

Corpus Christi Caller

A page of opinion

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Garcia has earned Medal of Freedom

When President Reagan bestows the Medal of Freedom on Dr. Hector Garcia March 26, he will be giving overdue and deserved recognition to one of the nation's first citizens.

Dr. Garcia's long battle for equality has been a fight for the traditions of freedom so cherished by the country's founders. When Dr. Garcia founded the American G.I. Forum in 1948, few in the United States were aware of discrimination against Hispanics; fewer still were trying to bring about improvement. Dr. Garcia changed all that. He brought national attention to the question of Hispanic rights. All the progress which has been made since then toward full equality had its beginning in this one man's dedication to a cause he knew was just.

Dr. Garcia's concern hasn't been only for Hispanics. He has worked as tirelessly in behalf of community projects, benefitting all South Texas. He has served the nation as a member of this country's delegation to the United Nations. And he has counseled and helped countless individuals on a one-on-one basis as well.

The Medal of Freedom is given out sparingly. It is the highest award any civilian can receive from this nation. Nothing less could properly honor the contributions Dr. Garcia has made.