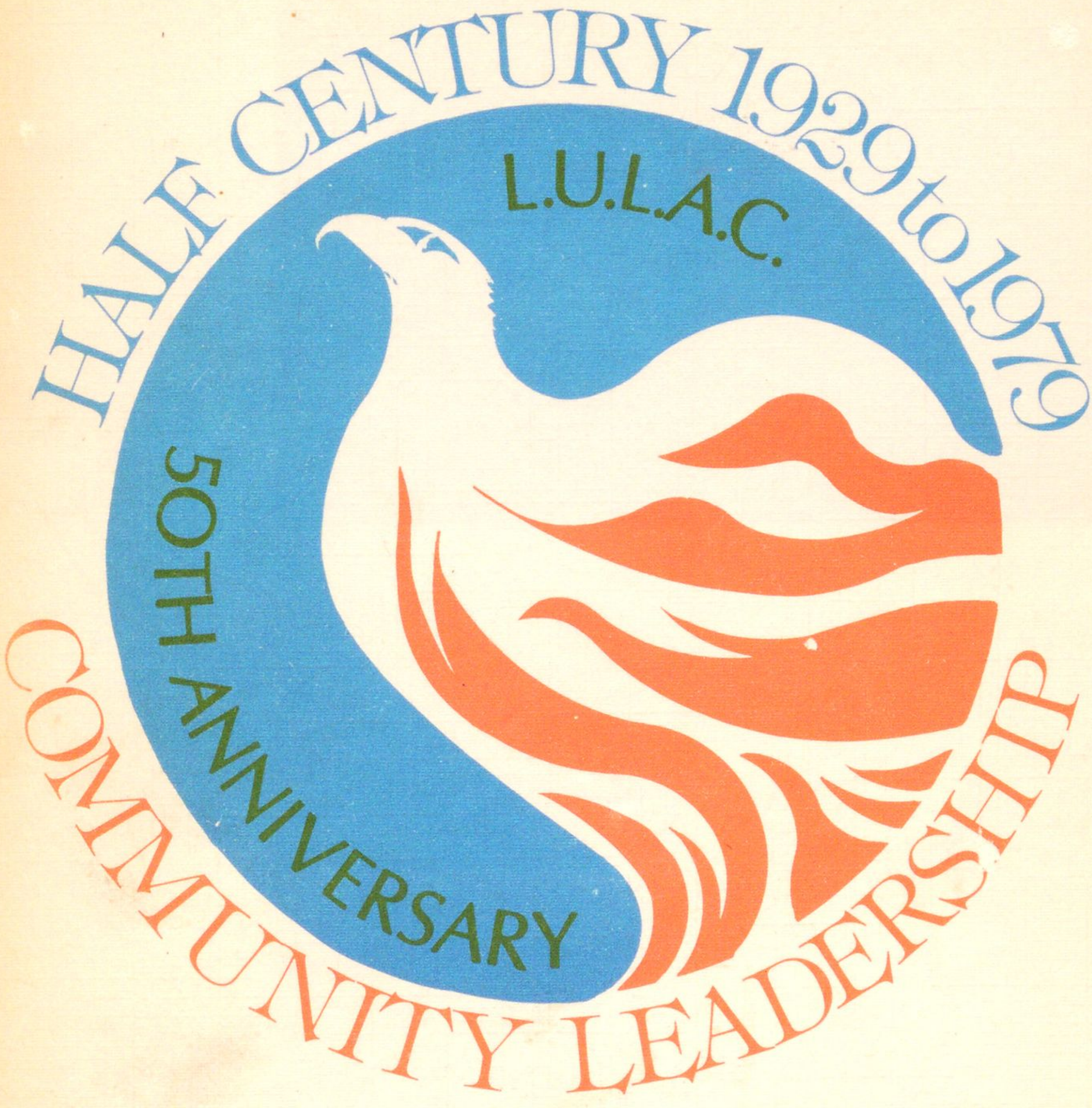
OUR LEGACY:



THE FIRST FIFTY YEARS

BY MOISES SANDOVAL

"TEN CUIDADO DE LAS COSAS DE LA TIERRA,

HAZ ALGO, CORTA LEÑA, LABRA LA TIERRA,

PLANTA NOPALES, PLANTA MAGUEYES,

TENDRAS QUE BEBER, QUE COMER,

QUE VESTIR

CON ESO ESTARAS EN PIE,

SERAS VERDADERO,

CON ESO ANDARAS.

CON ESO SE HABLARA DE TI,

SE TE ALABARA,

CON ESO TE DARAS A CONOCER."

HUEHUETLATOLLI, AZTEC KING

DEDICATION

"To the LULAC Family, a source of pride hope and inspiration."

Eduardo Peña, Jr., National LULAC President

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We wish to thank the following persons for their valuable assistance in completing this project: Author–Moises Sandoval; Editorial Assistance-Douglas Martinez; Interviewing–Sr. Alicia Salcedo, Marta Tijerina, Rev. Gilbert Romero; Production Management/Graphics–Esteban Solis, SOL ASSOCIATES' INC.; Printing–Apollo Printing, Houston, Texas; Photos Courtesy Corpus Christi Library.

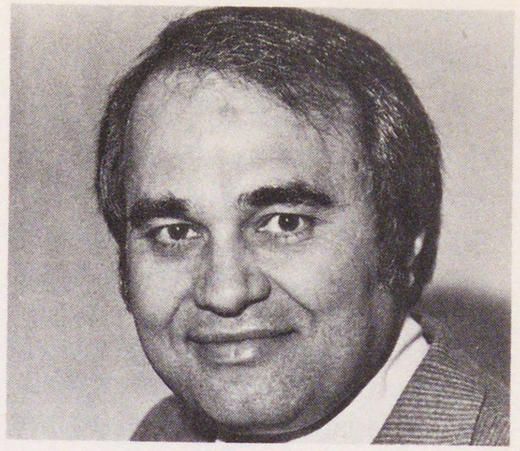
Copyright © 1979 League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC)
Eduardo Peña, Jr. , President
400 First Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20001
All rights reserved.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE
INTRODUCTION
CHAPTER I -- BAD TIMES
CHAPTER II -- BEGINNINGS
CHAPTER III -- THE FOUNDING OF LULAC
CHAPTER IV -- THE ANGLO REACTION
CHAPTER V -- THE GROWTH OF LULAC
CHAPTER VI -- LEADERSHIP
CHAPTER VII -- THE LULAC VISION
CHAPTER VIII -- THE ISSUES - EDUCATION
CHAPTER IX -- THE LITTLE SCHOOLS OF THE 400
CHAPTER X -- EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS
CHAPTER XI -- THE STRUGGLE FOR JOBS
CHAPTER XII -- CIVIL RIGHTS
CHAPTER XIII -- WOMEN
CHAPTER XIV -- THE HISPANIC AGENDA - LULAC IN THE 1980's AND BEYOND

BIOGRAPHIES OF LULAC PRESIDENTS

PREFACE



Our 50th Anniversary is a golden moment for Hispanics standing in the spotlight of national attention, gaining greater recognition each day as we move to become the largest minority in the United States.

As leaders in the Hispanic community, we do not take lightly our responsibility to continue our good work, for it flows from a legacy that each LULAC generation in turn has upheld for the benefit of the overall community.

Our achievements in education, employment, housing, civil rights, and economic development have provided millions of Hispanic Americans with a richer life in any number of areas which our organization has touched.

A student in Pomona, California receiving a LULAC scholarship, a bilingual teacher, a low income family living in one of our housing projects in San Antonio, unemployed youths receiving job training from any of the LULAC--sponsored SER centers throughout the country are all living, vital examples of the work we have done.

They have all been helped through the struggles of generations of LULAC members.

On a wall of the National Museum of Anthropology in Mexico City, there is a poem that says something about all of us and our need to be involved in each other's lives.

In its simplicity there is eloquence, in its lyrical language a special spirituality which we share as LULAC members. It is reprinted on the inside front cover.

This is a book about LULAC and the Hispanic community, about our history and growth, and our hopes for the future. This publication is the first step in my efforts to develop a National LULAC Archives to gather and preserve the treasure of our history for future generations so that they may indeed know OUR LEGACY: THE FIRST FIFTY YEARS.

Eduardo Peña, Jr.
LULAC National President

INTRODUCTION

The founding of the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) marks an important moment in the history of Hispanic people in the United States. It signals the end of an era and the beginning of another. It evokes images of crossing over from old ways to new ones, of a people coming of age or perhaps even a resurrection.

To the Anglo, LULAC's simple proclamation had the symbolic force of planting the flag on ground where that right was not conceded. To the Hispanic it was a trumpet call to march. LULAC's call to the Hispanic people, like that of Abraham, was to "go forth from the land of your kinfolk and from your father's house." And though the Mexican American was not asked to seek a new land, LULAC urged him that in order to succeed he had to take up a new way of life--the citizenship, language and perhaps even the culture and ethics of the Anglo who had come to dominate Hispanic land and to create a new nation in which the Mexican Americans were now treated as strangers. It was a soul-wrenching demand to make upon a people who had come to the New World to implant their culture and had never turned their backs on it, even in the most remote colonies. Unlike other immigrant groups who had psychologically surrendered their culture when they checked into Ellis Island for processing into the United States, the Hispanics had stubbornly clung to their language and traditions.

Yet, LULAC felt that the times demanded that the Hispanic in the United States make a total commitment to his new homeland, however unwillingly he may have been incorporated by conquest or by the exigencies of economic need or political exile.

To understand the significance of the new perspective which a small group of Mexican American leaders articulated on a cold, rainy day in Corpus Christi in 1929 as they brought forth a new organization, one has to go to the beginning of the relationship between the United States and its Mexican inhabitants. When the U. S. annexed one-third of Mexico's territory (one-half, including Texas), there were some 77,000 Mexican citizens in the conquered lands--60,000 in New Mexico, 10,000 in California and 5,000 in Texas, plus perhaps 2,000 in Arizona.

These "conquered" people–as they were called for many generations--were given the option of accepting full U. S. citizenship or "returning" to Mexico–as if they had just arrived when in reality Hispanic civilization had been in New Mexico for 250 years when the Anglo took over and in almost every other area for more than a century. Under such circumstances, the inhabitants naturally chose to stay in the lands they

had settled. But though the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo said they were citizens, their conquerors never accepted that reality and perhaps to this day it can be truthfully said that the majority Anglo society has not accepted the Mexican American as an equal.

The ink was hardly dry on the treaty when the Anglo began to deny the Mexican Americans their rights as citizens. Their lands were taken away. They were stripped of political power. They were isolated from the larger community. Their culture was disparaged. And, finally, their role in history was erased and they were unrelentingly attacked physically. The persecution was so fierce that there came a time in California, wrote Carey McWilliams, when it was thought that Hispanic culture had been thoroughly exorcised.

Passing decades did not diminish the prejudice. Instead, the feeling that Mexicans were an alien presence intensified when irrigated farming, railroad building and mining began to pull large numbers of workers across the border at the same time that the bloodiest civil war in the hemisphere began to expel refugees from Mexico. O. Douglas Weeks wrote in 1929 that Americans who favored restriction of incoming Mexicans "are inclined to put all Texas-Mexicans into one category and to characterize them generally as ignorant, slothful, unclean, dangerous and incapable of assimilation or of good citizenship."

Therefore, by claiming citizenship for themselves and by extension for all Mexican American people, the founders of LULAC were challenging the prevailing view and serving notice that they would be laying claim to all the rights and privileges accruing to U. S. citizens. Furthermore, they were immediately exercising one of those sacred rights–the right to organize--and utilizing it for the benefit of their people.

The portent of that action was not lost on the majority. It signalled that Hispanic life in the United States had advanced to a higher plane from the elemental struggle for survival which had exhausted the energies of the Mexican American for so many decades. Implicit in this advance was a modicum of economic success which permitted the members of LULAC to turn their attention from the single-minded pursuit of personal need to the needs of their people as a society. Organization also indicated to the Anglo majority that the Mexican American would no longer be easy to manipulate.

