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# Press Release

## **Message from the Chief Judge of the United States District Court for the District of Puerto Rico Commemorating the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Federal Magistrates Act**

On October 17, 1968 President Lyndon B. Johnson signed into law the Federal Magistrates Act. The two principal goals of the Act were to replace the outdated commissioner system with judicial officers, and to provide relief to district judges in handling their caseloads. Over the past half century, the jurisdiction, duties and responsibilities of these judicial officers has significantly expanded, and their official title was changed to that of United States Magistrate Judge.

Today, the United States District Court for the District of Puerto Rico, joins other courts across our Nation in recognizing the important contribution of federal magistrate judges to our legal system. As Chief Judge of this Court I commend the dedication, loyalty and hard work of our five Magistrate Judges, as well as those who preceded them.

Throughout this next year, the District Court will sponsor a series of events and conferences to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the Federal Magistrates Act, as well as to educate the Bar, public and media about the important work of magistrate judges. A planning committee will be chaired by Senior United States District Judge Juan M. Pérez-Giménez -- a former U.S. Magistrate Judge -- and by members of the Bench and Bar to be appointed forthwith, including the President of the Puerto Chapter of the Federal Bar Association.

Members of the Bar and public who are interested in learning more about the history, jurisdiction and duties of magistrate judges may do so by reading the following white paper: <http://www.fedbar.org/PDFs/A-Guide-to-the-Federal-Magistrate-Judge-System>.

For additional information, please contact the United States District Court for the District of Puerto Rico at 787-772-3000.

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