DENVER CITY COUNCIL

Proclamation

Proclamation No. 25-1535
Celebrating a Legacy of Empowerment: 34 Years of Denver Cafecito's Latina Leadership

WHEREAS, Hispanic Heritage Month, observed annually from September 15 to October 15, celebrates the histories, cultures, and contributions of Hispanic and Latino communities, values that Denver Cafecito has embodied for 34 years, building a legacy of empowerment through mentorship, networking, and service; and

WHEREAS, in 1991, at a critical moment in the national conversation on workplace equity and justice, four Latina leaders, Rosemary Rodriguez, Michelle Lucero, Denise Maes, and Ledy Garcia-Eckstein, founded Grupo de Cafe, now known as Cafecito, as a safe and welcoming space for women of color to gather, reflect, and support one another; and

WHEREAS, what began as a few women meeting for coffee has evolved into a vibrant and influential multigenerational network of Latina professionals and allies who, for 34 years, have gathered nearly every Friday to share successes, exchange ideas, navigate challenges, and uplift one another; and

WHEREAS, Denver Cafecito has remained volunteer-run, with no dues and no fundraising, and has focused instead on friendship, mentorship, and support; and

WHEREAS, special recognition is owed to Rosemary Rodriguez for her dedication to producing the group's weekly newsletter, which has become a trusted source for job postings, community events, and celebrations of achievement for more than 1,200 members; and

WHEREAS, beginning in 2020, Marlene De La Rosa stepped forward to assist Rosemary Rodriguez with coordinating meetings, securing new meeting locations, and encouraging virtual gatherings during the pandemic, which many members described as a social lifeline; and

WHEREAS, the influence and work of Denver Cafecito have been recognized in the media, including a 2008 feature in *5280 Magazine* that highlighted the founders as "powerbrokers" and acknowledged the group's mentorship and role in helping members obtain influential roles in the Mayor's Office and on local boards and commissions; and

WHEREAS, the group has also served as a vital venue for civic engagement, as reported in a July 2021 *Reuters* article describing a Denver Cafecito gathering where Latina community leaders organized to testify in Colorado's redistricting process and mobilized participation through its newsletter platform; and

WHEREAS, Denver Cafecito exemplifies the spirit of Hispanic Heritage Month by fostering leadership, connection, and resilience among Latina women and their allies through a welcoming and impactful community that continues to build a legacy of empowerment.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT PROCLAIMED BY THE DENVER CITY COUNCIL:

Section 1. That the Denver City Council honors and recognizes Denver Cafecito for 34 years of Latina leadership and celebrates its legacy of empowerment.

Section 2. That the Clerk and Recorder of the City and County of Denver shall affix the seal of the City and County of Denver to this proclamation and that a copy be transmitted to Cafecito.

PASSED BY THE COUNCIL October 14, 2025

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PRESIDENT