At the same time, LULAC was confronting the identity crisis of Mexican Americans. Denied the security of belonging which comes from acceptance, he could not consider himself an American citizen. The people of New Mexico called themselves Hispanos and those in

other sections of the Southwest saw themselves as Mexicans. Yet, the motherland was not the reality in which they lived.

As a people apart, the Hispanic people in the U. S. had institutions modelled upon the motherlands indigenous to their isolated culture. Grebler, Moore and Guzman wrote that voluntary mutual benefit organizations dated back to 1894 when La Alianza Hispano Americana was founded. La Sociedad Progresista Mexicana Y Recreativa, La Camara de Comercio Mexicana and La Sociedad Mutualista Mexicana were organized around 1918 and La Sociedad Union Cultural Mexicana came into being in 1924. There were also hundreds of Catholic organizations which were founded in the early part of the 20th Century. As the Spanish names of these groups imply, these organizations linked the Mexican American to his homeland. LULAC proposed to change all that.

The League of United Latin American Citizens--as its name suggests by being in English rather than Spanish--was modelled not on Mexican civic organizations but on United States groups. LULAC is in many ways similar to the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, which was founded in 1910. It has also been likened to the Lions, Elks and Kiwanis clubs.

There was nothing in the aims and purpose of LULAC to tie it to Indo-Hispanic or Iberian roots. English was its official language. "Washington's prayer" was its oration. The LULAC emblem was a shield displaying a field of blue with 13 white stars at the top and seven red and white vertical bars on the bottom half "representing the original 13 states in our country." Membership was limited to native born or naturalized citizens.

Thus to the Hispanic U. S. citizen, LULAC served notice that it was time to stop gazing nostalgically to the motherland in Mexico or Spain and clinging to the mentality of isolation in colonias or the villages of northern New Mexico. LULAC announced it was time to establish roots in the United States and to venture forth to mix with the dominant society in all aspects of life.

CHAPTER I -- BAD TIMES

Hispanics were just emerging from their darkest epoch in the United States when LULAC was founded. Carey McWilliams wrote that more Mexicans were lynched in the Southwest between 1865 and 1920 than blacks in other parts of the South. He said that vast research would be required to arrive at an estimate of Mexican lynchings between 1849 and 1890. "In the mining camps, every crime or reported crime was promptly blamed on some Mexican and lynching was the accepted penalty for crimes in which Mexicans were involved," McWilliams wrote.

Thus for the Mexican American in the conquered lands, survival itself became an open question. In an article in World's Work in 1916, George Marvin reported that the "killing of Mexicans...through the border in these last four years is almost incredible...Some rangers have degenerated into common mankillers."

No jury along the border would convict a white for shooting a Mexican. Reading Secret Service records gave the impression that there was an open season on Mexicans.

In 1922, The Nation documented cases in Texas in which Mexicans had been brutally assaulted and sometimes murdered. The lawlessness became so widespread that a federal official warned the governor of Texas that some action would have to be taken to protect Mexicans. An editorial in the New York Times on November 18, 1922, said: "The killing of Mexicans without provocation is so common as to pass almost unnoticed."

King Fisher, the notorious Texas gunman, was once asked how many notches he had on his gun. He replied: "Thirty-seven, not counting Mexicans." About such attitudes, McWilliams observed "This casual phrase, with its drawling understatement, epitomizes a large chapter in the Anglo-Hispano relations in the Southwest. People fail to count the non-essential, the things and persons that exist only on sufferance whose life tenure is easily revocable."

The early 1920's are remembered by Houston Attorney John Herrera, a member of LULAC since 1934, as "a period of dark despair for Mexican-Americans." He said: "For those who had been coming to the land of opportunity and for those of us already here it was all ashes in our mouths because all of the good jobs, all of the land, all of the prestige had been taken away from us. It had been briefly ours during

the Texas Revolution. Then we were brothers. But as soon as other Anglos started coming in, especially in South Texas, the people who owned all the land were kicked out.

"In South Texas, we had the same situation that you now have in Rhodesia where there are millions of blacks and just a few hundred thousand whites who want to keep them subjugated," Herrera said. "In South Texas the great majority was Mexican-Americans who had lived there for four, five or six generations. Yet, they weren't voting and certainly the Anglo-American hierachy did not want to see them organized. As a matter of fact, it was because of the practices of the Anglo Americans in South Texas that LULAC came into being in 1929.

"The Texas Rangers would go out with a warrant to pick up a Sandoval, an Herrera or an Hernandez and they thought it would be degrading to bring him to jail. If he resisted arrest they shot him and left him dead in a ditch. They would never bring him in. The only way we could get into court was to pay our taxes or to stand trial, or when they had the Selective Service offices there, to report for the (Armed) Service.

"So what was happening, " continued Herrera, "was that there was excessive humiliation in public places, in industry, labor unions, schools and certainly politics. If we had gone into politics right away we would have been stymied because it would have been like a Negro trying to go into a Mississippi courthouse to get a drink of water. He would have been lynched.

"A Negro was burned alive in Sherman, Texas, in 1932 or 1933. And in 1919 or 1920 three Mexican Americans were lynched not 60 miles from where I am sitting. They were strung up to a telephone post just because one of the brothers was involved in a divorce suit with his wife. She had an Anglo attorney."

John Solis of San Antonio, one of the founders of LULAC, remembers that there were signs all over saying: "No Mexicans allowed," or "No Mexicans Served Here." "You would go and sit down in a restaurant that didn't have the sign and they would come and tell you: 'We don't serve Mexicans here.' Those were the conditions we were fighting. You couldn't go to barbershops. You couldn't go to an Anglo theater."

Judge Alfred J. Hernandez, a LULAC member for more than 35 years, said: "We had black schools and white schools created by law which

were supposed to be separate but equal. But in Texas we also had Mexican schools which were neither white nor black. And they were never equal. The Mexican school was usually a little shack between the black and white schools. They were worse than the black school. And the black schools were supposed to be bad."

Mexican Americans were not allowed to vote. "We were kept away," said Judge Hernandez. "People were just told that they better not come down to vote: 'You're Mexican and you are not supposed to vote.' "

M. C. Gonzales, one of LULAC's founders, recalls that Mexican Americans were denied the right of suffrage in some counties through the creation of a white man's primary. Since Mexican Americans were not considered white, they were turned away from the polls.

In San Antonio, Mexican Americans were not permitted to purchase real estate in certain residential sections, Gonzales said. Also, no American citizen of Mexican descent was allowed to serve as a jury commisioner, grand juror or petit juror.

Pete Tijerina, a prominent San Antonio attorney, said there was a great deal of economic discrimination. Big companies and municipal employers relegated Mexican Americans, if they hired them at all, to the lowest jobs. There were no Mexican Americans in offices or management. In fact, John Solis, one of LULAC's founders, remembers that even the stores in downtown San Antonio refused to hire Mexican American clerks. Laborers in San Antonio received only $1.50 a day and wagon drivers $12 a week. But that was not the worst. Ezequiel Salinas of Laredo, another national president, said that some workers in the Rio Grande Valley were getting only 60 cents for a nine to 10-hour day.

Even in the 1940s, conditions had not changed significantly. Hector Godinez of Santa Ana, also a LULAC national president, said that in 1946 there was only one Mexican American lawyer in Los Angeles. John Herrera said it was not until the 1950's that the first Mexican American policeman was hired in Houston.

In the 1930s, there was no protection for workers who went on strike in the orange groves of California, recalls Godinez. "Many of our people were unceremoniously taken across the border. The farmers could to this in the 1920s without any fear of retribution."



Ben Garza
First President General of the
League of United Latin
American Citizens

CHAPTER II -- BEGINNINGS

Despite the widespread murder, repression, intimidation and prejudice, there were a few sanctuaries which were spared the full savagery of that violent epoch. These could be found along the border where it took the Anglo a long time to gain control. During that interval, the Mexican American was able to build a strong tradtition of self-determination. People became accustomed to running their own institutions, acquired education and experienced success in business enterprise. It was in these places-San Antonio, Brownsville, Corpus Christi, Laredo, El Paso, and similar places that stirrings began to occur early in the 1920s. Almost spontaneously, it seems, leaders began talking about the need to organize. Eventually, several groups formed and later coalesced to form LULAC. John Solis remembers the movement this way:

"LULAC's mother organization was organized in 1921 in San Antonio by seven men. Throughout 1920 we met every weekend at a ranch in Elotes in the northern part of Bexar County. We discussed the pathetic conditions of Americans of Mexican descent. We were highly discriminated. There was a strong race prejudice against our people. We were at the bottom of the totem pole."

"The seven men were Frank Leyton, the oldest member of the group, and his brother, Melchor, Pablo Cruz, Abraham Armendariz, Merci Montez, Leo Longoria, Vicente Rocha and me. Frank Leyton made saddles. His brother was a baker. Pablo Cruz was a printer, the son of the founder of a San Antonio newspaper. Armendariz was a printer. Montez was a professional boxer, at one time lightweight champion of Mexico, and Longoria was his trainer. Rocha was a coffee salesman; he had a coffee wagon and delivered a pound of coffee here, a pound of coffee there. I was working for a wholesale house, but I wasn't making money. I was just living.

"During our discussions we finally decided to form an organization to better the conditions of our people economically, civically and educationally. After working the whole year and being turned down by hundreds of our people who were afraid that if we started this movement they would lose their jobs, we were able to gather 37 people at a barber shop owned by Ramon Carbajal at 1506 South Flores Street. That first night we selected two leaders: James Tafoya, Sr., (a lawyer) who worked for the district attorney, and Feliciano Flores, Sr., a freelance policitician.

"However, Tafolla and Flores said we could not have two leaders and urged us to select one. We chose James Tafolla and Feliciano Flores walked out with seven men leaving our group with only 30. That same night, Tafolla drafted an application for a charter and the next morning, October 13, 1921, he went to the Secretary of State's office and obtained the first charter ever issued to a Mexican American organization. We named our group The Sons of America. Feliciano Flores organized a political group called The Sons of Texas.

"We worked several years organizing councils in surrounding counties but Mr. Tafolla, who worked for a political office-holder, did not want to give up the presidency of the organizaton. Also, the younger element wanted to do things he did not want to do. So Manuel Gonzales of the Sons of America and some of us who had started the group organized the Knights of America, which was composed of younger people.

"We did a lot of things and then in 1924 destiny took me to Corpus Christi where I found conditions worse that those in San Antonio. There they had a Mexican school. You couldn't eat in the Anglo restaurants. You could't bathe in North Beach because you were a Mexican. There were signs that said: 'No Mexicans Allowed.' Fifteen miles out of Corpus Christi there was a Mexican school, a one-room shack with one teacher for all the grades. Naturally, the students could not be taught anything.

"We had the first Mexican American ever called to jury duty in Nueces County. That was the work of the Sons of America council which I organized in Corpus Christi. I had a hard time, but Luis Wilmot, Joe Stillman, the three Mesa boys, Dave Barrera, Al Cano and Desi Luna, were the founders. Ben Garza came in later and he put in a lot of time. During 1924 and 1925, I was in business in Corpus Christi and then returned to San Antonio."

There is no doubt that the idea of organizing Mexican Americans was stirring in many minds. Writing in 1937, Alonso S. Perales, the second president general of LULAC, said the idea for a strong organization to protect the interests, and struggle for the progress and well being of the Raza in Texas, was born in his head in 1917 as a result of his observations in the State of Texas.

In a well documented chapter titled, "The True Origins of the League of United Latin American Citizens," he lays claim to being the "initiator of the idea and the principal founder" of LULAC. Perales account

of early organizing activity is similar to that of Solis, except that he has the Order Sons of America (apparently the full name of the group) surfacing in 1920 instead of 1921. Then came the Order Sons of Texas. He wrote that the Order Knights of America were not organized until 1927.

At any rate, Perales wrote that he and three friends–Professor Luz Saenz, Pablo Gonzales and Filiberto Galvan--checked all three organizations and found that they did not fulfill an ideal they had discussed many times. The main deficiency seemed to be the penchant of the leaders of these groups to become involved in politics. Also, these groups did not manifest the leadership which Perales and his friends desired.

