

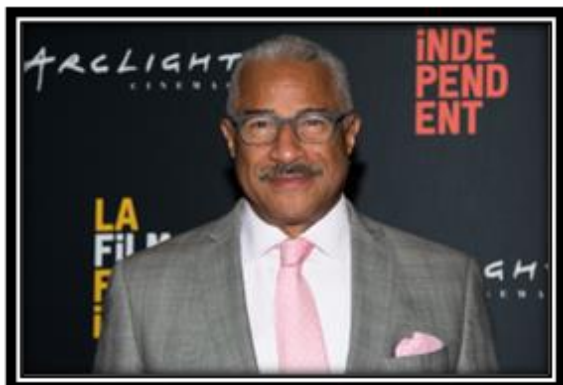
PROFILE OF RESISTANCE

FELIPE LUCIANO

activist, poet, journalist

“We have to walk into our power!”

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Background Information

Born November 24, 1947

Felipe Luciano was born and raised in New York City. His father was born in Puerto Rico, and his mother was a first-generation Puerto Rican. He earned a bachelor's degree from Queens College – City University of New York and a master's degree in Christianity and Social Justice. He is an activist committed to community empowerment, civil rights, and social justice.

Luciano's Resistance

Raised largely by a single mother in an impoverished neighborhood, Felipe Luciano had a tough upbringing. When he was a teenager, he joined a gang and was ultimately incarcerated. During his time in prison, Luciano de-escalated fights between inmates by shedding light on America's contradictions between poverty, repressiveness, and the unfulfilled promise of democracy.ⁱ Luciano obtained his GED while incarcerated in preparation for better opportunities outside of the institution. Upon release, he attended Queens College–CUNY with the support of various community organizations like SEEK, a college readiness program. Surrounded by many activists and intellectuals, he became involved in student activism on campus. In 1968, Luciano became one of the founding members of the original Last Poets. The trio was composed of poets and musicians who emphasized a Black reawakening. Hip-hop artists like Public Enemy, NWA, and A Tribe Called Quest accredited the group for being instrumental in shaping the genre.ⁱⁱ Luciano also co-founded the New York chapter of the Young Lords Party (YLP). This Puerto Rican nationalist organization was modeled after the Black Panthers and focused on community empowerment. The YLP's work had a lasting effect on the Puerto Rican community and New York City culture.

Achievements

After departing YLP, Luciano worked as a radio host for “Latin Roots,” the first program in English in the United States to feature Latin culture and music, intended to diversify the listeners. He also became a journalist and was the first Puerto Rican news reporter of WNBC-TV New York, a major media network. He has received two Emmys for his journalistic contributions.

Essential Questions

1. As a child, Felipe received support from leaders within local community resources. These positive experiences inspired him to create more opportunities for youth through the Young Lords Party.
 - a. Do you notice any needs for young people in your community? What resources would you create to fulfill needs within your community?

2. Luciano used poetry to talk about issues he was passionate about to advocate for change.
 - a. What role do you think the arts have in social justice?

3. ***“We have to walk into our power!”***
 - a. What do you think Luciano means by this?

ⁱ Editors, Felipeluciano.com, “About Luciano.” Retrieved from <http://www.felipeluciano.com/about-felipe/>

ⁱⁱ Magliozzi, R (2020). “Herbert Danska’s *Right On!*” MoMA. Retrieved from <https://www.moma.org/magazine/articles/341>