SECNAV Del Toro Names Future John Lewis-class Oiler USNS Dolores Huerta

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WASHINGTON – Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro announced that the future John Lewis-class oiler, T-AO 205-class, will be named USNS Dolores Huerta (T-AO 214). Del Toro made the announcement during a speaking engagement at the Veteran Affairs Center for Minority Veterans Hispanic Heritage Month Commemorative Event in Washington, Sept. 18.

The future USNS Dolores Huerta honors American labor leader and civil rights activist Dolores Huerta, a central figure in the farmworkers' labor movement from the 1950s through 1990s.

The naming selection of the future USNS Dolores Huerta (T-AO 214) follows the tradition of naming John Lewis-class oilers after civil rights leaders and will be the first to bear her name. Secretary Del Toro previously named USNS Thurgood Marshall (T-AO 211), USNS Ruth Bader Ginsberg (T-AO 212), and USNS Harriet Tubman (T-AO 213).

"Dolores Huerta has been a leading figure in the Hispanic community and a champion of civil and workers' rights for over 70 years," said Secretary Del Toro. "Dolores Huerta dedicated her life to caring for those voiceless and underrepresented—she dedicated her life to taking care of people. I am honored to announce the next John Lewis-Class fleet replenishment oiler, T-AO 214, will be named USNS Dolores Huerta."

After a brief stint as a public school teacher, Huerta in 1955 co-founded the Stockton chapter of the Community Service

Organization to promote voter registration and economic opportunity initiatives for the local Hispanic community.

In 1962, she along with Cesar Chavez, co-founded the National Farm Workers Association, a forerunner of the United Farm Workers. In the 1960s and 1970s, Huerta helped lead local labor strikes and national boycotts of lettuce, grapes, and Gallo wine that improved the working and living standards for farmworkers. During this period, she also coined the phrase that remains the motto of the farmworkers' labor movement, "Sí, se puede"—"yes, we can."

From 1988 – 1993, Huerta served on the Commission on Agricultural Workers, established by Congress to review the effects of farmworker and immigration legislation. In 2002, she founded the Dolores Huerta Foundation, a non-profit organization dedicated to empowering other volunteer organizations that pursue social justice.

Over the course of her career, Huerta has received numerous accolades including the Eleanor Roosevelt Human Rights Award in 1998. When President Barack H. Obama awarded Huerta the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2012, he praised her lifelong devotion to "advocating for marginalized communities."

The future USNS Dolores Huerta is the tenth ship of the John Lewis Class. The class and lead ship are named in honor of the late civil rights icon Rep. John Lewis from Georgia.

The ships are designed to supply fuel to the Navy's operating carrier strike groups.

The oilers have the ability to carry a load of 162,000 barrels of oil and maintain significant dry cargo capacity.