Therefore, discussions began about a new organization which, in Perales' words, would labor sincerely for the intellectual, economic, social and political betterment of the Mexican Americans in particular and for the Raza Mexicana in general.

Through Perales makes no mention of it, M. C. Gonzales, the third president general of LULAC, said in a personal interview in 1978 that still another group also figured as a precursor of LULAC: the Loyal Mexican American Citizens of Brownsville, of which Perales was president and which counted among its members such leaders as J. T. Canales and Clemente Idar, a brilliant orator who was a national organizer for the American Federation of Labor, according to Solis.

Since all these groups followed, more or less, the same principles and purposes, it was perhaps natural that they would eventually attempt to get together. This happened at Harlingen in 1927. The meeting was called by Perales and other Valley leaders who were intent in forming still another organization.

Long before Perales called the meeting, Council No. 4 of the Sons of America in Corpus Christi and the Knights of America had been discussing merger. To these groups, forming still another organization seemed to be a step toward further division and weakness. Therefore, Council No. 4 headed by Ben Garza, called a meeting attended by M. C. Gonzales, Mauro Machado and John Solis of the Knights of America in San Antonio and Perales Saenz and Felipe Herrera from the Valley. However, Perales and his group would not give up their idea of forming another organization.

On August 14, 1927, representatives of all these groups met in Harlingen and out of that meeting came a new organization called the

League of Latin American Citizens. However, one incident at that meeting was perhaps of more long-term historical significance. At one point, J. T. Canales proposed that the new organization be composed only of U. S. Citizens. Since the majority of those assembled consisted of Mexican citizens, there was a demonstration of protest. But apparently the decision was to exclude non-citizens because more than 90 percent of those in attendance walked out in protest–leaving only a few delegates and visitors from Corpus Christi, San Antonio and Brownsville.

The Sons of America, Knights of America and the new League could not agree on merging. However, a tentative step was taken when the following resolution was adopted at the Harlingen assembly.

"Resolved that the chair shall appoint a committee consisting of one delegate from each of the towns here represented, of which the chair shall be the chairman, and that this committee shall have full and plenary powers from this assembly to study the Constitution and By-Laws of the Order Sons of America and make suggestions tending toward their amendment, if they see fit to amend their Consitution, and communicate with a committee from the Order Sons of America with equal powers, to the end that this organization (the League) may be incorporated into the Order Sons of America."

A year later–on August 4, 1928--leaders pushing to unite the various groups issued a proclamation urging all Latin American civic organizations to merge into one. The committee named to bring that result consisted of Ben Garza, A. de Luna and E. H. Martin from Corpus Christi; John Solis and Mauro Machado from San Antonio and A. S. Perales and J. T. Canales from the Valley.

However, a more concrete step toward merger had been taken by two of the groups following the 1927 meeting. Returning to Corpus Christi, delegates of Council No. 4 of the Order Sons of America and the Knights of America of San Antonio agreed to merge even if the Latin American League and Council No 1 of the Order Sons of America (San Antonio) could not agree to incorporate.

After waiting a year, Council No. 4 seized the initiative and sent an ultimatum to Council No.1 to the effect that if a decision was not reached in 30 days the Corpus Christi group would drop out. Failing to receive a response by the deadline, Council No. 4 severed relations with the San Antonio group. Thus the stage was finally set for the birth of LULAC.

CHAPTER III -- THE FOUNDING OF LULAC

The invitation for the historic meeting had been sent by "a group of friends from Corpus Christi, formerly Sons of America, Council No. 4." John Solis remembers the weather as being cold and rainy as delegates and other guests entered Obreros Hall to start the meeting at 1 p.m. Besides the Corpus Christi group, there were delegates from San Antonio's Knights of America and the League of Latin American Citizens from the Rio Grande Valley. Weeks, an observer at the proceeding wrote that there were 25 delegates present. However, 125 Mexican American observers were also at the meeting.

It was not a foregone conclusion that history would be made that afternoon. Not everyone was anxious to create one organization out of the three groups. J. T. Canales was among those who were lukewarm to the idea. Alonso Perales wrote that scarcely one week before Canales had expressed the opinion that the Sons of America and Knights of America had not won their epaulets in social and civic work in behalf of the Mexican American. Perales said that he was finally able to convince him that it was logical to form one organization.

Another problem was the name of the proposed new organization. The group from Corpus Christi wanted a short new name. But the members of the League of Latin American Citizens were loathe to surrender what they thought was an aptly descriptive title. Here again, Canales was the one most opposed to the change.

The proceedings got under way with Ben Garza calling the meeting to order. Alonso Perales then moved that Garza be named chairman of the convention and his motion was seconded by M. C. Gonzales of San Antonio. The motion carried unanimously. Gonzales was then elected secretary.

The chairman introduced all visitors, who came from San Antonio Brownsville, La Grulla, Encino, McAllen, Alice, Robstown and Austin. Weeks, who was there from the University of Texas in Austin to study the merger efforts, was introduced. Then A. de Luna of Corpus Christi gave the opening address, urging the delegates to merge into a single organization with only one name and constitution. Perales then took the floor and seconded the proposal, stating that the Latin American Citizens League was eager to see such a new organization begin at once. M. C. Gonzales then took the floor and said merging would be one of the grandest things that could be done. Professor Saenz, of McAllen, also

spoke in favor and urged a unanimous vote. Finally, J. T. Canales, of Brownsville, climaxed the presentation with an eloquent address. The merger resolution was passed unanimously.

"The deliberations were conducted in both English and Spanish," wrote Professor Weeks. J. T. Canales, Alonso S. Perales, J. Luz Saenz, E. H. Martin (editor of El Paladin of Corpus Christi and an important collaborator in publishing the proclamations and news of the movement toward unity) and A. de Luna of Corpus Christi took active part. Admirable decorum was maintained and a remarkable spirit of harmony prevailed."

The resolution establishing the new organization read as follows: "Whereas for many months of untiring efforts a group of citizensof the City of Corpus Christi, Nueces County, Texas, and former members of Council No. 4 of the Order Sons of America have struggled along using their best means of friendship and accord to unite into solid and great organization two other organizations (The Knights of America of San Antonio and the Latin American Citizens League, of the Rio Grande Valley) that by principle were pursuing the same identical ideals, and

Whereas, this group of members had the only thought in mind to render the best undivided help to our brethren throughout the great States of Texas, Arizona, New Mexico and California and knowing aforehand that neither one of these organizations alone, single-handed and divided, could render such help, then,

IT IS RESOLVED by this group of citizens of Corpus Christi, and former members of Council No. 4, of the Order Sons of America, to issue a call to all these organizations and to use their best efforts to bring about the merging of the three organizations into one, and on the 17th day of February, A. D. 1929 that long expected reunion was accomplished.

A committee consisting of two members of each organization was named to form some rules of order for the new organization. The committee consisted of Juan Solis and Mauro Machado from the Knights of America, Alonso S. Perales and J. T. Canales from the Latin American Citizens League and E. H. Martin and A. de Luna from the break-away Corpus Christi council of the Order Sons of America. The group withdrew to another room and eventually came back to present the following basis for organization. The name of the new organization would be "United Latin American Citizens." Membership was restricted to American citizens of Mexican extraction (although Anglos were later admitted). English was declared the official language of the organization. All local councils of the merging organizations were recognized and, since Corpus Christi was the host group, it was bestowed the honor of being Council No. 1.

The committee also recommended that a convention be held in Corpus Christi on May 18th and 19th of the same year for the purpose of framing a permanent constitution and electing general officers for the new organization. The recommendations were accepted and an executive committee consisting of Garza, Gonzales, Saenz and Canales were given the task of making the necessary arrangements.

The motto, "All for one and one for all," was then voted on and the convention adjourned. Three months later, the convention was held in Allende Hall in Corpus Christi and Ben Garza was chosen president, M. C. Gonzales, vice president, A. de Luna Secretary and Luis Wilmot, treasurer. By that time, wrote Weeks, the United Latin American Citizens had added four new councils: Alice, Robstown, Falfurrias and Edinburg.

Word of the new organization spread rapidly and at that first convention there were visitors from Floresville, Sugar Land, Gulf, Mission and Laredo. A banquet was held on the first evening of that maiden convention and the city attorney of Corpus Christi, the district attorney of Nueces County and the secretary of the Corpus Christi Chamber of Commerce addressed the delegates.

The convention adopted a Constitution consisting of nine articles, the first of which established the name of the organization as "The League of United Latin American Citizens." The aims and purposes of LULAC were embodied in 25 statements.

The Constitution gave governing powers to a Supreme Council consisting of two delegates and two alternates from each council. Officers and members were required to subscribe to a oath saying they would "be Loyal to the Government of the United States of America, to support its Constitution and to obey its laws." Membership was restricted to native-born or naturalized citizens of Latin extraction 18 years of age. However, the Constitution and opened honorary membership to persons of distinction (other than citizens of Latin extraction) or those who had given distinguished service to LULAC.

CHAPTER IV – THE ANGLO REACTION

LULAC's debut received a mixed review if Weeks' observations were typical. He observed that there were many people along the border who were native-born Mexican American citizens and therefore eligible to join the new organization. He was not about to go out on the limb and claim that they were capable of good citizenship, but he added: "They are citizens and must be dealt with as such." While conceding that the mass of Mexican Americans were "lowly and ignorant," he said there had arisen among them "a class of prosperous, educated citizenry whose living conditions compare favorably with American standards." Therefore, he was sympathetic to the aims of the new organization.

However Weeks ascribed exceedingly modest goals to LULAC. He said (p. 259) that the Mexican American's "motive in this undertaking is prompted neither by a desire to antagonize the Anglo-American, nor to demand a complete equality either among the Mexican-Americans themselves or between them and the Anglo-Americans. What he wants to do most of all is to eliminate as much as possible race prejudice on both sides of the dividing line and to gain for the Mexican American equality before the law, equal facilities for educational and other forms of improvement, and a reasonable share of political representation. . . "

Somewhat condescendingly, Weeks saw the biggest obstacle in achieving the aims of the organization as the lack of clear vision among the Mexican Americans "of the privileges and duties of his American citizenship." He also expressed a measure of skepticism as to whether LULAC members had the perserverance to make the organization work. "It is commonly thought to be a Latin, and particularly a Mexican, trait to make dramatic beginnings amidst a great show of idealism, enthusiasm, and unanimity, and then to lie back and let the undertaking thus launched go on for itself."

Weeks applauded the League's decision to limit membership to citizens. He did not see that as an attempt to break with their "racial brothers who are Mexican citizens." But he added that "practical policy dictates that the Mexican American can best improve the condition of all by using the rights which he, as an American citizen, alone possesses."

A somewhat startling observation by Weeks was that LULAC was not interested in admitting all American citizens of Latin or Mexican extraction. Weeks wrote that a majority of the leaders believed that the organization "should take in the most advanced element, thus making of itself a sort of Fabian Society, which would serve as a small nucleus of enlightenment, circulating its ideas among non-members and remaining a small concentrated group, unified in purpose, and better fitted to fight the battles of the less fortunate."

There is some evidence that this indeed was the view of LULAC's early leaders. John Herrera, a member since 1939, said that the Houston LULAC Council No. 60 had a difficult time getting going because "the older folks would not take the younger folks in. The older men did not want the help of the younger people." Herrera said LULAC intended to look down upon the young people because they were openly involved in politics in an organization called the Latin American Club of Harris County. However, after the council had been forced to suspend activities as a result of such problems, the young people finally took over in 1939 and Council No. 60 has met continuously ever since.

The tendency to include only an elite reassured Anglos that there would be no mass organization by Mexican Americans. However, the persons who manipulated the oppressive and exploitive system did not overlook the possibility, however remote it may have seemed. Upon hearing that a council had been formed in his area, one particular despot wrote to Mexican Americans:

"I have been and still consider myself as your Leader or Superior chief . . . I have always sheltered in my soul the most pure tenderness for the Mexican-Texan race and have watched over your interests to the best of my ability and knowledge . . . . Therefore, I disapprove the political activity of groups which have no other object than to organize Mexican-Texan voters into political groups for guidance by other leaders . . ."

