

In loving memory of:

Stanley Almodovar III
Amanda Alvear
Oscar A. Aracena-Montero
Rodolfo Ayala-Ayala
Antonio Davon Brown
Darryl Roman Burt II
Angel L. Candelario-Padro
Juan Chavez-Martinez Luis
Daniel Conde

Cory James Connell
Tevin Eugene Crosby
Deonka Deidra Drayton
Simon Adrian Carrillo
Fernandez
Leroy Valentin Fernandez
Mercedes Marisol Flores
Peter O. Gonzalez-Cruz
Juan Ramon Guerrero
Paul Terrell Henry
Frank Hernandez

Miguel Angel Honorato
Javier Jorge-Reyes
Jason Benjamin Josaphat
Eddie Jamoldroy Justice
Anthony Luis Laureano Disla
Christopher Andrew Leinonen
Alejandro Barrios Martinez
Brenda Lee Marquez McCool
Gilberto Ramon Silva
Menendez
Kimberly Morris

Akyra Monet Murray
Luis Omar Ocasio-Capo
Geraldo A. Ortiz-Jimenez
Eric Ivan Ortiz-Rivera
Joel Rayon Paniagua
Jean Carlos Mendez Perez
Enrique L. Rios, Jr.
Jean C. Nieves Rodriguez
Christopher Joseph Sanfeliz
Xavier Emmanuel Serrano
Rosado

Yilmary Rodriguez Solivan
Edward Sotomayor Jr.
Shane Evan Tomlinson
Martin Benitez Torres
Jonathan Antonio Camuy Vega
Franky Jimmy Dejesus
Velazquez
Juan P. Rivera Velazquez
Luis S. Vielma
Luis Daniel Wilson-Leon
Jerald Arthur Wright

RISE UNAFRAID

NCLR Lideres youth during the NCLR Annual Conference in Orlando light a candle for each of the victims lost in the Pulse nightclub shooting.

embracing OUR UNIQUENESS

People came to Latin Night because it had the best music. Hitting Pulse on Friday's was a no-brainer for anyone who loves Orlando nightlife. It was the area's most popular gay club, and everyone in the diverse crowd felt welcome. Brenda McCool had beaten cancer for the second time and was there celebrating with her son Isaiah.

Brenda and Isaiah let loose with the kind of freedom you can only feel on the dance floor. The drag show had just ended. A dance contest was underway. But by the time the night was over, Brenda and 48 other people would be killed in the deadliest mass shooting in American history. Many of the victims were Latinos, and all of them were LGBT or allies.

Diversity is at the center of our vision for a better America. Our efforts are rooted in the idea that we are made stronger by our differences, made better by our common ground. We're committed to working together across communities—regardless

of sex, gender identification, race, or ethnicity—and with everyone who straddles some or all of these identities. And no matter how our identities intersect, at Pulse that night, we were all represented.

Just a month after the tragedy, we gathered in Orlando for the 2016 NCLR Annual Conference. The event was marked in part by grief, where usually there was levity. Featured speaker Wilson Cruz spoke at our Monday Breakfast, sharing his own experiences at Pulse as an example of "places where we can be wholly ourselves." He then revealed that Brenda was part of his family—his mother's stepsister—and said she "was the mother every LGBT person dreams about." He urged us all to understand that "the Latino and LGBT communities must come together and embrace their natural coalition."

As we mourned those lost in the horrific violence at Pulse, we also saw our strength and resilience as we comforted and

consoled each other in the space where we were not Latino or LGBT, but one family.

NCLR was changed in other ways as well. In response to this tragedy, our Board of Directors took a historic and unanimous vote to establish NCLR's policy positions to reduce gun violence in our country. They include a ban on assault weapons, universal background checks, and other reasonable restrictions consistent with the civil rights protections of all Americans.

Family isn't always two parents raising their kids. It's a group of trans teens living together after leaving home. It's a Honduran refugee leaning on her support circle because she came here alone. You can create your own family, and, sometimes one comes together without trying. It's about protecting, defending, and loving each other. For NCLR, it's about protecting our *familia* from hate and violence.