

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Sept. 14, 2010

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Release No. 10-089



Julia de Burgos, Celebrated Poet, Honored on U.S. Stamp

SAN JUAN, PR — On the eve of National Hispanic Heritage Month, Julia de Burgos, one of Puerto Rico's most celebrated poets, was recognized by the Postal Service today on a 44-cent stamp at the Teatro Tapia, one of the oldest drama stage buildings in the U.S. An award-winning writer and journalist, Julia de Burgos takes her place among honorees in the Postal Service's Literary Arts series and with 75 other Hispanic-themed stamps.

"Today, the Postal Service honors Julia de Burgos, a revolutionary writer, thinker, and activist," said Jordan Small, Postal Service area vice president, Northeast Area, during the first-day-of-issue stamp ceremony. "Dr. de Burgos wrote more than 200 poems that probe issues of love, feminism, and political and personal freedom. Her groundbreaking works urged women, minorities and the poor to defy social conventions and find their own true selves."

Joining Small to dedicate the stamp were Byankah Sobá, journalist and master of ceremonies; Jorge Santini-Padilla mayor of San Juan; and María Consuelo Sáez Burgos, niece of Julia de Burgos.

Julia Constanza Burgos García was born on Feb. 17, 1914, in the town of Carolina, Puerto Rico. The eldest of 13 children, de Burgos grew up along the Río Grande de Loíza. She later wrote, "My childhood was all a poem in the river, and a river in the poem of my first dreams." Although her family's limited means made attending college difficult, de Burgos persevered and graduated from the University of Puerto Rico in 1933 with a two-year teaching degree. For the next several years, she worked at a series of teaching and journalism jobs while also publishing poems in journals and newspapers.

De Burgos' first collection, *Exact Poems to Myself*, consisted of poems she wrote in 1934 and 1935. One of the poems written during this early period also became her most famous, "Río Grande de Loíza," a love song to the river of her childhood. In another poem, de Burgos rejected the social and behavioral restrictions placed on women, forcefully proclaiming, "I am life, strength, woman." Other poems address political themes such as equality and social justice.

De Burgos left Puerto Rico in 1940 for New York City, then moved to Cuba, where she stayed until 1942. From 1944 to 1945, she served as an editor for *Pueblos Hispanos*, a New York-based newspaper that promoted many progressive social and political causes including Puerto Rican independence. In 1946, she received another literary award, this time for her essay, "To Be or Not To Be Is the Motto."

A number of de Burgos' poems describe the loneliness and isolation she experienced in New York City, highlighting for Puerto Ricans and other immigrants the importance of community and solidarity.

From 1946 until her death in New York City in 1953, de Burgos was plagued with health problems. Friends and family ensured her final resting place was her beloved Carolina, Puerto Rico.

The stamp features a portrait of Julia de Burgos created by artist Jody Hewgill.

How to Order the First-Day-of-Issue Postmark

Customers have 60 days to obtain the first-day-of-issue postmark by mail. They may purchase new stamps at a local Post Office, at The Postal Store website at www.usps.com/shop, or by calling 800-STAMP-24. They should affix the stamps to envelopes of their choice, address the envelopes (to themselves or others), and place them in larger envelopes addressed to:

Julia de Burgos Stamp
Stamp Distribution
585 Ave. RD Roosevelt OFC
San Juan, PR 00936-9311

After applying the first-day-of-issue postmark, the Postal Service will return the envelopes through the mail. There is no charge for the postmark. All orders must be postmarked by Nov. 15, 2010.

How to Order First-Day Covers

Stamp Fulfillment Services also offers first day covers for new stamp issues and Postal Service stationery items postmarked with the official first day of issue cancellation. Each item has an individual catalog number and is offered in the quarterly *USA Philatelic* catalog. Customers may request a free catalog by calling 800-STAMP-24 or writing to:

Information Fulfillment
Dept. #6270
U.S. Postal Service
PO Box 219014
Kansas City, MO 64121-9014

Philatelic Products

There are three philatelic products available for this stamp issue:

- 465961, First-Day Cover, \$0.82
- 465991, Ceremony Program, \$6.95
- 465993, First-Day Cover Keepsake, \$9.95

To learn more about the Postal Service's Stamp Program, visit <http://beyondtheperf.com>.

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