Running throughout Weeks' account of LULAC's beginnings is the attitude that the Mexican Americans themselves are to blame for many of their difficulties and that the segregation enforced upon them was really what they sought. He says that Mexican Americans do not desire doctrinaire equality because they "on the whole, like to keep to themselves." He agrees that Mexican Americans should have the opportunity to serve on juries but implies that their absence is not the fault of the Anglo-dominated system. He declares that the Mexican American must first learn English, become reasonably informed as to the law and overcome his notoriety as an untrustworthy witness. Discrimination in places of public accommodation can be erased, in Weeks' view, as the Mexican gains education and improves his dress.

Weeks places the onus for improving the situation squarely on the Mexican American. "In order, therefore, that these people may be able to stand their ground, they must correct their own deficiencies, resulting from ignorance, docility and prejudice against the Anglo-Saxon and his ways. And doing such, they must show him that they can meet his standards and hence can demand their rights. Thus . . . they can remove his racial prejudice."

However, not even service above and beyond the call of duty seemed to remove the Anglo's prejudice. A World War II Medal of Honor winner was severely beaten in Richmond, Texas, because he asked for service in a restaurant. Mexicans, denied the right to enter the premises were supposed to order food through a small window. Even the Mexican Consul was refused service in one of the fine restaurants in Houston.

Anglos did not look kindly upon Mexican Americans trying to improve their education. Luis Wilmot, one of the LULAC founders, said: "They didn't want Mexicans to get ahead. They wanted us to remain as slaves." Mexican American leaders were called agitators or communists and ostracized in many ways. Ezequiel Salinas, who eventually became a District Judge, of Laredo, also remembers being called a radical.

"There was a subtle discrimination that would look on us as radicals and this was used to destroy the organization," recalled Hector Godinez, another LULAC national president. "They didn't want us to organize. They did everything to block us from organizing and, of course, people were afraid that they would lose their jobs if they got into LULAC. On the farms, the workers were afraid the boss would run them off."

Frank Pinedo of Houston said: "There still was the animosity and distrust and antagonism. When we would complain about police brutality and school segregation, they would listen polietely when we made the presentation to the school board or city council and then proceed to vote against us."

Weeks' portrayal of the disinterested Anglo was not the reality that Mexican Americans encountered when they set out to organize new LULAC councils. John Herrera recalls that many LULAC members were hounded out of their jobs and out of their businesses for being in the organization. "When we were organizing LULAC councils down in South Texas in the King Ranch country, the Texas Rangers set up barricades to keep us from getting through. A couple of us even had to

dress as women to get by the barricades in order to go to Kingsville. This was during the early 1940s."

Judge Alfred Hernandez said: "At that time, going into a county or city where the people were anti-Mexican, you could have been beaten or killed. There was this sheriff called Buckshot Lane in Fort Bend County. He ran me and John Herrera out of the county at shotgun point. We were trying to organize it for LULAC. But they didn't want Mexicans. We were strangers. They felt we had no business in that place. We were agitators. We were there arousing people.

"For organizing we had what we called 'the Flying Squad' and we rode in cars all over the state. We had no air conditioning. We had no money to travel. We were on our own. We slept in the cars. We took bread and made sandwiches on the way. We borrowed money to pay for the gas, the breakdowns of the cars. I remember pushing cars, sleeping on the side of the road because we had no money. We did this every weekend. We would go from one end of the state to the other."

John Herrera recalls that in those days there was no funding at all. "Any time you joined LULAC it was a labor of love which cost you a lot. You had to leave your wife and children." Organizing was made difficult by the requirement that members be citizens. Potential members often had parents who were not citizens and hesitated about joining an organization which made such distinctions, Herrera said.

However, there were also other constraints. "There was fear of joining a group that was out beating the bushes, confronting the authorities, the powers-that-be. It was difficult to say the least. But people felt someone had to do it, someone without a personal ax to grind, someone willing to devote the energy and take the risks."

The problems were encountered all over the Southwest. Belen Robles remembers arriving in a community outside El Paso in the 1950s for the formal inauguration of a new LULAC council only to find that the members had been intimidated into staying away by the Anglo establisment.

John Solis also remembers the "flying squadron" in the San Antonio area. "We would go to different towns at our own expense in an old car. We didn't have any professional man to help us. So we would travel all night, carrying three or four extra tires. In those days we didn't have sedans. We had open cars with no heater or air conditioning. When we would go through a rain we would take a tarpo-

lin and fold it over us so we would not get wet. The roads were not paved and were often muddy. Sometimes we got stuck. We would then get off and take off our shoes and socks and push. Sometimes we had to wash our faces in rainwater puddles alongside the road and then go to the meeting on that day. One year we traveled 52 weekends. We would lock up our little places of business at 6 p.m. and then travel all night down the valley.

"We would be run out of some towns," recalled Solis. "We were told that if we met in certain towns, Goliad, for instance, we would be run out. The authorities and other officials, for instance, used to tell us: 'We don't want you to rabble-rouse the people. These people are all right as they are now. So why do you want to meet?' And when we told them why we wanted to meet – to better the conditions of the people, they said: 'Well, you can't meet.' "

Rather than diminishing from year to year, Anglo opposition to LULAC organizing efforts continued unchecked for 20 years after the organization was founded. Hector Godinez of Santa Ana, Calif., and national president in 1960-61, said: "When we organized Orange County in 1947 the governmental forces against us were awesome. We were not aggressive but we were forced against our will into police cars and taken to the district attorney's office.

"They grabbed Manuel Viega, Hector Tarango, Eddie Valenzuela, Isidoro Gonzales and the late Cruz Barrios, who owned a market. They took us [to the district attorney's office] and accused us point blank of being a subversive organization – in other words, communists. Representatives of the Associated Farmers were sitting right there.

"We had just formed something they didn't want – the organization. They were afraid of it. You see, our parents had been stronlgly persecuted in the mid-1930s and late 1930s. My father was an activist and when the first strikes were called in the orange orchards, we did not have any protection whatever. Many of our people were unceremoniously taken across the border. They could do that in the 30s without any fear of retribution of any type.

"In 1947 when they got us and threatened us I was 21 years old and quite inexperienced. Hector Tarango must have been in his late 20s, more sophisticated. He had two years of college and was a gutsy guy. He stood up and asked them: 'You have any charges? If not, let me talk to my attorney because you are going to have a libel suit on your hands.' As soon as he said this the district attorney said a few words, then came out of his inner office and told the farmers: 'You don't have a case.'

"It was pure harrassment and if Hector had not been there, some of us, because of lack of exposure and experience, would not have known how to defend ourselves. I had just come out of the Army. But Hector had more experience. In many ways he was not one of the best liked guys in town and he has sort of disappeared. But I will always be grateful for this one thing: He did something that required a lot of courage and ability at a time when there was nobody else to do it. And that is what I remember about him.

"My God, if I could count the number of people who have been in LULAC in California, even in Orange County, the last 20 years – they would number in the thousands. But many were scared out of the organization. Others maybe left because they weren't really indoctrinated into social service, but many were scared because of the confrontation, the suspicons, that you were not a loyal American." Godinez, who has been in LULAC since 1946, said few members from those days are still around.

"Whenever we were going to the little towns where the Mexicans were not permitted to enjoy the rights of citizens, the law would come," said Manuel C. Gonzales, one of the original founders of LULAC. "Since we were dressed well because we came from the city, they thought we were bootleggers. Only bootleggers in those days had good suits, the lawmen claimed. Therefore they were always searching us trying to find some booze. They called us agitators, saying we were not going into their town to give false hopes to the people when they were content and didn't need any education."



Order of Sons of America, Council No. 4, Corpus Christi, Texas, 1927. Members took part in a Flag Parade with the local chapter of Elks. Later, through the efforts of this Council, three Organizations were merged, and LULAC was created on February 17, 1929.

CHAPTER V – GROWTH OF LULAC

Despite the organizing dififculties, LULAC clearly showed that it wa an idea whose time had come. Weeks wrote[18] that by the time th Supreme Council had its first meeting on June 23, 1929, the number o councils had increased to 18. Among the new councils were Floresville Sugar Land, Laredo, Crystal City, Uvalde, Del Rio and Eagle Pass Weeks found such progress phenomenal.

By 1942, M. C. Gonzales, LULAC's third president general, wrote "The establishment of 37 councils in widely separated and distinc sections of the State indicated that the purposes of the League are wid enough to take care of ecery situation that has arisen, and th incontrovertible fact that the League is flourishing speaks with eloquence that it is powerful enough to supply the needs of it members."

By the late 1930s, LULAC had spread to New Mexico and California Hector Godinez said that, although a search of the records has yielded nothing, a LULAC council existed in the 1930s in San Bernardino.

The roster of presidents shows how strongly LULAC had taken root i New Mexico by the end of the 1930s. While five of the first nin presidents were from San Antonio and three from the Rio Grand Valley, the first national president from New Mexico was elected i 1939. He was Filemon T. Martinez of Albuquerque. In the next fiv years, three of the national presidents were from New Mexico. Council had by then been established in Taos, Santa Fe and Albuquerque.

The outbreak of World War II caused many of the councils to suspen their activities as Hispancis went to war or moved to the centers of wa industry in search of jobs. "LULAC really got going in California i 1946," Godinez said. "We started in Los Angeles and then formed th Santa Ana council. From there we went to Fullerton, but Orang County was really the birthplace of LULAC in California (after tha initial start in San Bernardino)."

Manuel Viega, who owned a funeral home, was the first president o LULAC in Santa Ana. "Surprisingly, Los Angeles had a lot of trouble trying to develop strong councils," Godinez said, "In fact, not many organizations have been able to get a toehold in Los Angeles. I guess it is a combination of many things. You had to raise your own agitating groups. East Los Angeles has never had the power a lot of people think it has. It has always been an area of illegal aliens or non-citizens and no one can get a big power base."

Expansion to the Midwest did not occur until the administration of Albert Armendaris (1953-1954) and of Judge Alfred Hernandez (1965-1967). "I made that a personal goal," Hernandez said. "My brother-in-law was sent to Chicago, given some money to live and to pay bus fare. He organized LULAC in a barbershop in South Chicago.

"Then we went to Indiana, Wisconsin and Minnesota. As we moved, we set up a group in every state where we felt we ahd a nucleus."

In Texas, the strong council were in Corpus Christi, San Antonio, Laredo, El Paso, and other towns in the Valley and, later, Houston, LULAC was never able to establish itself strongly in Dallas, but there was a council in Austin.

The first Washington, D.C., council was chartered in 1966, but the East was not organized until the administration of Joe Benitez (1973-1975). He established councils in Florida among Cubans and in New York among Puerto Ricans.

Today, LULAC has 380 councils in 24 states. It is still the largest Hispanic organization in the nation. Texas has the largest number of councils, followed by California.



First Convention held in
Corpus Christi, Texas
MAY, 1929

CHAPTER VI – LEADERSHIP

If LULAC proved that it was an idea whose time had come, it was because, from its beginnings, it had a high quality of leadership. The early leaders were true pioneers. They had no models to follow, no precedents to guide them, no tradition of education or even of success when they began their long climb to prominence. Some were children of immigrants who came to this country with a high level of self-assurance. Others were from the enclaves which had never surrendered to Anglo domination. They overcame poverty, poor education, discrimination and the feelings of inadequacy which bias engenders. Here are a few mini-profiles of the leaders:

• Bernardo (Ben) Garza started with nothing, said his son, Ben Jr., and built up a restaurant which his widow said accommodated 2,000 persons. He was a man of such character and integrity that he won the admiration of Anglos and Mexican Americans alike.

"You know, it is surprising," Ben Garza Jr. said, "that despite the discrimination prevalent at that time my Daddy was urged in 1929 not only by the Mexican community here but also by the Anglo community to run for mayor of Corpus Christi. So we can tell the influence he had."

Instead, Garza decided to dedicate himself to organizing the Mexican American people. This subjected him to the taunts and tensions endured by those early LULAC organizers. One time an ambush was set for him, according to his widow, but fortunately he changed his travel plan for that night.

