

MORENO, RITA (ROSA DOLORES ALVERIO) (1931–)

“By playing Googie, I’m thumbing my nose at all those Hollywood writers responsible for lines like ‘Yankee peeg, you rape my seester, I keel you?’”

Born Rosa Dolores Alverio in Humacao, Puerto Rico, Rita Moreno was five years of age when she came to New York City. In 1950 she debuted in *So Young, So Bad*, a movie that launched her career in a series of forgettable films where she played the stereotypical “Latin spitfire.” A secondary role in *The King and I* led to her Oscar winning role in the acclaimed *West Side Story*. Refusing to be stereotyped any longer, Moreno opted to work in the theater and on television. Her incredible talent flourished and Moreno went on to become the only actress to ever win a Tony, (*The Ritz*), a Grammy, (*The Electric Company*) two Emmys, (*The Muppets* and *The Rockford Files*), and the Oscar (*West Side Story*). Moreno is proud of her Latina heritage and continues to appear in films and on television, most recently in the well-received *Ugly Betty*. She was a regular in the critically acclaimed television drama *Oz* (1997-2002). Among her many honors, in 2004 she received the Presidential Medal of Freedom from President George W. Bush.