Nicaragua 1979 – 2019: The Sandinista Revolution After Forty Years

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**PRESENTER BIOGRAPHIES**

**Jon Lee Anderson** is a staff writer for the New Yorker magazine. He began his journalistic career in Peru in 1979. Since then, he has reported from over fifty countries and covered two dozen conflicts but continues to write frequently about Latin America. He has profiled a range of contemporary political and cultural figures from the region including Gabriel García Márquez, Fidel Castro, Hugo Chávez, Augusto Pinochet, and, most recently, Jair Bolsonaro. His books include *Che Guevara: A Revolutionary Life;* *The Fall of Baghdad;* *The Lion’s Grave: Dispatches from Afghanistan;* and *Guerrillas: Journeys in the Insurgent World*.

**Alejandro Bendaña**, served as Deputy Ambassador to the United Nations and Secretary General of the Nicaraguan Foreign Ministry during the first Sandinista Government (1979-1990).  He started the Centro de Estudios Internacionales in Managua, serving there between 1991and 1997. In 1992-93, Dr. Bendaña was Tinker Professor of Latin America History at the University of Chicago. From 2002 to 2016 he worked for the United Nations and other organizations in peace-building programs in Africa, Asia, and Latin America.  Between 2014 and 2015 he served as Senior Mediation Advisor in the UN Department of Political Affairs. Holding a PhD from Harvard University in History, Bendaña is the author of *Power Lines: US Hegemony in the New Global Order* (Interlink, New York, 1996). He is the author of *Sandino, Patria y Libertad* (Anama, Managua, 2016), considered by the American Historical Review to be the “definitive biography of Sandino.” His most recent book is *Buenas al pleito, mujeres en la rebelión de Sandino* (Anama, Managua, 2019).

**Erick Blandón Guevara**, an associate professor of Romance Languages and Literatures in the University of Missouri-Columbia, holds a PhD in Latin American Literature and Cultural Studies from the University of Pittsburgh, and an MFA in Creative Writing from The University of Texas at El Paso. He is a poet, storyteller, novelist, screenwriter, and essayist. He was a student leader during the fight against the Somoza dictatorship in the 1970’s in Nicaragua, then working in different cultural institutions of the Sandinista revolution (1979-1990). His published books of poetry include: *Aladrarivo* (1975), *Juegos prohibidos* (1982), and *Las maltratadas palabras* (1990). In fiction he has released one short story collection, *Misterios gozosos* (1994), and the novel *Vuelo de cuervos* (1997), which was republished in 2017 by Alfaguara in Mexico. His work has been included in anthologies such as *Flor y Canto* (Nicaraguan poetry), ed. Ernesto Cardenal (2006); *Cuentos Nicaragüenses de ayer y hoy*, ed. Max Lacayo et al (2014); *Puertos abiertos antología del Cuento Centroamericano* ed. Sergio Ramírez (México en Colombia 2015), and *Nicaragua cuenta*, ed. Arquímedes Gonzáles and Karly Gaitán (Zaragoza, 2018). As a scholar he has published *Barroco descalzo* (2003), *Discursos transversales* (2011), and *Rubén Darío: un cisne entre gavilanes* (2016). His essays and articles have appeared in *Revista iberoamericana*, *Istmo. Revista centroamericana de crítica literaria y cultural*, *Negritude*, *Chasqui*, *La Habana Elegante, Review Literature and Arts of the Americas*. As a screenwriter he has written the scripts for the documentary films *Como los sinsontes de las cañadas* (2014) and *Cervantes en Centroamerica: Sergio Ramírez o el arte de narrar* (2019). He has also authored the poetic text for the short film *Las cabezas de la Hidra* (2018), all of them directed by Iván Arguello L.

