

WELCOME REMARKS BY PATRICIA
MENÉNDEZ-CAMBÓ

Miami, Florida

April 30, 2019

Thank you, Teresa. I am honored to welcome all of you tonight, on behalf of the Wilson Center's Latin American Program. I am proud to be a member of the Program's Advisory Board, and am thrilled to be joined by so many other Board members and Wilson Center friends and family.

It is especially gratifying to offer this welcome as we honor two very dear friends, Woods Staton and Ricardo Poma, with whom I've had the privilege to work for so many decades/years. You'll hear more tonight about the quality of their leadership and vision. But let me just say that the years we have collaborated together have been some of the most fulfilling of my life/career.

I have only just met our other two honorees, María Helena Quiñonez and Susana Raffalli, but I am already inspired by what I know of them. Surely, their official bios reflect only part of the great humanity and commitment they bring to their work in Colombia and Venezuela.

I wish to thank the Latin American Program for honoring these 4 distinguished individuals, and just as important, for the outstanding work it does, day in and day out. Its small but dedicated staff contribute enormously to how we think about the region, how we surmount its challenges and allow opportunities to flourish. It's no wonder that this year, for the second time in a row, the University of Pennsylvania ranked the Wilson Center the #1 think tank in the world in regional studies.

Thank you again to our honorees, to our generous sponsors, and to all the friends and family gathered here tonight. In challenging times like these, isn't it wonderful to be together in celebration?