



**Heritage Harbor Foundation**

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Dear Recipient:

As we enter the centennial year of the laying of the cornerstone of the soon to be repurposed Guiteras Elementary School in Bristol, the Heritage Harbor Foundation deems it appropriate to honor its long-neglected benefactor who remains relatively unknown, even in Bristol, the town of his birth.

Feel free to distribute these commemorative flyers to those who may have an interest in this physician and his diverse activities.

According to the Rhode Island Heritage Hall of Fame, which has recently inducted Dr. Guiteras, he is the highest achieving Latino in Rhode Island history.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Patrick T. Conley".

Patrick T. Conley, J.D., Ph.D.  
President

PTC/ddf  
Encs.

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## Dr. Ramon Guiteras and Guiteras School

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As we remember the contributions of Guiteras Elementary School to Bristol let us not forget the contributions of its namesake and benefactor before another name is attached to this beautiful but well-worn building that will observe its centennial in 2025.

Dr. Ramon Guiteras, founder of the American Urological Association, surgeon, statesman, and sportsman was the most prominent Rhode Islander of Latin American heritage ever. He was born in Bristol, Rhode Island, on August 17, 1858 to Ramon and Elizabeth Manchester (Wardwell) Guiteras. His paternal grandfather had sailed from Spain to Cuba, acquiring a coffee plantation near Matanzas. His mother was from a prominent mercantile and business family in Bristol associated with the DeWolfs, hence the Cuban connection.

Ramon Guiteras was educated in Bristol, and prepared for college at Mowry and Goff's English and Classical School in Providence. He then entered Harvard University. His close friends included Theodore Roosevelt and Leonard Wood, a physician who served as chief of staff of the United States Army and Military Governor of Cuba. After graduating from Harvard Medical School in 1883, Guiteras studied under eminent surgeons in Paris, Vienna, and Berlin for two years. On his return, he took the Naval medical examination for the post of assistant surgeon, receiving the highest honor of his class. Instead of accepting a Naval commission, he joined a poor-house staff that later became the City Hospital of New York. He began teaching surgery at the New York Post-Graduate Hospital in 1890 and was appointed visiting surgeon to the City and French Hospitals in 1892. He continued at the Post-Graduate Hospital for his entire career, where he became Professor of Operative Surgery in 1894 and Chair of Geniti-Urinary Surgery in 1898.

General surgeons performed most urological procedures until Dr. Guiteras founded the American Urological Association (AUA) in 1900. The society was initially named the New York Genito-Urinary Society, but in 1902 it became the AUA. Dr. Guiteras was elected as its first president. The annual meeting quickly became a major social and scientific event, with the first annual convention held in Sara-



Dr. Ramon Guiteras

toga Springs, New York, on June 13, 1902. The AUA is currently the largest urological organization in the world, with members on six continents. The Ramon Guiteras Award, given annually, is the AUA's highest honor.

Dr. Guiteras published *Urology*, a two-volume text, in 1912. It was translated widely and considered the superior text of its time. It included 943 illustrations and photographs, described medical and surgical approaches to urological disease, and detailed practical guides such as instrument sterilization and efficient clinical and operating spaces. He published over 100 articles on diverse urological topics, including an investigation into ureteral catheterization.