**Steven Bloomfield** has been associate director of the Watson Institute since 2016. Before coming to Brown, he served as director of the Fellows Program, associate director, and executive director of Harvard's Weatherhead Center for International Affairs over a period of twenty-two years. Prior to that he worked as a senior administrator with Harvard's Latin American Scholarship Program of American Universities (LASPAU). A former Peace Corps volunteer (Ecuador, 1978-80), he was educated at Harvard University.

**Donald Castillo Rivas** is a Nicaraguan economist, professor, writer, and diplomat. He has published numerous books and essays on economics, politics, and international relations. He obtained a PhD in economics from the Autonomous University of Barcelona, ​​a Diploma in International Commerce and Business from the Universidad Javeriana, Bogotá, and a BA in economics in Cuba. He has twenty years’ academic experience as a professor-researcher at the Universities of Chile, Mexico, Buenos Aires, Cuba and Nicaragua. For ten years he was ambassador of his country in Colombia (in two different periods of three years each), Ecuador (concurrent) and Spain. Apart from academic and diplomatic life, he has had experiences as a consultant in international organizations: Inter-American Development Bank, World Bank, ILO-UN, and United Nations Development Program. He participated as a counselor in the negotiations of the Nicaraguan Resistance with the Sandinista Government in Sapoa and Managua (Hotel Camino Real) 1988. He was a member of the negotiating team over the external debt of Nicaragua with Spain and the Club of Paris in the period in which he served as ambassador to Spain (1994-1997). He is currently a member of the International Commission of the Blue and White Alliance, which opposes the Nicaraguan regime.

**Carlos Fernando Chamorro** is a Nicaraguan journalist. In 1996 he founded the digital magazine and daily [www.confidencial.com.ni](http://www.confidencial.com.ni), a medium of independent investigative journalism that he has directed ever since. He also directs the weekly television show Esta Semana (Canal 12), a Sunday magazine for reporting and interviews founded in 2000, as well as the television program Esta Noche. Owing to a December 13, 2018, assault on the media on which he works by the Nicaraguan Policía Nacional, he has been living in exile in Costa Rica, a situation necessitated by the Ortega regime’s continuing stance, despite the lack of a court order. Since this exile, he has continued directing Confidencial and producing television programs that, since the censoring of their distribution by Canal 12 in Nicaragua, are now distributed by Youtube and Facebook Live. Chamorro was an FSLN soldier and director of *Barricada*, the daily newspaper of the Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional, between 1980 and 1994. In 2004 he directed the documentary *XXV-19* on the history of the Sandinista Revolution. He studied at McGill University where he obtained a BA with honors in Economics in 1977. He’s been a Knight Fellow at Stanford University (1997-1998) and a visiting professor in the Master’s in Journalism program at the University of California, Berkeley (1998-1999). In May 2009 he was awarded the Premio a la libertad de expresión en Iberoamérica given by the Casa América Cataluña (España). In October 2010 he received the Premio María Moors Cabot awarded by the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism. He is a member of the Consejo Rector de la Fundación Nuevo Periodismo Iberoamericano Gabriel García Marquez.

**Cristiana Chamorro Barrios** is the founder and director of the Violeta Chamorro Foundation, a non-profit organization for the defense of freedom of expression, access to public information, and the promotion of initiatives that foster democracy, social development, education for change, and excellence in national journalism. She is a board member and Vice President at *La Prensa*, Vital Voices, Clínica Verde and Funides. Chamorro was a member of a group of advisors to President Chamorro and special advisor on political and social issues, communication, civil society, project management, strategic planning, research, speech writing and editing, event planning and public relations. From 1979 to 1990 Chamorro was the Director and a journalist for *La Prensa*.

**Luis Carrión Cruz** has been a member of the FSLN since 1972 and was a member of the National Directorate from 1979 to 1995, when he resigned. Cruz was Vice Minister of the Interior from 1980 to 1988 and was Minister of Economy, Industry, and Commerce from 1988 to 1990. He was head of the electoral campaign for Herty Lewites, 2005–2006, and has been a member of the Executive Committee of the Sandinista Renovation Movement (MRS) since 2000. Cruz is a member of the Board of Instituto para el Desarrollo y la Democracia (IPADE), whose operations have presently been suspended by the Nicaraguan government.

