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[Edit] **McDonald's restaurateur attends presidential event**

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Denver McDonald's® restaurateur Frank Sandoval and his wife Virginia (FROM LEFT) were among several prominent national business and community leaders at the White House Hispanic Heritage Month Event on October 6.

Contributed by: [Timi Aguilar](#) on 10/11/2006

Wheat Ridge business owner **Frank Sandoval** was honored with an invitation from the president to attend the celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month in the historic East Room at the White House on Oct. 6. This exclusive event brought Latino business and community leaders together from across the nation to recognize and celebrate the significant contributions that Latino Americans have made in our culture and society.

"It is an honor to be a guest of the president at this event that celebrates not only our rich heritage as Mexican-Americans, but that recognizes the fact that we as business owners and community leaders are cornerstones to the foundation of this country," Sandoval said. "For my wife, **Virginia**, and I to be in the room with so many others who have the same passion and dedication to serve their local and extended communities, and who really want to make a difference, is both energizing and humbling."

Other distinguished guests of **President Bush** included Prince **Felipe de Borbon**, the Crown Prince of the Kingdom of Spain, U.S. Attorney General **Alberto Gonzales**, and U.S. Treasurer **Anna Cabral**. Singer **Ana Cristina** also performed as part of the ceremony.

"I believe that America should remain the land of the entrepreneur, and that ours is a country that benefits when people have a dream and work hard to achieve that dream," stated President Bush. "The small business community is strong here in America. It's strong because we have entrepreneurs in our midst."

Sandoval is an example of that entrepreneurial spirit. A Wheat Ridge resident and president of the Clara Corporation, he owns 15 McDonald's restaurants in the Denver-Metro area. Sandoval's career in the restaurant industry began at McDonald's in 1965 when he was a high school student earning 85 cents an hour. In 1978, he became the first Hispanic owner operator in Denver, and one of the company's youngest franchisees. Today, Sandoval is the largest single franchisee in Colorado.

The president commended Latino entrepreneurs who lead the U.S. in business ownership. "I'm proud to report that the number of Hispanic-owned businesses is growing at three times the national rate, and that's positive, particularly if you're a fellow like me who worries about whether or not people can find work, because the truth of the matter is 70 percent of new jobs in our country are created by small businesses."

As a result of Sandoval's efforts to help young people in need across our area, Sandoval has earned a reputation for leadership and community service. Most notably, Sandoval is the capital campaign chair for Ronald McDonald's House and is helping lead efforts to raise \$15 million in funds to open a second Ronald McDonald House in the Denver-Metro area . He received the highest honor given to a franchisee in the McDonald's system called the "Ronald Award."

Through his business, Sandoval has partnered with the Adams County School district to start a mentoring program to help young people break the cycle of poverty, drop-outs, and teenage pregnancy. He also helped launch McDonald's Hispanic American Commitment to Educational Resources Scholarship program (HACER) in Colorado, which has awarded about \$1 million in scholarship funding in the Colorado area \$19 million nationally since it was first created in 1985.

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