

In his fifteen years of eligibility, he did not receive enough votes for induction into the National Baseball Hall of Fame.

Following his retirement, Concepción managed the Aragua Tigers. He and his wife Delia have three children, David Alejandro, David Eduardo, and Daneska. Concepción's career helped inspire fellow Venezuelans, including the All-Star shortstops Omar Vizquel and Ozzie Guillén, both of whom wore number thirteen in his honor.

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KEVIN HOGG

**Concepción de Gracia, Gilberto** (1909–1968), a central figure in the twentieth-century Puerto Rican independence movement, was born into a modest family of mixed racial descent on 9 July 1909 in Vega Alta, Puerto Rico. He was the fourth of nine children of Carmen de Gracia and Ceferino Concepción. After graduating from Central High School in Santurce in 1926, Concepción de Gracia attended the University of Puerto Rico, Río Piedras campus, earning degrees in law and business administration in 1932. During his early years in legal practice, he distinguished himself as the counsel for Pedro Albizu Campos (1891–1965) and other leaders of the Puerto Rican Nationalist Party, who had been charged with conspiring to overthrow the government of the United States. Albizu Campos was imprisoned in Puerto Rico and later in Atlanta, Georgia. Concepción de Gracia moved to New York City in order to work on the appeal of the case. He married Ada Suárez in 1935, and established himself in Manhattan one year later. Their first child, Alma, was born there.

Throughout his life, Concepción de Gracia saw himself as part of a Latin American intellectual and political tradition that went back to nineteenth-century Cuban and Puerto Rican struggles against Spanish colonial rule, led by such key figures as Ramón Emeterio Betances (1827–1898), José Martí (1853–1895), and Eugenio María de Hostos (1839–1903). With a deep sense of history, he invoked

their ideas on freedom in order to preserve a crucial public memory and a vision for Puerto Rico, free from US domination. As a student, he was equally inspired by the twentieth-century poet and politician José de Diego (1866–1918) and by Albizu Campos. Their rousing words were echoed in his own deeply patriotic and liberating speeches. He was also an admirer of Gandhi's nonviolent resistance doctrine, and, later in life, that of Martin Luther King.

Concepción de Gracia's New York years (1936–1939) were the beginning of a life dedicated to the liberation of Puerto Rico. He worked closely with American Labor Party Congressman Vito Marcantonio (1902–1954), with whom he enjoyed a personal friendship. Marcantonio played a critical role in the defense of Albizu Campos and consistently supported Puerto Rican independence in the US Congress. Concepción de Gracia also joined forces with Puerto Rican and Latin American militants with whom he shared patriotic values. He immersed himself in the Puerto Rican communities of East Harlem and Washington Heights, participating in demonstrations against racial, class, and cultural discrimination. He became a powerful political orator and also wrote for Spanish newspapers. He spoke out in defense of the Spanish Republic during the Spanish Civil War (1936–1939) in events sponsored by an antifascist coalition. Along with others, he denounced the horrific violence in the 1937 Ponce Massacre in Puerto Rico, under Governor Blanton Winship, when a crowd of marching Nationalists was gunned down by the police.

Concepción de Gracia relocated to Washington, D.C., with his family in late 1939, but he frequently returned to New York for political events. During World War II, he studied at George Washington University Law School and earned a doctor of juridical science degree in 1941 and a master of laws degree in 1944. His son, Gilberto Manuel, was born in Washington. In those years, Concepción de Gracia participated in academic and anticolonial conferences held in Washington. In 1943 he read a paper at a conference "The Economic Future of the Caribbean," organized by E. Franklin Frazier (1894–1962) and Eric Williams (1911–1981), with the proceedings published by Howard University Press (1944).

On that occasion, Concepción de Gracia stated that Puerto Rico was "a battleground in which the future of democracy for colonial peoples is being tested." He went on to argue for Puerto Rican independence "in the interest of continental solidarity, to promote the best interests of democracy in the

Western Hemisphere and throughout the world, to help in the stabilization of conditions in the Caribbean” (Concepción de Gracia, 1944). In 1944, he published an insightful and well-documented essay in the *George Washington University Law Review* focusing on absentee ownership of land by sugar corporations in Puerto Rico, a fundamental question in the discussion of colonialism and the future of the Caribbean. The multiplicity of experiences in New York and Washington—participating in new bilingual political spaces opened by the Puerto Rican community, building alliances with progressive groups, and gaining insights into the structure and operation of imperial institutions—deeply influenced his perspective. They served him well later as a senator in the Puerto Rican legislature (1952–1960) and as a spokesperson for Puerto Rican independence in the United Nations and in conferences sponsored by other international organizations.

His return to Puerto Rico in 1944 was an important turning point. Concepción de Gracia was elected president of the Congreso Pro Independencia (Pro-Independence Congress), a broad-based movement that included members of Luis Muñoz Marín’s Partido Popular Democrático (Popular Democratic Party, or PPD). However, after World War II, Muñoz Marín reversed his position, arguing against independence. In response, Concepción de Gracia and others founded the Partido Independentista Puertorriqueño (Puerto Rican Independentista Party, or PIP) in 1946, which vigorously engaged with the electoral system in the island to further the anti-colonial cause. But the Estado Libre Asociado de Puerto Rico (called a “Commonwealth” in English), created in 1952, was voted for by a majority in Puerto Rico and hailed by Muñoz Marín as a unique “experiment” in decolonization. The Commonwealth designation enjoyed widespread support from Congress and policymakers in the United States.