**Richard E. Feinberg**, a professor at the University of California, San Diego, has traveled frequently to Nicaragua over the last 15 years and has spoken, in informal conversations and more structured interviews, with many of its principal figures in business, political, and academic circles. His most recent visit was in December 2018. While serving with the State Department’s Policy Planning Staff, he met with General Anastasio “Tacho” Somoza in 1978, and while serving with the National Security Council traveled with First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton to Managua in 1995. Feinberg joined the Carter Center elections- observation mission in 2006 and attended the subsequent 2007 inauguration of Daniel Ortega Saavedra. His two most recent studies are *Nicaraguan Tragedy: From Consensus to Coercion* (Wilson Center, Latin American Program, 2019) and *Nicaragua: From Revolution to Restoration* (Brookings Institution, 2018).

**Luis Adán Fley Gonzalez** is a retired agronomist who works on his small farm in Matagalpa. He’s president of the nascent political party Fuerza Democrática Nicaragüense (FDN) comprised of former Contras. Fley joined the Contras – of which he became a chief legal investigator and a leading commander (known at Comandante Jhonson) – on June 13, 1981. His story has been told in Sam Dillon’s *COMANDOS: The CIA and Nicaragua's Contra Rebels*.

**James Green** is the Carlos Manuel de Céspedes Professor of Latin American History. He received his doctorate in Latin American history, with a specialization in Brazil, at UCLA in 1996. He has traveled extensively throughout Latin America and lived eight years in Brazil. He served as Director of Brown University’s Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies from 2005 to 2008. He is a past president of the Brazilian Studies Association (BRASA) and served as the President of the New England Council on Latin American Studies (NECLAS) in 2008 and 2009. He is currently the Director of Brown's Brazil Initiative; the Executive Director of the Brazilian Studies Association, housed at Brown; and the Director of the Opening the Archives Project.

**Lea Patricia Guido López** is a sociologist who holds a PhD in Public Health. She has held positions as secretary general of Ampronac (1977 -1979), Minister of Social Welfare (1979-1980), Minister of Health (1980-1986), and secretary general of the Association of Nicaraguan Women “Luisa Amanda Espinosa” (AMNLAE) 1987-1989. She is currently retired from the World Health Organization.

**Mateo Jarquín,** originally from Nicaragua, received his BA in History from Grinnell College. A PhD candidate in Harvard University’s Department of History, he is particularly interested in revolutionary movements, international relations, and the history of development agendas in Latin America during the Cold War. His dissertation, based on archival and oral-history research in several countries in Central America and the Caribbean, provides a history of the Sandinista Revolution (1978-1990) from the perspective of its foreign relations in the region.

**Stephen Kinzer** is an award-winning foreign correspondent who has covered more than 50 countries on five continents. He made his first trip to Nicaragua as a freelance journalist in 1976, covering the Sandinista uprising for the *Boston Globe*. In 1983 he became chief of the newly opened *New York Times* bureau in Managua.  He spent the next six years reporting on war and upheaval in Nicaragua and elsewhere in Central America. His book about that experience, *Blood of Brothers: Life and War in Nicaragua,* is a social and political portrait that the *New Yorker* called "impressive for the refinement of its writing and also the breadth of its subject matter."  Kinzer is also the co-author of *Bitter Fruit: The Story of the American Coup in Guatemala.* Columbia University awarded Kinzer its Maria Moors Cabot Prize for outstanding coverage of Latin America. After his six-year posting in Managua, Kinzer became chief of the *Times* bureau in Berlin, where he covered German unification and the wars in the former Yugoslavia. In 1996 he became the first *Times* correspondent in Istanbul, from which he covered Turkey and the newly independent countries of the Caucasus and Central Asia. After leaving the *Times*, Kinzer taught journalism and international relations at Northwestern University and Boston University. He is now a senior fellow at Brown’s Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs. His tenth book, *Poisoner in Chief: Sidney Gottlieb and the CIA Search for Mind Control*, will be published in September 2019. He writes a world affairs column for the *Boston Globe.*

