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Entertainment



Justice Sotomayor teases new picture book on civics, heroes

By: Associated Press
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Photo Credit: AP Photo/Adriana Gomez Licon



The justice sat down with Grammy Award winning singer Gloria Estefan in Miami and told a crowd of hundreds about the idea for her next children's book, which will be about civic participation.

Sotomayor said her preferred title would be "How To Be a Hero," and the book will portray acts of civic participation as heroic.

"People think of citizenship as a formal title of belonging to a country," she said. "Citizenship with a small 'c' is what we are in every community that we choose to live in: whether it's your building, your block, the community of the church, the community of your school."

Appointed to the court by President Barack Obama in 2009, Sotomayor said she wants to use her platform as a justice to inspire children through books, this time by helping "kids understand what it takes to change the world."

"Everyone of us has a responsibility to make that community better. And that's what makes heroes—it's those people who see something wrong in their community and say 'I will work to change that,'" she said.

Sotomayor has kept busy writing content for kids, and she notes that her works come out simultaneously in Spanish because she grew up in New York City to Puerto Rican parents speaking the language but not finding enough literature in her mother tongue.

After her 2013 memoir, "My Beloved World," came out, she wrote an abridged version for middle school readers. Then she wrote an autobiographical picture book, "Turning Pages," in 2018 and her most recent picture book, "Just Ask!," published last year, about children with "life challenges" such as attention deficit disorder, autism, blindness and diabetes. Sotomayor was diagnosed with diabetes at age 7.

Sotomayor told the crowd Tuesday not to scold children when they stare at people with deformities.

"Teach them not to have pity but to have curiosity," she said.

Sotomayor sat for only a few minutes with Estefan, and then both women walked along the rows of the Temple Judea synagogue in the Coral Gables suburb. She shook hands with many but only took written questions— and hugs— from children.

The Cuban-born singer read aloud a question from a 5-year-old girl before asking her to approach Sotomayor. "How can I stop being shy?" Estefan read.

Sotomayor looked at the girl and smiled. "You just started," she said.

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