

# LEHMAN CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

## *Lehman Center Honors a Local Hero*

**Lehman Center creates special seating section to honor and celebrate the legacy of renowned restaurateur and Lehman Center patron Joe Torres**

A commemorative plaque in Joe's name will be placed on his favorite seat and additional Concert Hall seats located in the same section will have plaques available for a donation of \$250 or more. Patrons will also have the option to leave a personal, commemorative message on the seat's plaque.

**José Torres**, "Joe," was a beloved restaurateur, chef and member of the Lehman Center family. His restaurant, **Joe's Place**, was a hidden gem nestled beneath the elevated tracks of the #6 train in the **Bronx**. He was known for his friendliness and generosity within his community and well beyond. ***"Salsa musicians had a post-gig ritual in the Bronx. When the music stopped, off they'd go to Joe's Place, a Puerto Rican restaurant, where the owner and chef José Torres would lay out a free spread."*** - New York Times

Hailing from Guaynabo, Puerto Rico, Joe developed his culinary talents from an early age in his mother's kitchen. In 1953 nine-year-old Joe moved with his family to the Parkchester neighborhood of the Bronx in New York City. While in high school, he started cooking in a midtown Manhattan hotel, working his way up from grill man, to line cook to chef. Over the years he cooked in restaurants, diners and steakhouses. With time, Joe transformed from the cook back in the kitchen to the affable chef everyone wanted to know and he realized that he wanted to open his own place *"to do something with food and be proud of it, as a Puerto Rican, and stick to my roots."* (Quote: Joe Torres). That dream became a reality in 1998, when he opened Joe's Place on Westchester Avenue in the Bronx, which quickly became both a favorite spot for local families and a must visit destination for Latin musicians, all drawn by their enthusiasm for his authentic home-style Caribbean food and friendly atmosphere. After the Latin music stopped at Lehman Center, the musicians would all head over to Joe's Place. ***"It was for the musicians, but whoever wanted to come by, they certainly did. Everything on the buffet was on him. Talk about jam-packed! But that was him. He did things like that."*** - Master Latin pianist, Eddie Palmieri

Unfortunately, Joe passed away in April after a hard battle with Coronavirus. In addition to being a cherished member of the neighborhood, Joe was a huge supporter of Lehman Center for the Performing Arts and his presence will be deeply missed at our Concert Hall.

**To purchase a commemorative seat or make a donation in Joe's name, please contact:**

**Janet Sanchez**, Assistant to the Director of the Performing Arts Center / [janet.sanchez@lehman.cuny.edu](mailto:janet.sanchez@lehman.cuny.edu) or

**Mark Green**, General Manager of the Performing Arts Center / [mark.green1@lehman.cuny.edu](mailto:mark.green1@lehman.cuny.edu)

Donations to Lehman Center are tax-deductible to the fullest extent of the law.

During these trying times, Lehman Center wants you to be spiritually well. Please visit our website [www.LehmanCenter.org](http://www.LehmanCenter.org) for uplifting and inspiring virtual events that we recommend.

**Media Contact:**

**Leah Grammatica** / LGPR / 212-243-6052 / [Leahgram@aol.com](mailto:Leahgram@aol.com)