

Dr. Marta Pérez Proposes Honoring Dr. Carlos J. Finlay

En Español

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Contact: Valentin Alvarez (305-995-2794)

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According to school board rule 6Gx13-7E-1.02 section IB1 a school can be named for men or women who are "...outstanding civic, or educational leaders, or individuals who have made a significant contribution to humanity whether living or deceased, of local, national, or international prominence. If the individual is an appointed or elected public official he or she shall have left office."

I want to propose to the board to consider the naming of school after a man who has made a significant contribution to humanity, who is deceased, who achieved international prominence.

The Miami community at large and in particular the medical community under the sponsorship of the Cuban in Exile Rotaries have requested of me, as a board member, to present Dr. Carlos J. Finlay as a worthy candidate to have a school named after.

The prominence and significance of Dr. Carlos J. Finlay transcends the Cuban community in Dade County. Dr. Carlos J. Finlay, the researcher who identified the mosquito as the transmitter of yellow fever, a deadly disease, was educated in Edinburg, France, and received his medical degree from Jefferson Medical College in Philadelphia and then in Havana. He practiced medicine in Cuba, in Peru and with the U.S. Army Medical Corps during the Spanish American War.

Dr. Carlos J. Finlay was nominated to receive the Nobel Prize in Medicine in 1906 by Dr. Ronald Ross, a Nobel laureate himself, of the University of Liverpool in England for his contributions to advancement in the medical field.

The research contributions of Dr. Carlos J. Finlay fill volumes of medical publications. His work and contributions as a scientist are recognized globally today. Most Spanish speaking countries that celebrate Medical Doctors' Day have selected December 3, Dr. Finlay's birthday, as the day to have such celebration. It is obvious that the contributions and dedication of Dr. Carlos J. Finlay to the medical profession have made him a role model to the profession. The fact that the work of Dr. Finlay took place a century ago.

But it is still considered such an outstanding contribution to medicine and the betterment of mankind places this humble man in the category of those who have left a legacy to future generations. A fast review of the internet sources today will take any researcher to close to one thousand web pages revising the work and the significance of this extraordinary scientist. The UNESCO confers a coveted research in microbiology prize named after Dr. Carlos J. Finlay. This yearly international award is administered by the Tel Aviv University. This is another example of the international community recognizing Dr. Carlos J. Finlay as a world renown scientist.

Miami-Dade County is a young community, and the naming of its schools reflect this youth. We have many schools named after their location, a few named after prominent leaders of the community and the country but very few after those who have made significant contributions to mankind. If we are to elevate the cultural status of our community let us begin by giving our students role models to admire and follow. The naming of one high school after such

intellectual and benefactor of humankind such as Dr. Carlos J. Finlay will be step in the right direction.

The biographers of Dr. Carlos J. Finlay present him as a very determined person who in spite of poor health persevered in his research work and in his service to others. He had a very strong temperament but was very calm and in control at all times. He never seek personal gain from his work, only the betterment of others, particularly those in need of medical attention. These character traits surely are among the ones we want to inculcate in our students at the Miami-Dade County Public Schools.