**Peter Kornbluh** is a senior analyst, at the National Security Archive in Washington, D.C., where he has worked for 33 years. He currently directs the Archive's Cuba and Chile Documentation Projects. He was co-director of the Iran-Contra documentation project and also director of the Archive's project on U.S. policy toward Nicaragua. From 1990 to 1999, he taught at Columbia University as an adjunct assistant professor of international and public affairs. Since 1985 he has written widely on U.S.-Latin American relations for *The Nation* magazine, and other publications such as *Cigar Aficionado*, the *New York Review of Books*, *The New Yorker*, *The Washington Post*, and *Politico*. His most recent book, co-authored with William M. LeoGrande, is *Back Channel to Cuba: The Hidden History of Negotiations between Washington and Havana* (UNC Press, 2014), a *Foreign Affairs* Best Book of the Year. He is the author/editor/co-editor of a number of Archive books among them *The Cuban Missile Crisis, 1962* and *The Iran-Contra Scandal: The Declassified History*. His first book on the contra war, published in 1987, was *Nicaragua: The Price of Intervention*. He is also the editor of the Archive’s major collection of 3000 declassified documents on the Sandinista revolution and the contra war, *Nicaragua: The Making of U.S. Policy, 1978-1990*; and co-editor of a comprehensive collection of over 5000 documents on the contra and Iran operations, *The Iran-Contra Affair: The Making of a Scandal, 1983-1988*.

**Brian Meeks**  is Professor and Chair of Africana Studies at Brown University. He previously served as Professor of Social and Political Change and Director of the Sir Arthur Lewis Institute of Social and Economic Studies at the University of the West Indies, Mona, Jamaica. He has also taught at Michigan State University, Florida International University, and Anton de Kom University of Suriname, and served as Visiting Scholar at Cambridge University, Stanford University, and Brown University. He has published twelve books and edited collections, including *Critical Interventions in Caribbean Politics and Theory;* *Caribbean Revolutions and Revolutionary Theory: An Assessment of Cuba, Nicaragua and Grenada;* *Narratives of Resistance: Jamaica, Trinidad, the Caribbean;*and *Envisioning Caribbean Futures: Jamaican Perspectives.*His novel *Paint the Town Red*was published in 2003, and his volume of poems *The Coup Clock Clicks* was published in 2018*.*

**Susan Meiselas** is a documentary photographer who lives and works in New York. She is the author of *Carnival Strippers* (1976), *Nicaragua* (1981), *Kurdistan: In the Shadow of History* (1997), *Pandora’s Box* (2001), *Encounters with the Dani* (2003) *Prince Street Girls* (2016), and *A Room of Their Own* (2017). She has co-edited two published collections: *El Salvador, Work of 30 Photographers* (1983) and *Chile from Within* (1990), rereleased as an e-book in 2013, and also co-directed two films: *Living at Risk* (1985) and *Pictures from a Revolution* (1991) with Richard P. Rogers and Alfred Guzzetti. Meiselas is well known for her documentation of human-rights issues in Latin America. Her photographs are included in American and international collections. In 1992 she was made a MacArthur Fellow and most recently was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship (2015). “Mediations,” a survey exhibition of her work from the 1970s to the present, was recently exhibited at the Fundació Antoni Tàpies, Jeu de Paume, and the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art.