Despite failing health, Garza never ceased to work for the Mexican American people. "I think that if he had said, 'Forget LULAC, forget the Mexican American people,' and taken care of himself, he would still be here today," Ben Jr. said. *LULAC News* portrayed Garza as "a man who sacrificed his life to do good without expecting any reward for his efforts and services. The work he did among all peoples, his long, untiring efforts to create a better understanding between the members of the Anglo and Latin peoples, and his devotion to duty will live forever in the minds of those who knew him. It was this trait of character which prompted him and some of his closest friends to bring our organization into existence."

• Felix Tijerina had only the barest rudiments of reading and writing. In fact, one of his closest friends in LULAC claims that he could not read or write but could work complex fractions in his head. But this son of immigrant parents who rose from rags to riches probably did more to insure the education of future generations of Latinos than any other person. Tijerina is recognized as the father of the Little Schools of the 400, whcih eventaully became the nationally acclaimed Headstart program. His commitment was so strong that he funded the studies, paid the teacher to pilot the test program and aggressively sold the idea and the program until the school system took it over.

• John Herrera followed the migrant trail with his family, picking cotton in Texas and working in the beetfields in Michigan. By the age of 14 he was still in the fifth grade, and when he was 20 he quit high school in order to devote full time to earning a living. He was 24 when he finally received his high school diploma, and he worked his way through law school by attending classes at night and picking cotton, digging ditches and driving a cab by day in order to earn his expenses and support his wife and the children born in the six years it took him to complete his studies. He accomplished all this at the height of the Depression – between 1934 and 1940. It took him another three years to pass the bar examination. Every time he would go to Austin to take it he would fail because he simply did not have enough time to study, he said. But in 1943 he finally reached his goal.

There was a lot of discrimination in Houston at that time," Herrera said. "None of us were in the professions. I was trying to be the first Chicano lawyer in Houston."

"Up until five or six years ago I was bitter about some of this," Herrera said – "having to pick cotton and having to be a migrant worker, but every time I go to the hospital and they tell me I am just as sound as a dollar and ask me how I manage to stay in shape so long I tell them: 'Hell, yes, I used to pick 500 pounds of cotton a day and by the time the sun came up I already had 200 pounds in the sack.' " Herrera was national LULAC president in 1952-1953 and has been in LULAC since 1934.

Each leader was a pioneer in some way. Ezechiel Salinas was one of only two men in his class at the University of Texas to take six subjects and earn six "A's". Most students took only four subjects. He started a newspaper called *El Universitario* and went on to become a district judge, serving in judicial office for 27 years.

• Alonso Perales was probably one of the first Mexican Americans to attain international prominence. He was adviser to three or four presidents, said his nephew Leon Perales and a California LULAC member. He served on many international commissions in Latin America as representative of the State Department, but he never forgot his origins in the Rio Grande Valley and was one of the founding fathers of LULAC.

• William D. Bonilla, the second of eight children of another Mexican immigrant family, worked in the cotton fields, picked watermelon, harvested tomatoes, peanuts and peas to help support his family. He attended the inferior Mexican school of Calvert, Texas, but he eventually became a prominent lawyer and served as national president of LULAC between 1964 and 1965 – at 33 the youngest person to be elected to the top office.

There are countless sagas like these in LULAC's members – persons who came from the very bottom of society and made great successes of their lives. It would have been simple for these men and women to fade away from the barrios and forget the suffering still rampant there, but they didn't.

"It is very easy for someone to assimilate himself into society and forget that his name is Pinedo or Rodriguez and never look back," said Frank Pinedo, a Houston lawyer and LULAC president in 1954-1955. "But I think that is wrong. I think those who have education and those who have financial ability still have a responsibility to help – not only to make the community a better place in which to live but in a special way to try to improve the conditions of living of other Mexican Americans."

The early leaders of LULAC gave of themselves without adding up the cost. Some lost their health or their businesses in the process. "People in LULAC have sacrificed," Judge Alfred Hernandez of Houston siad. Raoul Cortez of San Antonio lost a Spanish-language TV and radio station because of his involvement, Hernandez said.

Hernandez. who began his working life in his immigrant father's watch-making business in Houston and went on to become an attorney and a judge, said: "My first year as national LULAC president (1965-1966) cost me $25,000. That was going to be a trip for my family to Eorope as a silver wedding anniversary present to my wife. I blew it the first year, but man I moved. I traveled on my own everywhere by the cheapest way possible. When I got there I bought a hot dog. After a while I told people that if they wanted me there they

had to provide a place for me to sleep. After the money was gone I said I could not come unless they paid my plane fare and provided food. Early LULACers gave years of their lives".

Though in recent years LULAC got the undeserved reputation of being conservative, the early leaders were treated as militants. "They were a different breed," observes Hector Godinez. "They were people who sacrificed and suffered the social injustices, were ostracized, harassed by law-enforcement agencies, not being able to go into a town but camping out in the fields and drifting into town to talk to the people because they were persecuted." (Godinez himself was a pioneer, establishing the first Mexican American bank in California.)

Ezechiel Salinas, LULAC national president in 1939-40, remembers enduring the taunts of the Texas Rangers and other lawmen as he stood on the back of a truck and spoke to striking onion workers who were getting only 60 cents a day. He was called a communist although his message to those workers was simply that LULAC had set up a fund of $200 to help buy food for the strikers.

"Alsonso Perales once wrote to the President of the United States that he would rather take the flag of the U.S. and rip it down and shred it to pieces and throw it on the ground and stomp and spit on it than to be denied his American rights," Leon Perales said. Coming from perhaps the most prominent government employee of Mexican descent in the nation at that time, the statement was picked up by the press and there was quite a furor.

Hearing the testim ony of these leaders makes one wonder whether they made LULAC or whether LULAC also had some role in what they became, for many give credit to the organization for their accomplishments. John Herrera talked about going to court with his law professor to argue his first case and doing such a good job that the judge asked if he were a veteran lawyer. Herrera attributed his skill to the experience and training he had received in LULAC meetings.

"Being in LULAC gave me confidence," Herrera said. "I didn't fear because I was a LULAC. Lately, I have been going over some letters I wrote years ago and I say: 'Why was I so eloquent? Why was I so far-sighted? Why was I so right? And, without being maudlin, why was I so accurate?' I have no explanation, but being in LULAC imbued us with peace. LULAC gave us a lot of faith."

"LULAC has been good to me," Hector Godinez said. "It gave me a background and an ability to deal with issues, defend myself, defend

my rights – something that I would have never received if I had been on the outside. LULAC gave me an opportunity to deal with government officials. I think it made me a better person. In many ways I give LULAC credit for whatever success I have had in my career. I am very grateful.

"LULAC made me what I am," Godinez continued. "I contributed a lot to it but I think I have gotten twice in return for my efforts. If I had not been national president in 1960 and met all those people in Washington, I would not have been asked in 1961 to take over the postmastership of the city of Santa Ana, a very responsible position. I feel I owe a debt to the organization. I cannot divorce myself from it."

Looking back on more than 50 years of working to better the lives of Hispanic people, first as one of the organizers of the Sons of America, then the Knights of America, and, finally, LULAC – John Solis summed up the struggle: "I feel very good about it. I am very proud and very happy of all the sacrifices that we went through to accomplish what we did, putting stepping stones down for what LULAC is today. I hope to God that I live to see all of the aims of LULAC accomplished.

Every time that William Bonilla goes to try a case he sees evidence of the work LULAC has been doing through the years. "We have talked for so long about people registering to vote that now we are getting Mexican Americans on the jury and this is something very dear to my heart. It was very depressing to try a jury case twenty years ago and find one Mexican American on the panel. I have been registering as many people as possible for years. It doesn't matter to me if there is an election or not, because I know that eventually their names will end up in the jury wheel. Now when you go to the jury, out of 20 persons you may have as many as 10 Mexican Americans. In the past, the opposing lawyer would strike automatically and systematically anyone with a Spanish surname – as a matter of fact, anyone who looked brown. You could have a blonde girl, but if her surname was Garcia she was gone.

"Now we have 10 and the district attorney in criminal cases and the insurance company lawyers in civil cases actually have to say, 'Good morning,' and smile to the Mexican Americans and really dig down deep to find out what their thinking process is. They [opposing lawyers] are at a greater disadvantage than I am and I get better deals for my clients."

Pete Tijerina says: "You know, you have the question about whether the man makes the organization or the organization makes the man. I think LULAC gave me the opportunity to become known in San Antonio. All the clientele that I have now and have had in the past is because of my work in LULAC. It gave me a great deal of publicity." (Tijerina is recognized as the founder of the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund (MALDEF). "I have worked hard for LULAC but it has paid me generously," Tijerina concluded.

There seems to be no doubt that LULAC provided the supportive environment which many Mexican Americans needed. Because of LULAC, the Hispanic in the U.S. could dare hope for a better life. Because of LULAC he could begin to raise his head from decades of defeat and begin to see his potential and responsibility in a larger world. Because of LULAC he could muster the courage to begin to throw off the heavy burden of injustice which had been placed upon him.

There were countless struggles demanding raw courage. Judge Hernandez tells about how it was in Indiana in the mid 1960s: "The migrant workers at that time were having problems. I called a national boycott against H. J. Heinz. There was barbed wire around one migrant camp and guards with shotguns threatened us when we tried to go in.

"I wanted to testify before the Human Rights Commission in Indiana about conditions. So we had people smuggle pictures out to me. But I couldn't testify as to my own knowledge. So the night before the hearings, we put on work clothes to look like farm workers and we slipped through and talked to the people and got names and addresses and took pictures of the conditions – how everybody got water from one faucet, had no screens and how when it rained there was mud all over.

William Bonilla remembers: "My father was a large person but on one occasion I saw an Anglo chasing him around the counter [of the service station the elder Bonilla managed]. I was only 13 or 14 but I was old enough to know that the only reason my father was running was that he was 'a Mexican' and the other man was not. So I picked up a hammer and told the gentleman that if he continued I was going to kill him. If the man had moved forward I probably would have killed him with the hammer. Those things you don't forget easily. So after I became an attorney I decided I should do something for the community. I joined LULAC."



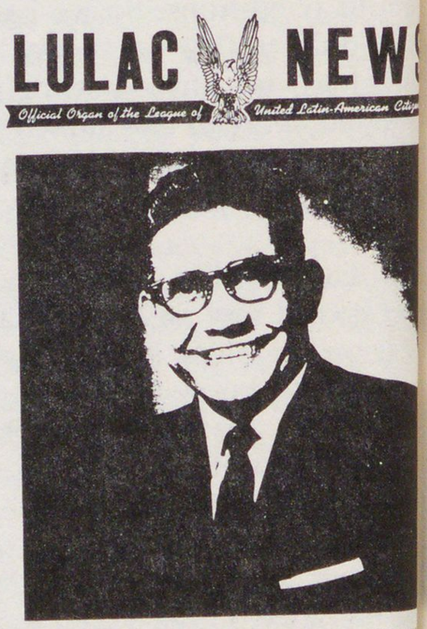


White House Conference On LULAC 10 Point Program.

1960's



Honorable Joe Bernal
Texas State Senator



Judge Alfred Hernandez LULAC National President

CHAPTER VII -- THE LULAC VISION

The underlying vision behind LULAC's guiding principles was that the Hispanic in the U.S. had to establish and practice his citizenship. Staking that position firmly was the key to eliminating opperssion and achieving progress. But as noted previously, the Anglo neither conceded that the Mexican American was a citizen nor that he was capable of good citizenship. And the focus of Anglo projecide was the Mexican-ness of the target population.

Thus instinct impelled LULAC to shed the identification which was the source of the problem. "At that time we didn't want to say we were Mexican American," John Solis said, "not because we were ashamed – every LULAC is very proud of his Mexican heritage – but we wanted to get away from the Mexican because everywhere you could see signs saying: 'No Mexicans allowed'." That is why the LULAC member proclaimed that he was a Latin American.

