

(H.B. 1662)

(No. 119)

(Approved July 11, 1998)

AN ACT

To declare the 24th of July of each year as the "Day to Honor the Birth of Abelardo Díaz-Alfaro", and the week corresponding to the 24th of July of each year as "Abelardo Díaz-Alfaro Week"; and to appropriate funds.

STATEMENT OF MOTIVES

Abelardo Díaz-Alfaro was born in the region of the Caguas Valley on July 24, 1920, the son of *Don* Abelardo Díaz and *Doña* Asunción Alfaro. He studied the arts and psychology leading to a degree in Social Work from the University of Puerto Rico. He did social work in several towns around the Island, an experience which allowed him to know the Puerto Rican *jíbaro* in very special ways.

His childhood was spent in the midst of a family of educators and journalists, which helped in his development as an outstanding writer. The creator of symbols and sharp images and master of poetic narrative, *Don* Abelardo occasionally allowed his political and social ideas to shine through his ingenious and highly stylized writings on the customs of our *jíbaros*.

His first work, a beautiful collection of stories and tales from the countryside entitled "Terrazo", was published in 1947. This work was so successful that several of its short pieces, the best known being "El Josco", have been translated from Spanish into several other languages including English, Czechoslovakian, Polish, Russian, German, French and Italian.

Subsequently he published "Mi Isla Soñada", a collection of scripts for the radio program "Teyo Gracia y Su Mundo".

His legacy of tales and stories was widely published in newspapers and magazines such as "Alma Latina", "El Mundo", "Presente" and "Asomante". It was precisely in "Asomante" that he published one of his most cherished literary creations in 1956: the short story "Los Perros", which is taught in French schools and universities as a study text of the literary genre.

The relevant writings of our illustrious *Don* Abelardo have transcended the territorial boundaries of our Island and placed him among the great writers of our times such as Gabriel García-Márquez and Carlos Fuentes. His art, given life through the written word, for all readers throughout the world to enjoy, has led him to be known as one of the most distinguished story-tellers of our time.

Don Abelardo Díaz-Alfaro devoted his life to cultivating the literary narrative art form. His prestigious work is one of the glories of our people and thus the Program for Cultural Promotion in the Cities and Towns of Puerto Rico of the Institute of Puerto Rican Culture has undertaken the task of making known the writings of *Don* Abelardo throughout the Island of Puerto Rico.

The Legislature of Puerto Rico wishes to express the gratitude of the People of Puerto Rico and recognize *Don* Abelardo Díaz-Alfaro during his lifetime, as the valuable symbol for which he stands as a pillar of Puerto Rican literature.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF PUERTO RICO:

Section 1.- The 24th of July of each year is hereby declared as the "Day to Honor the Birth of Abelardo Díaz-Alfaro", and the week corresponding to the 24th of July of each year as "Abelardo Díaz-Alfaro Week".

Section 2.- The Institute of Puerto Rican Culture, as the entity which upholds our identity as a People, shall plan and develop activities pertinent to said Week.

Section 3.- The amount of fifteen thousand (15,000) dollars is hereby appropriated from any available funds in the Commonwealth Treasury to further the purposes set forth in Section 2 of this Act. Said funds may be matched with federal, municipal or private funds.

Section 4.- In subsequent years these funds shall be consigned in the General Budget of the Institute of Puerto Rican Culture.

Section 5.- This Act shall take effect immediately after its approval.

August 4, 1999

Luis G. Hidalgo, Director of the Office of Legislative Services of the Legislature of Puerto Rico, hereby certifies to the Secretary of State that he has duly compared the English and Spanish texts of Act No. 119 (H.B. 1662) of the 3rd Session of the 13th Legislature of Puerto Rico, entitled:

AN ACT to declare the 24th of July of each year as the "Day to Honor the Birth of Abelardo Díaz-Alfaro", and the week corresponding to the 24th of July of each year as "Abelardo Díaz-Alfaro Week"; and to appropriate funds,

and finds the same are complete, true and correct versions of each other.

Luis G. Hidalgo