**Marjorie Miller** is Vice President and Global Enterprise Editor for The Associated Press in New York.  Previously, she was the AP’s Regional Editor for Latin America from Mexico City; *Los Angeles Times* Foreign Editor; and a *Times* correspondent in London, Jerusalem, Bonn, Mexico City and San Salvador. She covered Central America—including Nicaragua and the Contras – from 1985 to 1988 for the *Los Angeles Times*.

**Julio C. Ortega,** a native of Peru, is an accomplished scholar, poet, playwright, and novelist, with fifteen books as well as several critical editions to his credit. After six years of teaching at the University of Texas at Austin, and two years as professor and chairperson at Brandeis University, Professor Ortega joined Brown's Department of Hispanic Studies in 1989. He has also been a visiting professor at numerous universities both in the United States and abroad, including recent terms as Simon Bolívar Professor of Latin American Studies at the University of Cambridge (1995-96) and Cátedra de Estudios Avanzados at the Universidad Central de Venezuela (Summer 1995).Professor Ortega's commitment to literature goes beyond his own writing and teaching to include his involvement in several international publishing houses – he was Director of the Serie Futura of the Biblioteca Ayacucho (Caracas), Coordinator of the Editorial Council, Archives Collection (Paris), and Co-editor of the series *Archives* (University of Pittsburgh) – and on the advisory committees of a number of academic journals. Currently, he is director of the series *New Humanities* at the Iberoamericana academic series (Madrid), and the editor of *Carlos Fuentes’ Works* (Mexico).His teaching and research interests include twentieth-century Spanish American literature and culture, and literary theory. He is credited as the founder and leading scholar of Transatlantic Studies, which came to life at Brown's Department of Hispanic Studies 20 years ago. He organized with colleagues and students seven large international conferences on transatlantic readings at Brown, six annual Transatlantic workshops at universities in Spain, and a bi-annual series on transatlantic readings of Cuban, Chilean, Peruvian, Mexican, and Argentinean literatures in cooperation with local universities.Professor Ortega's recent publications include (i) literary criticism: *Transatlantic Translations* (London, 2014),*Retrato de Carlos Fuentes* (1995), *Arte de innovar* (1994), *El discurso de la abundancia* (1992), *Una poética del cambio* (1992), and *Reapropriaciones: Cultura y literatura en Puerto Rico* (1991), as well as fiction, edited volumes, and anthologies.  His work has been translated into English, French, German, Portuguese, Russian, Quechua, Arabic, and Persian. He has been distinguished with honorary doctoral degrees by universities in Peru and Nicaragua, and has been decorated for his work by the governments of Peru and Mexico; (ii) fiction: *La mesa del padre* (1995), *Ayacucho, Good Bye* (1994), *Canto de hablar materno* (1992); and (iii) edited volumes: *The Picador Book of Latin American Short Stories*, edited with Carlos Fuentes (1998), *La Cervantiada* (1995), *Venezuela: fin de siglo* (1994), and *Rayuela de Julio Cortázar* (1993).

**Anthony Quainton** is currently Distinguished Diplomat in Residence at American University in Washington, D.C., in the School of International Service. He has held this appointment since September 2003. Prior to joining the faculty, Ambassador Quainton spent 38 years as a member of the United States Foreign Service. He held posts as Ambassador to Peru, Kuwait, Nicaragua, and the Central African Republic. He had earlier posts in Australia, Pakistan, India, Nepal and France. He also served as Director General of the Foreign Service, Assistant Secretary of State for Diplomatic Security, and Coordinator of the Office for Combating Terrorism. He retired from the Foreign Service in 1997 and subsequently was President and CEO of the National Policy Association from 1998 to 2003. Ambassador Quainton received his BA from Princeton University and a B.Litt degree from Oxford University as a Marshall Scholar.