After divorcing in 1948, Concepción de Gracia married Abigaíl Díaz in 1949. They spent most of their lives on the island. In those years, under his leadership, the PIP became the principal opposition party in Puerto Rico. He openly denounced the massive military and naval buildup of Puerto Rico and the island of Vieques during the 1940s and 1950s. As president of the PIP, a position he held for twenty years, he opposed Puerto Rican involvement in the Korean War, in which thousands of Puerto Ricans were deployed and many lost their lives or were wounded. Concepción de Gracia also defended Puerto Rican veterans who had been unfairly court-martialed by the US Army in Korea.

The PIP repeatedly denounced the persecution of Nationalists, *independentistas*, and Communists under McCarthyism and Puerto Rico’s own repressive 1948 Gag Law.

This was true particularly after the 1950 Puerto Rican Nationalist armed insurrection, the attack on Blair House in Washington, D.C., and again in the aftermath of the attack on the US Congress in 1954 by Nationalists, which galvanized international attention. We now know that the FBI had targeted Puerto Rican militants on the island and the mainland since the 1930s. With the complicity of the local police, political leaders and left-leaning writers were harassed and publications were tracked to their source and often translated into English. Among those who had been severely attacked under McCarthyism was Concepción de Gracia’s friend and political ally Congressman Marcantonio, whom he steadily supported.

In spite of the underlying atmosphere of fear and the intense surveillance during the Cold War, Concepción de Gracia worked tirelessly toward the goal of creating an independent state. Widely recognized, he charted with clarity what a real decolonization process meant at a time when African, Asian, and Caribbean colonial territories won their independence. As the scholar Aarón G. Ramos (2011) has observed, Concepción de Gracia’s interventions at the 1949 Conference of American States held in Havana, Cuba, and again in 1953 at the United Nations, had a significant impact. In a 1953 report to the United Nations, the US government stated that Puerto Rico was no longer a dependent territory but rather a self-governing Commonwealth. Concepción de Gracia radically challenged this position, characterizing the Commonwealth as a repackaging of the old colony under a different name without altering the basic military and economic relations. He remained loyal to his ideas of freedom, in spite of some crushing electoral defeats and conflicting views within the *independentista* movement, and in the face of the growing tide of the pro-statehood movement.

Concepción de Gracia’s lasting legacy can be found in his compelling speeches and writings and in his commitment to preserving and transmitting the validity of the Puerto Rican nation and culture. Throughout his political career, he offered a real education to a wider public, enabling better comprehension of the significance of sovereignty. Like Albizu Campos, he inspired new generations to re-imagine a different society. But in Concepción de Gracia’s ethics and politics, nonviolence was a core

belief. For him, public debate, legal challenges, and electoral participation were crucial instruments to achieve independence. An exemplary presence in Puerto Rican life, his political language resonated deeply with an increasingly broader audience. When Concepción de Gracia died in San Juan on 15 March 1968, at the age of 58, many, including citizens who did not vote for the Independentista Party, and even some of his political adversaries, praised his learning and humanity and expressed great respect for an entire life devoted to the struggle for justice and dignity.

[See also Albizu Campos, Pedro and Betances, Ramón Emeterio.]

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ARCADIO DÍAZ-QUIÑONES

**Condé, Maryse** (1937– ), writer, critic, administrator, and scholar, was born Maryse Boucolon on 11 February 1937, the youngest of eight children born to a middle-class couple in Pointe-à-Pitre, Guadeloupe. Her father, Auguste Boucolon, worked as a civil servant. Her mother, Jeanne Quidal Boucolon, was an elementary school teacher. As a youth, Condé was bright, inquisitive, and a bit unruly. Despite household prohibitions, she explored her father's personal library, where she developed an appetite for reading.

According to Condé, she became a writer at about the age of 7. Her debut came with a sketch she wrote depicting her mother's strong role within the family. When her mother read her daughter's portrayal, she cried. At that moment, the novice author discovered that even a child could use language to convey compelling truths to an audience. Years later, in her 2010 article "How to Become a So-Called Caribbean Woman Writer: A User's Manual," Condé recounted how formative she found this sense of agency:

The feeling of power that I felt that afternoon from making my mother cry—Me, a child, no taller than a tuft of guinea grass, no bigger than a mosquito—is what I have to admit I have been searching for, book after book. To take the wind out of people's sails! To lay bare their skeletons! To denounce all the hypocrites, the zealots, the self-righteous! To smash apart clichés and lies! (p. 674)

In this way, writing claimed the young woman's time, energy, and imagination. Condé's work finds its focus in truth-telling, often in irreverent and contentious fashion. In these bold efforts, she commonly cites Aimé Césaire, the architect of the Negritude movement in Francophone literature, as her most profound literary influence.

Condé ventured to Paris at age 16, where she attended Lycée Fénelon and the Sorbonne, pursuing studies in language and literature. She received her doctorate in comparative literature from the University of Paris in 1975, authoring a dissertation analyzing racial stereotypes in West Indian literature. She has since held academic positions with a variety of distinguished institutions of higher education, including Harvard, Princeton, the Sorbonne, and Columbia University, where she founded and chaired a unit devoted to Francophone literature. After retiring as chair of Columbia's Center for French and Francophone Studies in 2003, she became professor emerita at Columbia University's Department