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Press Release

U.S. DISTRICT COURT FOR THE DISTRICT OF PUERTO RICO AND FUNDACION COMUNITARIA DE PUERTO RICO ESTABLISH FEDERAL BENCH AND BAR SCHOLARSHIP FUND

San Juan, Puerto Rico (October 2, 2025) – The Bar Admission Fund of the U.S. District Court for the District of Puerto Rico and Fundación Comunitaria de Puerto Rico (FCPR) have signed a collaborative agreement creating the *Federal Bench and Bar Scholarship Fund*. This initiative is designed both to honor the careers of two outstanding jurists Judges Juan R. Torruella and Carmen C. Cerezo and to provide financial support to law students in Puerto Rico.

The Scholarship Fund will provide 12 awards over the next three years. In its first year, four scholarships will be awarded—two through the Judge Juan R. Torruella Scholarship and two through the Judge Carmen C. Cerezo Scholarship.

“With the establishment of these scholarships the Federal Court honors Judges Juan R. Torruella and Carmen C. Cerezo, two pioneering jurists of the federal judiciary in Puerto Rico, and reaffirms its commitment to education. My colleagues and I hope that the example of these trailblazers, and this material support, will inspire and strengthen the next generations of lawyers who will appear before the Court,” affirmed Hon. Raúl M. Arias-Marxuach, Chief Judge of the U.S. District Court of Puerto Rico.

Judge Juan R. Torruella was appointed to the U.S. District Court for the District of Puerto Rico in 1974 by President Gerald Ford, serving as Chief Judge from 1982 to 1984. In 1984, President Ronald Reagan appointed him to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the First Circuit, where he became the first Puerto Rican to serve on a federal appellate court. He remained on the First Circuit for thirty-eight years, including a term as Chief Judge. In addition to his judicial service, Judge Torruella was a scholar and author, as well as an Olympic sailor who represented Puerto Rico in several Olympic Games.

Judge Carmen C. Cerezo was nominated to the District Court by President Jimmy Carter in 1980, becoming the first Hispanic woman to serve as a federal district judge in the United States. In 1993, she became the first Puerto Rican woman to serve as Chief Judge of the District Court. Judge Cerezo was recognized for her strong legal acumen, integrity, and leadership. She also chaired the Court’s Continuing Legal Education Committee from 2006 until her retirement in 2021, where she dedicated herself to strengthening the professional development of attorneys.

The agreement establishing the Fund was signed by the Clerk of Court Ada I. García Rivera on October 2, 2025, marking the beginning of a partnership between the federal judiciary and the philanthropic community to benefit the advancement of legal education in Puerto Rico.

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For Immediate Release