**Sergio Ramírez Mercado** graduated as a lawyer from the University of Nicaragua in 1964. He served as Secretary General of the Confederation of Central American Universities from 1968 to 1973, and again from 1976 to 1979. Between 1973 and 1975 he was resident artist in West Berlin through the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD)*.* In 1977, he headed the Group of Twelve, formed by intellectuals, businessmen, and priests united against the Somoza regime. In 1984 he became Vice President of Nicaragua. In 1995 he participated in the founding of the Movimiento Renovador Sandinista (MRS) and was the presidential candidate of that party for the 1996 elections. Among his books, translated into more than 16 languages, are:

* *De tropeles y tropelías* (short-stories, 1971), Revista Imagen Award, Caracas;
* *Castigo Divino*, (novel, 1988), Dashiel Hammet Award in Spain;
* *Un baile de máscaras* (1995), Laure Bataillon Award in France ;
* *Margarita, está linda la mar* (novel, 1998), Alfaguara International Novel Award in Spain;
* *Adiós muchachos* (1999), his personal memoir of the Sandinista revolution;
* *La fugitiva* (2011), Bleu Metropole Prize in Montreal; and
* *Ya nadie llora por mí* (2017).

In 2011 he received the Literary Award “José Donoso” in Santiago de Chile; in 2014, the Carlos Fuentes International Prize in Mexico; and in 2017 the Miguel de Cervantes Prize in Spain – all of them for the whole of his literary work. He is a recipient of the International Prize for Human Rights awarded by the Bruno Kreisky Foundation in Vienna; the Order of Arts and Letters, France; the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany; the Order Isabel la Católica, Spain; *Doctor honoris causa* of the Blaise Pascal University, Clermont-Ferrand, France (2000); and the Guggenheim Fellowship for creative writing, 2008. He has been a visiting professor at the University of Maryland, College Park, and the University of California, Los Angeles, with the Regents Program. He has also held the Robert Kennedy Professorship in Latin American Studies at Harvard University. He is a member of the Friends of the Inter-American Democratic Charter, a group of scholars and former public officials presided by former U.S. President Jimmy Carter. He is a member of the board of the Gabriel García Márquez Foundation for Journalism, based in Cartagena, Colombia.

**Richard Snyder** is a professor in Brown University's Department of Political Science and has been a faculty fellow at the Watson Institute. He received his MA and PhD in Political Science from the University of California, Berkeley, and his BA in Social Studies from Harvard University. He is the author of [Politics after Neoliberalism: Reregulation in Mexico](http://www.cambridge.org/us/catalogue/catalogue.asp?isbn=0521688701) (Cambridge University Press, 2001) and [*Passion, Craft and Method in Comparative Politics*](http://jhupbooks.press.jhu.edu/ecom/MasterServlet/GetItemDetailsHandler?iN=9780801884641&qty=1&viewMode=3&loggedIN=false&JavaScript=y) (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007, with Gerardo L. Munck). He is also the editor of three volumes on the political economy of rural Mexico (Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies, University of California, San Diego, 1998-2000) and co-editor of a special issue of the journal *Studies in* Comparative International Development on “Dependency and Development in a Globalized World” (2009). His articles on comparative politics and the political economy of development have appeared in journals such as British Journal of Political Science, Comparative Political Studies, Comparative Politics, Journal of Conflict Resolution, Journal of Democracy, and World Politics.

**Kai Thaler** is an Assistant Professor of Global Studies at the University of California at Santa Barbara and currently a research fellow of the Sie Center for International Security and Diplomacy at the University of Denver's Korbel School of International Studies. He is the author of several articles and book chapters, including "Nicaragua: A Return to Caudillismo" in the *Journal of Democracy*, and is currently working on a book manuscript on state building after rebel victory, with revolutionary Nicaragua as a key case. He holds a PhD in Government from Harvard University.