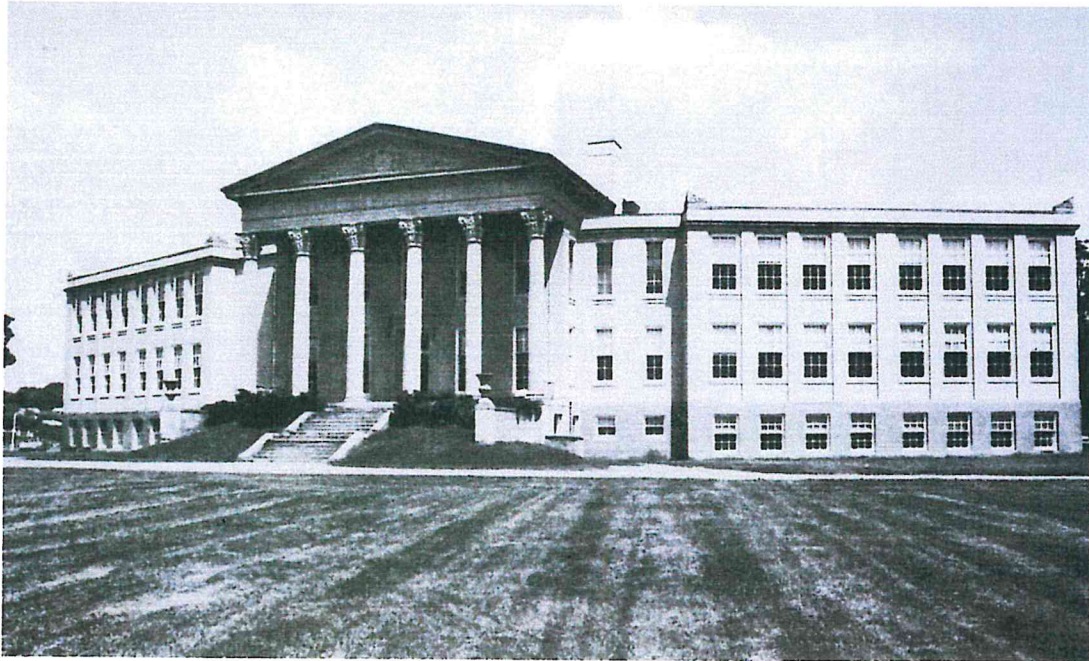
Dr. Guiteras served on multiple advisory boards and was recognized by Woodrow Wilson's administration for his linguistic skill and expertise on Cuba. He was a leader of the Pan-American Medical Congress and, during WWI, was sent on missions to Cuba to ascertain the sentiment of the Cuban people on the war. He was also sent to France as an advisory surgeon. In 1917, he made a trip to Italy as chairman of a commission of physicians to report on work by the American Red Cross.

Guiteras had a lifelong interest in boxing and was a member of the New York Athletic

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Guiteras Memorial School, Bristol (1925)

Club. He served as a referee for boxing matches conducted in Madison Square Garden and as a judge for the amateur boxing championship of the New York Athletic Club in 1887. Dr. Guiteras reportedly knocked down John L. Sullivan, who was the world heavyweight boxing champion from 1882 to 1892. It was during a sparring session at the Yale gymnasium, after which Sullivan is reported to have shaken Ramon's hand and referred to him as a "good boy." Dr. Guiteras served as surgeon of the African Hunting Club, founded by his Harvard classmate Theodore Roosevelt who called Ramon the best hunter and leader in times of danger.

Dr. Guiteras was a member of the most prominent social clubs in New York, including the Union, Players, Harvard, and the New York Yacht Club. He died suddenly at the age of 59 of meningitis at the French Hospital in New York City on December 13, 1917. "In looking back over his career, we are moved by the tender solicitude he exhibited for his profession, the faithful service he rendered the sick and the poor, and the generous teaching of young students in the medical sciences," according to his eulogy delivered by former Rhode Island Governor Augustus O. Bourn of Bristol.

Following a notable Bristol tradition, Dr. Guiteras left a bequest of \$350,000 (\$5.5 million today) to construct a school in Bristol

to honor his mother, Elizabeth. It became known as the Guiteras Memorial School. The large colonnaded brick and limestone building with a 9-bay central pavilion flanked by two 8-bay angled wings was designed by talented local architect Wallis Howe, and its cornerstone was laid on December 20, 1925. The structure overlooks Bristol Harbor and Silver Creek and remains one of the town's most visible and impressive landmarks. To its rear, the school has spacious athletic fields. Its expansive site was owned by the Wardwell family.

Ramon also left funds to construct a public library in Matanzas, Cuba in honor of his father. Unfortunately, that facility was seized by Fidel Castro in 1962 and turned into a Communist social club. Its library was relocated to the Belen Jesuit Preparatory School in Miami and houses over 35,000 books, the most extensive collection of Cuban books outside of Cuba.

Dr. Guiteras was inducted into the Rhode Island Heritage Hall of Fame in 2009 upon nomination by then Hall of Fame president Dr. Patrick T. Conley of Bristol.

**Dr. Patrick T. Conley**  
*President of the Heritage Harbor Foundation*  
*Historian Laureate of Rhode Island*

**This flyer is published courtesy of the  
Heritage Harbor Foundation**