Luis Wilmot said he became involved in LULAC because he "was tired of being called a Mexican." He felt that by callinghim a Mexican, the Anglo was saying "that I was not a bonafide citizen of this country." To this day he says he does not like being called Mexican American. "I love my Mexican descent. I love it. But when they separate us they [the Anglos] are looking at us as second-class Americans."

Therefore, the founding fathers of LULAC made a great point of the fact that they were Americans. The modern-day Chicano tends to cringe with embarrassment at some of the statements made at that time. For instance, Ezequiel Salinas stated in a talk quoted in the January, 1940, issue of *LULAC News* that "the majority of Americans of Mexican extraction – little Jose, little Juan and little Maria – thrill at the first musical chords of *America* and their hearts throb whenever 'Old Glory' passes by."

Historic retrospect has not been kind to the sentiments expressed by LULAC in that era. Dr. Jesus Chavarria saw the the thrust of such rhetoric as an attempt by Mexican Americans to lose their identity in the melting pot. "Around the 1920s (in some areas long before), some of our people began to advocate a broadly conceived ideology and political program, that to assimilate into the dominant society, we should turn away from our cultural roots and learn the dominant culture . . . by forgetting our native tongue, by changing our ways and by working hard to make ourselves acceptable," wrote Dr. Chavarria (*Liberty and Justice for All,* 1975:76).

The documentation for that charge was found in the fact that LULAC made English its official language, pledged unquestioning loyalty to the ideals, principles and citizenship of the U.S. and vowed to develop "the best, purest and most perfect type of a true and loyal citizen of the United States of America."

LULAC may have been a bit excessive in its proclaimed obeisance to the American way, but its members were not intent on winning approval from the Anglo society at all costs. If they had been, LULAC members would not have worked so hard to win education , civil and economic rights for all Mexican Americans and even for Mexican citizens. In doing exactly that they incurred the disapproval and even the hate of those who did not want the Mexican American to advance. The thankless effort and sacrifice that LULAC members devoted to seek the betterment of their people clearly showed that they had not turned away from their culture.

What LULAC was talking about was not the surrender of traditional values but something far different. What LULAC was asking the Mexican American was to make full use of his opportunities and responsibilities as a U.S. citizen. Ezequiel Salinas observed that the Mexican, expecially when he first came to the U.S., tended to be passive,to keep to himself. LULAC wanted him to become involved. That required the learning of English, the acquisition of an education, participation in government by voting, running for public office, taking part in judicial proceedings by serving on juries. This still is the philosophy of LULAC.

Prejudice blocked the desired participation in all these areas. Therefore, the first task of LULAC was to win those rights. The organization proposed to find remedies through peaceful, polite, diplomatic action within the democratic process. Their approach was low key not because they were not angry men and women.

Rather, it was because this was the only option open to them, given the oppression and violence from which they were just emerging. To succeed they felt they had to be model citizens, placing more faith in the American system than the Anglos did themselves.

This was a tremendous act of faith in the system and in the sense of fair play which was rarely demonstrated by the Anglos. Fortunately, even in those early days, there were successes. John Solis recalls one incident when he was in business in Corpus Christi in the mid-1920s with the Sons of America. "There was a man who said his family had

been run off the farm where they share-cropped [without being paid the money which was due them]. But they could not find a lawyer because there weren't any Mexican American lawyers in Corpus Christi.

"I was a young man then, full of energy; and I went to see a lawyer, an Anglo named Dudley Parlington. He was one of the best lawyers in Corpus and he told me: 'You don't know but there has never been a Mexican American who sued an Anglo in Nueces County. If I take the case you can imagine what all these Anglos are going to be saying about me, but I want to take this man's case.'

"I told him the family did not have any money, but that the Sons of America would be glad to pay a reasonable fee. He replied: 'I am not going to charge this man a penny.' And he won the case and as a result the man got his full money for his crops."

Such gains built confidence that legal ways could be found to overcome the ills that plagued the Mexican American people. But the struggle would be very long.

Faith in the legal process perhaps was influenced by the fact that many of LULAC's founders and a goodly portion of those who rose to leadership later were lawyers. "They were lawyers and readers of the Constitution," John Herrera said. "And they knew damn well that we weren't being treated right. Because any time we could get Anglos across the table and start talking to them about not allowing us to serve on juries and keeping our kids in segregated schools and not giving us decent jobs, they would start shaking their heads. Then when we would face them with the fact that we comprised one-ninth of the population and were getting one-third of the Medals of Honor that showed we were not traitors.

"So the whole thing of starting up the League of United Latin American Citizens was to get these bastards to start sitting across the table from us and start talking to us. A lot of places they wouldn't even talk to us because they had feelings of guilt, but once we did get in there we had that scene over and over."

These courageous lawyers lost no opportunity to engage the Anglo even though that often meant losing all the Anglo clients they had. Herrera recalls accompanying the Mexican consul to a little town outside Dallas where a Mexican citizen, a young man, had been killed.

"It turned out that this Mexican national came from a very prominent

family and when his father and mother came here to claim the body they found him buried in the trash dump," Herrera said. This created an international furor and the consul and Herrera appeared before the County Commission to protest. The commissioners could not understand what the problem was. One said:

"Well, Mr. Herrera, what are you complaining about? We have been burying Mexicans there for 50 years."

Herrera recalls another battle during World War II when one of the cement firms in Houston was getting a lot of government contracts and, because of the labor shortage, had to hire Mexican Americans. "There were complaints of unfair wages but the chief complaint was that after the work day ended a Mexican American ex-pug named Louie was taking a shower [in the company locker room] and an Anglo from East Texas said: "Hey, Mexican, you are supposed to go bathe with the Niggers.' So Louie hauled off and knocked him out and the company fired all the Mexican Americans.

"So there we were arguing with the head man of the Portland Cement Co. and he said, 'Mr. Herrera, I don't see what all the fuss is about. Up until the time we hired these additional Mexican workers six months ago, the Mexicans had been showering with the Niggers for 50 years."

Herrera also remembers another confrontation against the Humble Refining Co. because there were three sets of water fountains on its premises – one ivory white, one painted black, and the third painted brown.

Another aspect of the vision of the founders was education. They believed that it held the key to solving all the problems of the Latin American in the U.S. There were back to school campaigns in the fall, there was citizenship training, there were classes for wives and mothers and the LULAC meetings themselves sought to impart knowledge and training for members.

Perhaps the most important area of education focused on rights and responsibilities as citizens. There was special emphasis on the recourse that persons had for the redress of grievances.

What all this added up to was education on the uses of power. In organization they found strength they had never experienced before. Gradually, they learned the power of the ballot and, though the organization was non-partisan, many LULAC members sought public office and some were successful. One of these was U.S. Senator Dennis Chavez of New Mexico.

LULAC's aversion to partisan politics can be understood when one considers that most of the Mexican American people were victimized by politics many times. The immigrants who came from Mexico during the Revolution were political refugees. Mexican Americans and immigrants who came for other reasons were victimized by Anglo and sometimes Mexican American political bosses who used naked economic power to force the people to vote their way.

There is no doubt that LULAC's vision was the beacon light for at least one generation of Hispanics in the United States. From its founding through World War II, LULAC had a virtual monopoly on both the policy and program. The top leaders – men like Dr. George I. Sanchez, the great anthropologist; Dennis Chavez and the great attorney Gus Garcia – were all associated with it. There was no other organization which rivalledor challenged its perspective.

However, when the soldiers came home a former LULAC member – Dr. Hector Garcia, a surgeon – found the program and horizons of the organization too limited and founded a new group which siphoned some of the young leaders. This was the American G.I. Forum, which came into being as a result of an incident in which a small town funeral home refused to bury the body of a Mexican American killed in the Philippines in World War II.

The dead soldier was Felix Longoria, whose body was returned to the U.S. in 1948 for burial in his hometown of Three Rivers, Texas. However, the only mortician in town refused to hold services in his chapel. The resulting headlines led to then U.S. Senator Lyndon B. Johnson having Longoria buried in Arlington National Cemetery.

It is not clear what LULAC's reaction was; but, whatever it may have been, Dr. Hector Garcia saw a need to establish the American G.I. Forum, an organization with a more aggressive political program. Thus LULAC lost at least part of one generation.

In the 1960s, LULAC may have lost another generation as many of its members took a less than sympathetic view towards the street militancy of young people. There is a feeling among some of the members that LULAC has failed to captivate the interest of the present generation as well.

"LULAC has failed to attract young leaders," Frank Pinedo said. Therefore, in an age when there is a plethora of organizations appealing for the allegiance of the young, LULAC faces a stiff challenge in its next few years.

CHAPTER VIII -- THE ISSUES : EDUCATION

The quiet unsung activism of LULAC has been responsible for significant progress by the Hispanic people in the United States in the past half-century. From the very beginning, the big issues were education, civil rights and employment – just as they continue to be to this very day.

In education, the first priority of LULAC was quality, and the only wat to achieve that goal was to gain integration of a system that was segregated three ways. As previously mentioned, the Mexican schools in Texas were the worst in the state because there was no law which said that the separate facilities had to be equal to either black or white schools. "In most communities there was absolute segregation," Ezequiel Salinas said. "The conditions were deplorable. Nobody was going to spend any money for the Mexican schools."

Texas, however, was not the only state where there was a problem. There was segregation throughout the Southwest, though California perhaps had worse separation than states such as New Mexico, Arizona and Colorado.

Leon Perales, former editor of *LULAC News,* describes how it was to go to school for a Mexican American, even in integrated schools: "In South Texas, no matter how hard we studied or how well we did in our test, our report card always showed 'C–' or 'D', nothing better or worse. The idea [of the Anglo community] was to keep us out of school, and if they couldn't do that then to give us bad grades. Maybe that would discourage the students and, if that didn't do it, they wouldn't be able to qualify for the college entrance exam, because they would see our grades and that would be it. I went through all that. I couldn't eat in the cafeteria. I couldn't go out for athletics, couldn't even join the Spanish Club, not even for atm osphere. You just couldn't do anything."

In the early days, William D. Bonilla said, there were schools for the Negro, schools for the Mexican and schools for the Anglo. "There was no chance for anyone in school except in my case I played football well. Had it not been for football, I would have just been another student even despite my good grades." When Bonilla got to Baylor University in the late 1940s, the Mexican American had no opportunity to be a cheerleader, to be halfback in football, or to join the Chamber of Commerce, the top club on the Baylor campus.

"You could join any number of organizations and pay your dues but as far as progressing from there it was almost impossible," Bonilla said.

With the Mexican American children isolated in inadequate schools, there was no opportunity for them to learn English. "They would get to be 13 or 14 years old and not know any English and they felt humiliated and embarrassed when they tried to speak it," Ezequiel Salinas said. During his term of office as president of LULAC in 1939-1940, the first step was taken to improve the deplorable condition of Mexican American education.

Salinas approached L.A. Woods, state superintentent of schools, to bring to his attention the plight of Mexican American students. Woods already knew but was spurred to take action when he saw how deeply concerned LULAC was. "He was concerned enought to want to do something about it," remembers Salinas. "But he could not on his own correct the situation overnight in 254 counties of Texas. However, he did start a movement to provide for better schooling for children of Mexican descent."

Among the actions that Woods took, according to LULAC records, was to threaten to cut state aid from the Ozona School District for segregating Mexican American children. In a letter to the president of the school board, Woods said: "Complaints from the Latin American people of your district have been coming to this office for some three or four years . . . I must say that this is a very serious matter; the Constitution of this state and nation as well as the statutes require that no partiality be shown with reference to school facilities to any individual because of race, color or previous condition of servitude. Under the laws of this state children of Latin American extraction are classified as white and therefore have a right to attend the Anglo American schools in the community where they reside. . . . This is not being done in your district."

Salinas also appeared before an education conference attended by 100 school superintendants of Texas and among other things said that history books used in the elementary schools were the worst kind of propaganda because they reached the individual at an impressionable age. He said those textbooks taught that thousands of mexicans at the Alamo had killed some 30 or 40 Texans.

He informed the conference participants that it was not the Mexican people who had killed the Texans but the soldiers of Santa Ana, a man subsequently ostracized by the Mexican people. Salinas said that the

heroes of the Alamo included seven Texas Mexicans who were in the Alamo and yet the Texas history books made no mention of their presence, aggravating prejudice and antagonism by the Anglos against the Mexican people.