**Víctor Hugo Tinoco** was born in León, Nicaragua. He developed his initial ties to the Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional through his studies toward the priesthood at the Seminario Nacional. In 1973 he became a member of the Frente Sandinista while studying at the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de Nicaragua (UNAN) Managua, after which he returned to León for ongoing work with the Frente Estudiantil Revolucionario (FER). There he became the director of the Centro Universitario de la Universidad Nacional of the FER and coordinated at a national level the Asociación de Estudiantes de Secundaria (AES). Initiating the Movimiento Pueblo Unido (MPU) in 1978, he soon moved clandestinely to the north of the country to be integrated into the General Pedro Altamirano (GPA) column. As part of the GPA he participated in various offensive actions including the taking of Achuapa in April 1978 and, in the final insurrection, the capture of Achuapa and El Sauce. After the triumph of the Revolución Popular Sandinista he was named as Nicaraguan Ambassador to the United Nations. In that capacity he was part of the negotiation processes in Contadora (1983-1985), Manzanillo (1983), Esquípulas (1987­-1988), and with the contras (1989). He has a bachelor’s degree in Sociology and a graduate degree in Business Managment from the Universidad Centroamericana. After 1990 he became a member and political secretary of the Dirección Nacional of the FSLN. He was an FSLN member of the Nicaraguan Congress while maintaining positions critical of Sandinista policies and procedures. In 2005 he was expelled from the FSLN, together with Herty Lewites, for having presented a democratic challenge within the party. From 2006 to 2011 he was a member of Congress for the Movimiento Renovador Sandinista (MRS) and then again from 2012 to 2016. From 2012 to 2016 he was Vice President of the MRS, of which he is now a member of its governing directorate.

**Jaime Wheelock Román** is a Nicaraguan academic, researcher, and politician. As a member of the National Directorate of the FSLN, he was one of the nine commanders who led the revolution that overthrew the Somoza regime. In the government of National Reconstruction, he was Minister of Agrarian Reform and Agriculture. He graduated in Law and the Social Sciences from the Universities of Nicaragua and Chile. He holds graduate degrees in Sociology from the Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales in Chile, and in Public Administration from Harvard University. He has published several books, translated into different languages, which have had an important influence for the Nicaraguan revolution. He is currently Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Institute for Development and Democracy (IPADE) in Nicaragua.

**Armstrong A. Wiggins** serves as Director of the Washington, D.C., office of the Indian Law Resource Center. Born in Nicaragua, Wiggins is a Mískito Indian from the village of Karatá, La Moskitia. At the age of eighteen, he became President of his Karatá community, and in 1972 he became a founding member of AIPROMISU, the first Indian regional organization in La Moskitia that works to defend Miskito rights to self-determination, land, territories, environment, natural resources, sustainable development, and their cultural survival. In 1977 Wiggins and other indigenous leaders from the Americas and from around the world traveled to the United Nations headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland, to demand that the international community hold countries accountable for taking away their lands, natural resources, and children, and violating their rights of self-government and self-determination. The result of this international effort was the eventual birth of the United Nations Declaration. After the Sandinista Revolution of 1979, Wiggins became the national representative for MISURASATA, a regional Indian organization in Nicaragua. Owing to his human-rights work in La Moskitia and the ways in which his education and influence as an indigenous leader made him a threat to national political interests, Wiggins was arrested and taken as a political prisoner during both the Somoza and Sandinista regimes. Soon after, in 1981, the Nicaraguan political situation forced him into exile. Now in the United States, Wiggins began working for the Indian Law Resource Center and served as Director of its Mexico, Central, and South America Program in its Washington, D.C., office. For the past two decades, Wiggins has been actively involved with numerous human-rights cases involving indigenous peoples of the Americas at the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights. Wiggins played a leading role in the Center’s standards-setting work with the United Nations and the Organization of American States, particularly during the adoption of the U.N. Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples on September 13, 2007, and the adoption of the American Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples by the OAS on June 15, 2016. Since 2004, Mr. Wiggins has supervised the Center’s international efforts towards standards-setting in international bodies such as the UN, the OAS, and multilateral development banks, as well as the management of legal cases for the protection of the human rights of the indigenous peoples of the Americas.