Former U.S. Ambassador Calls for 250,000 Women to Close the Latina Leadership Gap

Hispanic Heritage Month (September 15 to October 15) initiative challenges women and employers to turn connection into access, influence and opportunity



Maria Brewer, Author, The Ambassador's Leadership Edge

ROCKVILLE, MD, UNITED STATES, October 2, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Maria Brewer had navigated war zones, bombings and some of the most demanding assignments of a 29-year U.S. Foreign Service career. Yet when she prepared to present her credentials as U.S. Ambassador to Sierra Leone, she felt something unexpected: nervousness.

This time, she wasn't advising the ambassador. She was the ambassador.

That experience reinforced something Brewer now wants other women to understand: earning a seat at the table and feeling prepared to fully exercise your influence once you get there are two different things.

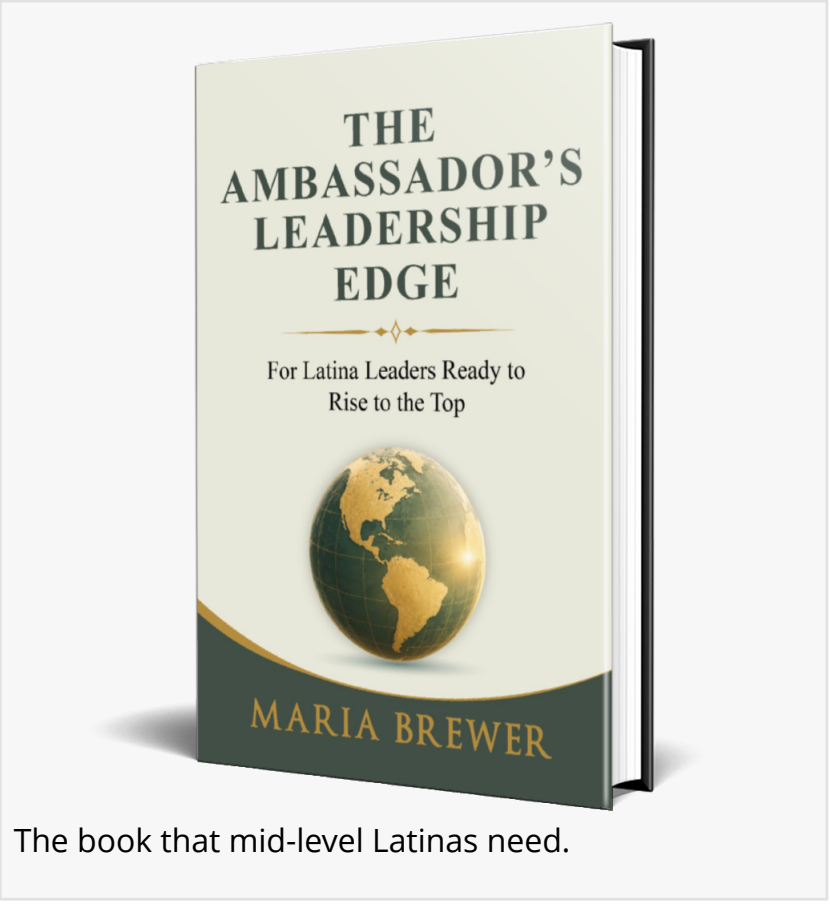
During National Hispanic Heritage Month, Brewer is calling for 250,000 women across the United States to strengthen their own leadership while intentionally opening doors for others.

The call comes as Latinas remain dramatically underrepresented at the highest levels of corporate leadership. Latinas represent roughly 9% of the U.S. population but only about 1% of C-suite executives, according to a recent report on The State of Latinas in Corporate America by LeanIn.org. Research also shows that Latina professionals demonstrate strong ambition while encountering significant barriers to advancement throughout the leadership pipeline.

“Latinas do not lack talent, ambition or work ethic,” Brewer said. “But excellence alone does not create access, sponsorship, visibility or influence. We have to understand how leadership and power work, build influential relationships and then use our influence to create opportunities for others.”

From Connection to Collective Power

Brewer believes Latinas already possess an important leadership asset: strong traditions of family, community, loyalty and mutual support. The opportunity, she says, is to translate those relationships into professional and collective power.



The book that mid-level Latinas need.

That means building relationships that lead to information, influential networks, mentorship, sponsorship, visible assignments and advocacy. It also means organizations must examine whether Latina professionals are receiving not only opportunities to enter the leadership pipeline, but the access and support necessary to advance within it. “Representation tells us who is in the room,” Brewer said. “The bigger question is whether they have the access, influence and authority to make a difference once they get there.”

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>
> *Maria Brewer*

Power, Presence and Purpose

Brewer's perspective was shaped by nearly three decades of diplomatic leadership across cultures and continents. She led international teams, navigated complex political and organizational environments and learned firsthand how relationships, influence and executive presence affect leadership. Those experiences became the foundation for Power, Presence and Purpose, the principles behind her Ambassador's Leadership Edge™ framework and book, The Ambassador's Leadership Edge.

Now Brewer is extending those principles beyond individual leadership development through Leadership Edge Ambassadors, a new community launching October 6th in Washington DC at Diplomatic and Consular Officers, Retired (DACOR) Bacon House.

The idea is simple: women strengthen their own leadership while intentionally using their relationships and influence to create opportunities for others. “When one Latina rises, she

expands what others believe is possible," Brewer said. "When Latinas rise together, they change institutions."


Book Launch, October 6th, 5:30–7:30 PM ET

During Hispanic Heritage Month, Brewer is challenging both Latina professionals and employers to consider what happens after talented women enter the leadership pipeline: Who receives sponsorship? Who gets visible assignments? Who has access to influential networks? Whose name is mentioned when leadership opportunities arise? And who is holding the door open for the next woman?

About Maria Brewer
Maria Brewer is a former U.S. Ambassador, global leader, executive coach and leadership mentor with 29 years of U.S. Foreign Service experience. She served as U.S. Ambassador to Sierra Leone and Lesotho and held leadership assignments across multiple continents. Today, she develops emerging and established leaders through the principles of Power, Presence and Purpose embodied in The Ambassador's Leadership Edge™. Brewer is available for media interviews and expert commentary on Latina leadership, executive presence, women's advancement, mentorship and sponsorship.

About the Book
The Ambassador's Leadership Edge: For Latina Leaders Ready to Rise to the Top is available in paperback and ebook on Amazon

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