Salinas said that very few children knew and perhaps some superintendents of the public schools of Texas knew that Captain Juan Seguin was the one who drafted the eulogy at the funeral services for the heroes of the Alamo; and that Lorenzo de Zavala was as good a patriot and Texan as could be found anywhere, having called the convention for drafting the Declaration of Independence, and having become the first vice-president of the Repbulic of Texas.

He further informed the superintendents that Francisco Ruiz was another signer of the Declaration of Independence, and so was Juan Antonio Navarro; that counties and cities had been named for Navarro, Zavala, Seguin, Gonzales and other prominent Americans of Mexican extraction and very few American students of Mexican or Anglo-Sacon extraction knew the reason who, because "these facts were concealed and omitted from Texas history books" *(LULAC News,* January, 1940).

Similar efforts were made in the Hondo schools. There, approval of a Works Public Adminstration (WPA) school construction project reportedly solved the problem of providing proper school accommodations for all children.

However, the Mexican American children continued to attend segregated schools in most areas because Anglos found a way to get around the Constitution and the statutes. The rationale was articulated by Price Daniels, an attorney general of Texas who later became a justice in the Texas Supreme Court. Another LULAC national president, Pete Tijerina, said that Daniels was once asked the question: "Under what basis can Mexican American school children be legally segregated in the State of Texas?" He replied that under no circumstances could Mexican American children in the State of Texas be segregated. However, he added that "for pedagogical reasons" they could be placed in a separate room for special instruction.

"What this meant," Tujerina said, "was that if a child was having trouble in school, the school board had license to segregate him, on the basis of language difficulties, in a separate class or in a separate building. That ruling retarded the progress of Mexican Americans and forced LULAC to seek new ways to end the segregation. Thus the organization's concern with improving the ability of Mexican American children to speak English well.

LULAC had to confront school authorities time and again to attempt to persuade them to improve conditions. John Herrera remembers one such incident in 1944 when he was district governor of LULAC. A complaint had come from Missouri County – 18 miles out of Houston. Mexican American students were being forced to attend a dilapidated one-room school while Anglos had a modern plant. Even though Missouri County was one of the richest in the stat, 51 students from grades one through five were crammed into that one room.

LULAC would not intervene until 100 percent of the families agreed on a course of action. One family had janitor privileges and it was six months before it decided to join the others. This did not happen until a little girl almost choked on a piece of bread because there was no water supply indoors and water had to be drawn with a hand pump from an outdoor well. When everyone agreed, the families started boycotting classes.

"LULAC had to be very careful then because even though the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) had gone openly into civil rights cases they were always ready to lop our heads off. So we always got sworn statements, fir instance, before we went to the City Council so that if people later backed down we would still have their sworn statements.

With the boycott finally in progress, LULAC members went two or three times a week to teach the children. Herrera, who was one of the volunteer teachers, remembers one bright-eyed youth of 14 years of age who wanted to be a doctor.

"Thirty years later this boy went to Laredo as the main speaker of the Texas LULAC convention and said: 'It is very significant that my first official act is to come to a LULAC meeting because if it had not been for LULAC's John Herrera I wouldn't be here today.' That man is Patrick F. Flores, the first U.S. bishop of Mexican descent," said Herrera. "I was sick in bed and when I was told what the bishop said it cheered me up."

"So what happened was that we boycotted the school for eight months. Then the commissioner of education asked what we wanted. I said he had no right to separate these children two miles away from the other children and put them all in one room with only one teacher for five grades and to share a playground fenced with barbed wire with a mule and a cow and to draw water from an outside well with a hand pump.

"I said the Mexican American children were being denied the right to rub elbows and play with other white children. I said we were serving in the foxholes in the South Pacific; so why couldn't we at least grow up as other Americans.

"He asked if that was all we wanted – to rub elbows. Then he said: 'Suppose we get the segregated Mexican school and put it on the campus over there?' I figured half a cup of tea was better than none. So I said yes and they took that clap-trap school and put it right in the middle of the [Anglo] campus next to the fire-proof school.

"Now the war had opened up the county and people had come from all over to work for Dow Chemical and Aluminum of America on the Gulf Coast. These newcomers would drive past the Mexican school and wonder what the hell it was. When told it was the Mexican school they found it hard to believe. So they started making calls to the goddamned school board and it fianlly moved the Mexican school to one corner and made it a school depository and invited the Mexican American kids to come into the main building.

"Nothing was ever written about that. You won't find it in the history books or anywhere else. I don't say that I did it myself. The entire LULAC council was behind me. God works in wondrous ways."

It was this type of struggle which characterized LULAC's activities in the field of education. Only those who worked and suffered knew about it. Leon Perales remembers an Arizona incident in which the sons of a man by the name of Willie Garcia were denied entrance to the university. "We spent days getting facts and sending out news releases which were never printed by the papers, but we tried," he said.

Thouth LULAC policy was apparently to make every effot to solve the difficulties without going to the courts (Fuguay, 1970:8), except when supported by "common sense, educational theory and judicial deicision", the major educational problems eventually had to be settled there.

The first important case involved the Del Rio schools, which, as so many others during that time, were segregating Mexican American children. LULAC took the appeal all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court in 1931 but was bitterly disappointed by the decision. The justices refused to hear the case on the grounds that the high court lacked jurisdiction. However, some progress was made because the Texas Court of Appeals had ruled that Mexican American children

could not be segregated merely on the basis of race. The separation had to be based on other grounds, and here was where the infamous Price Daniels opinion came in.

Gradually educators – Dr. George I Sanchez being one of the most articulate – attacked segregation on educational grounds. At a conference on the education of Spanish-speaking people in the Southwest which was held at the University of Texas in 1945, segregation was called "a highly undesirable practice that should be eliminated at the earliest possible moment." The educational specialists agreed that segregation handicapped the Hispanics in learning English. The educators at the meeting further went on record opposing segregation as being "pedagogically unsound, socially indefensible and palpably un-American".

Such views, however, did not bring the needed changes and the issue had to be settled by litigation. The next landmark case occurred in 1945 in Orange County, California. It set precedents invoked in the famous Brown vs. Board of Education decision through which the United States Supreme Court banned school segregation.

In the Orange County case – Mendez vs. Orange County – Hispanic children were being segregated on the grounds that they were "less clean, more diseased, more poorly clothed and mentally inverior to 'white' or Anglo Saxon children" (Fuquay, 1970:10). Initiated by the Santa Ana LULAC council, the case eventually went before a federal court in San Francisco, where Judge Paul F. McCormack issued a permanent injunction against the board of education banning the practice of segregation of Mexican or Latin descent children "for reasons of race, color or national origin." The court ruled that segregation was discriminatory, contrary to the Constitution and laws of the state and nation and utterly inconsistent with American traditions and ideals."

In Texas, the next development occurred in 1948. This was the Minerva Delgado case in which, for the first time, a court ruled that it was unlawful and unconstitutional to segregate Mexican children in the public schools of Texas. "We presented that case so ably that we didn't even have to file the lawsuit," exulted John Herrera. "We took it before the court on a petition and the judge went ahead and gave us a verdict which had the effect of closing all the Mexican schools in Texas."

The *San Antonio Express* reported that the decision affected objectionable school practices in 190 school districts in Texas (Garza

1951:32). The news report also said that Federal Judge Ben H. Rice had ruled that pupils of Latin American descent could not be segregated except in "separate classes on the same campus, in the first grade only, to overcome language difficulties."

These victories did not completely end school segregation in Texas or in other states. School district lines in Texas have had the effect of separating Anglos and Hispanics in many areas. Poverty and discrimination in housing have concentrated Mexican Americans in many cities and, as a result, they still attendschools which are disproportionately unbalanced in ethnic makeup. Testing which does not reveal the true intelligence of Hispanic students also serves to isolate them in "educable, mentally retarded" classes.

Two more recent cases in Corpus Christi dealt, once more, with segregated facilities and also with the creation of single-member school districts. In the first – Cisneros vs. Corpus Christi Independent School District – the court found that some city schools in the Hispanic community were not equal and that some intentional plans had been made by the school district to segregate Mexican-Americans. In the second, begun in 1974, the election of school board members at large is being challenged on the basis that it dinies Hispancis the opportunity to serve on the board of education.

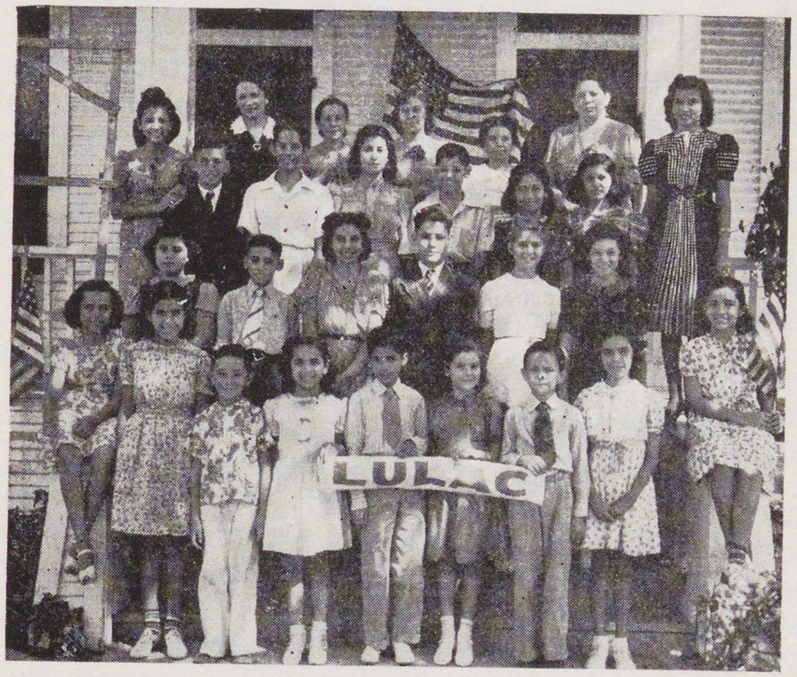
LULAC has continued to fight all practices which deny Hispanics an equal chance for an education and its faith in learning remains unshakable. Senator Dennis Chaves used to stress that knowledge gives the individual self-reliance and confidence. LULAC still believes that. With George I Sanches, LULAC believes that "education is the foundation of culture, progress, liberty, equality and fraternity, which in turn form the basis for peace, security and happiness, the goals of our people, our country, our world (Garza 1951:34). LULAC leaders have always seen education as the means to secure and safeguard the welfare of any people.

But perhaps the most compelling reason that LULAC placed such a high value on education was that it was the one acquisition that Anglo society could not take away. Swindled out of their land, their opportunities and even their good name, the Hispanic people in the U.S. found knowledge to be their only inviolable possession.

That unflagging interest led to the establishment of the National Educational Fund, the National Educational Service Centers, Operation SER (service, education, and redevelopment) and other programs, many of which are now funded by the government.

The range of these programs shows that LULAC has been concerned not only with the education of children but also with the continual enrichment of knowledge and training among adults. The organization has encouraged the start of night schools to teach English, provide citizenship training and enhancement of home skills and knowledge of child care, personal hygeine, health care and food preparation. LULAC councils as a matter of course have trained their members in public speaking, debate, and parliamentary procedure.

Around The Lulac Shield



The Sponsors, in the background, reading from left to right, are: Mrs Pat Cervantez, Mrs. Frank Gonzalez, Miss Lupita Sifuentes, Mrs. Santos S. Herrera and Mrs. Chano Garza.

SAN ANTONIO JUNIOR LULAC COUNCIL NO. 4

MEMBERSHIP LIST

Stella Bento, Adrienne Cadena, Gloria Carrejo, Carlos Cervantes, Jr., Charles Cervantes, Consuelo Cervantes, Louis Cervantes, Robert Cervantes, Irene Flores, Buddy Garza, Stella Garza, Alicia Gutierrez, Delia Gutierrez, Adel Gonzales, Henry Gonzales, Bertha Herrera, Margaret Juarez, Diega Martinez, John Raymond Moore Mary Regalado, Faustino Reyes, Eliseo Sifuentes, Jimmie Zepeda, Rudolph Regalado, Jh.

