



RON DESANTIS
GOVERNOR

FELIX I. RODRÍGUEZ-MENDIGUTÍA DAY IN FLORIDA

WHEREAS, Felix I. Rodríguez-Mendigutía is recognized as a voice for freedom not only in Florida, but around the world; and

WHEREAS, his legacy and influence have shaped generations of Cuban Americans who made Florida their home and now lead their own communities to preserve our freedom and ensure that Communism never reaches our shores; and

WHEREAS, Felix I. Rodríguez-Mendigutía was born in Cuba, and while studying in the United States at the age of 13, he witnessed the Communist government seize his family's possessions and oppress his home country, sparking his passion for service and freedom; and

WHEREAS, upon moving to Miami in 1960, he joined a group of Cuban exiles – known as Brigade 2506 – ultimately playing an instrumental role in the Bay of Pigs Invasion as a paramilitary officer with the Central Intelligence Agency; and

WHEREAS, in 1967, under the alias “Max Gomez,” Felix recruited Bolivian troops to capture Marxist revolutionary Che Guevara and prevent him from overthrowing the Bolivian government; and

WHEREAS, he became a United States citizen and joined the Army during the Vietnam War, achieving the rank of Colonel and flying over 300 helicopter missions; and

WHEREAS, Felix I. Rodríguez-Mendigutía's acts of valor have been recognized across the world, earning him the C.I.A.'s Intelligence Star for his extreme heroism in the most hazardous conditions, nine Silver Stars, and Crosses of Gallantry from the Republic of Vietnam, marking his legacy as one of the bravest fighters for freedom in history; and

WHEREAS, even after his service, Felix has remained an active member of Florida's Cuban American community, serving as President of the Brigade 2506 Veterans Association and chairman of the board of directors for the Hialeah Gardens Museum Honoring Assault Brigade 2506 in Hialeah, Florida; and

WHEREAS, Section 14.35, Florida Statutes, establishes the “Governor's Medal of Freedom,” which allows the Governor to recognize any person who has made an especially meritorious contribution to the interests and citizens of the state, its culture, or other significant public or private endeavor.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Ron DeSantis, Governor of the State of Florida, do hereby bestow the Governor's Medal of Freedom to Felix I. Rodríguez-Mendigutía for his significant contributions to the United States of America, the State of Florida, and the cause of freedom, and hereby declare September 16, 2021, as *Felix I. Rodríguez-Mendigutía in Florida*.



IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of Florida to be affixed at Tallahassee, the Capital, this 16th day of September, in the year two thousand twenty-one.

A blue ink signature of Ron DeSantis, written over a horizontal line.

Governor