

*Administration of Joseph R. Biden, Jr., 2024*

**Statement on the Death of Chita Rivera**

*January 31, 2024*

Chita Rivera was an alltime great of American musical theater, a pioneer and perfectionist whose magnetic performances in scores of Broadway productions brought joy to millions and captured the grit and grace of America.

The irrepressible third child of public servants—her mother was a Pentagon clerk and her father a clarinetist in the U.S. Navy Band—she moved to New York to dance at age 15. Over the next seven decades, she built a dazzling career, originating the roles of iconic strong women in classics from "West Side Story," to "Bye Bye Birdie," to "Chicago," to "Kiss of the Spider Woman," while blazing a trail for generations of Latina performers.

Chita won three Tony Awards, Kennedy Center Honors, and the Presidential Medal of Freedom, but she never quit putting the work first. She rode highs and lows with fierce resilience, including a devastating car crash that shattered her leg and left her with metal pins in her bones, only to see her climb back to the top and turn in Tony-nominated performances well into her seventies and eighties.

A mesmerizing dancer, singer, and actor, Chita's work was more than entertainment, it reflects part of who we are as Americans and as human beings, and it has helped shape how we see each other and our world. Chita knew what great Americans know: It's not how hard you get knocked down, it's how quickly you get back up. Her dazzling charm will live on in the soul of our Nation.

Our love goes out to Chita's daughter Lisa, to Chita's siblings Julio, Armando, and Lola del Rivero, and to her generations of fans.

NOTE: The statement referred to Lisa Mordente, daughter of Ms. Rivera. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language version of this statement.

*Categories:* Statements by the President : Chita Rivera, death.

*Names:* del Rivero, Armando; del Rivero, Julio; del Rivero, Lola; Mordente, Lisa; Rivera, Chita.

*Subjects:* Deaths, Chita Rivera.

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