The San Antonio Junior Council No. 4 was organized under the direction of Mrs. Santos S. Herrera on the 14th day of June 1939, and their charter was issued to them by the Supreme Council on the 13th day of July, and they will have their Official Installation and delivery of Charter on the 13th day of August, in the Auditorium of the San Antonio Technical and Vocational School, formerly Main High School.

JUNIOR LULACS

(This song for the Junior Lulac Councils adapted to the tune of "MOTHER")

J — is for the JUSTICE we all stand for,
U — is for UNITED—young and old,
N — is NEVER fear we'll never fail you,
I — n our work we'll try to be like gold;
O — is our ONWARD march forever,
R — ight into the older Councils' field
Put them all together they spell JUNIOR,
Till we wear the Senior Lulac Shield.
L — is for the LOVE we hope you'll give us,
U — is for the UNITY we hold,
L — is for our LOYAL Junior Councils,
A — ll our lives until we have grown old;
C — is for the CARE We'll give our Council,
S — is for the SERVICE we will give:
Put them al together they spell LULACS,
"ALL FOR ONE AND ONE FOR ALL" we'll live!

Director Junior Council No. 4
Mrs. Santos S. Herrera,

CHAPTER IX -- THE LITTLE SCHOOLS OF THE 400

Without a doubt, LULAC's most far-reaching achievement in education was a program called the "Little Schools of the 400", which was the model for the present Headstart program funded by the federal government. Headstart has helped hundreds of thousands of youngsters gain extra preparation for school.

The father of the little schools was Felix Tijerina, the wealthy Houston restaurant owner who led LULAC between 1956 and 1960. Judge Alfred Hernandez of Houston also had a hand in making the schools a reality. Here is the way Judge Hernandez describes the evolution of the schools from idea to reality:

When Hernandez was a pre-law student at the University of Houston, he said he ran into a professor of psychology who had an intriguing idea. He and Hernandez had many discussions about the value of testing the Hispanic student with examinations designed for middle class students in mainstream U.S. culture. Their conclusion, subsequently substantiated in recent years, was that these tests were not valid for poor students from a Hispanic culture who were unfamiliar with English.

However, the professor had a theory that with 400 basic words a Puerto Rican could get along in English. He planned to seek a grant to see if he could prove his hypothesis.

"I finished at the University and the professor went to Puerto Rico, but the idea [of the 400 words] kept bugging me," Judge Hernandez said. "When I was state LULAC director I was asked what I would like to do and I said that if we could teach the children some words of English [before they entered the first grade] there would be fewer dropouts because they would be able to understand the English-speaking teacher. Other children came into the first grade with a knowledge of those basic words while ours did not know what was going on. By the time they found out they had lost a period of learning which was basic and necessary and at the end of the year they were failed.

"Was there any way we could get that done? I had no money and most of us in LULAC worked without funds.

That is where Felix Tijerina came in. However, he might not have been in LULAC if it had not been for Hernandez. Tijerana had dropped out of LULAC – ironically because of something Hernandez had done. "I was the secretary of the LULAC council here at the time and Tijerina was chairman of the fiesta and he was supposed to report how much money he made," Hernandez said. "He was a very wealthy man; so they

gave him the job because they knew he was not going to take any money. But we had gone three or four months and he had not turned in any report. I was asked to get after him, but he still would not come in.

"I decided to write him a registered letter, return receipt requested, threatening to sue if he did not pay. I wasn't a lawyer then, but he hit the ceiling. He came in and chewed me and everybody out, said he could buy us all out, gave us the money, told us what we could do with it and walked out. But I kept thinking we could use this man somehow. I spent one whole night talking to the man because he was not convinced." Finally, Tijerina came back.

Eventually, Hernandez said that he interested Tijerina in the ideal of pre-school language training for Mexican American children. "I established the LULAC Educational Fund from which we created the schools of the 400," Hernandez said. "My Compadre's [Tijerina's] money paid for a study at the University of Texas to determine how many words are necessary for a Mexican Spanish-speaking child to have a basic knowledge of English."

Tijerina could appreciate the value of learning because, as the only son of a poor Mexican-born farm worker family he had had to leave his home in Sugar Land, Texas, at the age of 13 to look for work in Houston. Never having gone to school and lacking even a working knowledge of English, he took night courses while working as a dishwasher and then studied a few textbooks on his own. He became the owner of three restaurants grossing close to $500,000 a year, but he never forgot his difficulties or those of his people.

In 1957, Tijerina as LULAC national president appeared before the Texas State Board of Education to sell the idea of pre-school language training for Mexican American children. The board members listened but had nothing concrete to offer. LULAC and Tijerina resigned themselves to seeking a solution to the problem on their own. With the results of the university study, Tijerina then contacted a teacher in the Baytown area, where there was a 99 percent concentration of Mexican American pupils.

The teacher, Mrs. Elizabeth Burrus, decided which 400 words should be used. Hernandez picks up the story from there: "Felix paid a girl [a 17 year old Mexican American by the name of Isabel Verver who was a high school sophomore and had aspirations of becoming a teacher] and she pilot tested the program with 45students."

"All through the summer of 1957," wrote Marjorie Jean Fuquay, "Isable [who had gone through the experience of not knowing English when she entered the first grade] taught her students a minimum of

five words a day. She used her bilingual advantage in her work and her method of teaching was simple: She would say a word in English over and over, translate in Spanish when the children did not comprehend, until all the youngsters caught on." (p. 12)

Appropriately, that first class was given in Tijerina's hometown of Sugar Land. "We had kids who were failing in first grade and those who were starting school for the first time," Judge Hernandez said. "We provided transportation, supplies, and paid the girl out of Felix's pocket. The thing turned out to be such a success that Mrs. Lyndon B. Johnson came to visit the school and was so impressed that she took up the idea [later] and we had Headstart."

Of course, that did not happen right away. Actually, LULAC councils became enthused and made the Little Schools of the 400 an organizational project. By 1959 more than 800 Mexican American children were enrolled in a dozen schools. The schools spread to other states, including California.

Seeking a broader program, Tujerina went to the Ford Foundation, which offered to contribute $100,000 if Tijerina could raise another $50,000 in Texas. However, the best he could do was $3,000. Tijerina was finally able to persuade the State of Texas to fund the program but the parents of Mexican American children had to request the service and therefore not everybody who could have benefitted received the training. Nevertheless, the Little Schools of the 400 eventually spread all over the state.

To get school system funding, LULAC had to convince the state that it would save money if fewer Mexican American students had to repeat the first grade. It was estimated at the time that each failure cost $22,000. The program ran for a number of years and afert Johnson became President the Little Schools became the basis for Project Headstart.

There were many other successes on a smaller scale. One of John Solis' proudest accomplishments was being able to get a local congressman to appoint the first Mexican American to West Point – Seferino Martinez – in 1937. LULAC can also take justifiable pride in the dramatic increase in the number of high school and college graduates in recent years. Statistics compiled by the Department of Health, Education and Welfare show that in the fall of 1976 there were 277,000 Hispanics enrolled in two or four-year colleges and universities. That number is still not proportional to the Hispanic population but it is a tremendous jump from those early days when the founders of LULAC began their long odyssey of service to their community.

CHAPTER X – EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

Scholarships have always been a major educational effort. "We have given 30-35 scholarships a year for I do not know how many years," Luis Wilmot said in Corpus Christi. In San Antonio, John Solis said 20 or 30 are awarded each year by Council No. 2. This is the pattern throughout the nation. Because LULAC councils operate with a great deal of autonomy from the LULAC national office, it was difficult to know the full extent of this scholarship activity until the LULAC National Scholarship Fund was started in 1975 under the LULAC National Educational Service Centers, Inc. (LNSEC).

However, J. T. Canales started the first scholarship drive in Brownsville, Texas in 1932 during his term as the third national president of LULAC. Over the years, councils have given thousands and thousands of dollars to an unknown number of students, including Leonel Castillo, Commissioner of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, Eduardo Pena, President of LULAC and a Washington, D.C. attorney, and Dr. Robert Jimenez, a psychiatrist and community health leader in Boston. LULAC Scholarship recipients quite possibly are in every state of the union and in every conceivable type of work. Many of them certainly would not be where they are if it weren't for their LULAC scholarship, a community service nearly as old as the League itself.

In 1975, the first year of operation of LNSF, a total of $16,900 was raised from six corporate sponsors and distributed in 44scholarships. Local LULAC councils did not participate in raising funds for LNSF in the first year.

The following year, the corporate donatios of $15,445 were more than matched by local councils, which raised $38,243 for a total of $53,687. In that year, 211 scholarships were awarded.

1977 was the best year – a total of $96,009 was given by 30 corporate donors and $80,108 was contributed by 52 LULAC Councils, totalling $176,115. That year, 443 scholarships in amounts ranging from $50 to $1500 were awarded.

In 1978, the corporate and local donations dipped slightly, but still remained at highly respectable levels for a relatively recent effort like LNSF.

A total of 29 corporate donors gave $92,526, which was supplemented by $77,912 given by 52 councils, for a total fo $173,438. The number of scholarships awarded reached its highest level, however, at 449.

Thus the totals to date of m oney collected by LNSF for distribution to students who might otherwise be unable to continue their education is truly remarkable.

Through 1978, a total of $420,141 had been collected – of that am ount, $223,878 was from 71 corporate donors and $196,263 was from LULAC Councils. A total of 1147 scholarships have been awarded.

Other education related programs of LULAC sought to keep children in all grades of school, a project dating from the 1930s and carried on by various councils independently over the years, and supportive services such as hot lunches, eyeglasses and shoes. Access to education, financial aid and quality of instruction have been LULAC's traditional interests in designing successful programs.

As an outgrowth of a small LULAC Council 2008 counselling project in San Franciso and as part of the evolution of LULAC's interest in education, as stated in its aims in the League's constitution, LSENC was form ally established in 1973. From a limited beginning, the LULAC Educational Service Centers today serve 15,000 student clients each year as a netword with the national ability to influence the status of all minority students in higher education.

Before relating the personalities and incidents in the history of LSENC, it is necessary to look at the context in which the organization serves. The Hispanic portion of the U.S. population represents one of the most severely underprivileged groups in American society. Separated by a different culture and language, Hispanics are near the bottom of the scale in terms of education, income and employment. These national factors, coupled with local barriers to higher education in San Francisco, prompted the development of the LNESC network. When the first neighborhood project started in 1969 in San Franciso, the national poverty rate for Hispanics was 21.2%, compared with 10.7% for the whole population. In 1978, when the LNEXC staff was writing proposals to HEW for funding to expand the program, the poverty rates were 21.4% for Hispanisc and 9.3% for all U.S. families. These persistently grim figures demonstrate not the failure of programs but the magnitude of the challenge: the persistence of discrimination, a large influx of poor and uneducated Hispanics from south of the border, an absence of legislation to benefit farm workers and other exploitable labor, and the difficulty of correcting in a few years the disadvantages of many generations.

When the first LNESC proposal was written in 1972, the median number os chool years completed in the five southwestern states where

Hispanics concentrate was 11.64 years for the majority students and eight for Hispanics. In 1978, the best information produced equivalents of 12.5 years and 10.1 years, respectively, showing that though the gap has narrowed the challenge remains: Hispanics are not served adequately by the nation's educational system.

LNESC's program of providing access to educational opportunity is responsible for seven percent of all Hispanics who entered postsecondary education for the first time in the U.S. in the academic years beginning in 1977 and 1978.

The cycle of poor education and low economic achievement continues, however, along with the issues of access, retention, professional development and institutional representation for Hispanics in higher education. These are precisely problems that LNEXC was designed to address.

Even though no one realized it at the time, the idea for LNEXC started when many postsecondary schools in the San Francisco area developed special admissions programs in 1969 but did not make provision for Hispanics. David Florence, Manuel Larez, John Rodelo and other members of LULAC Council 2008 petitioned these colleges with some success to include Hispanics in their special programs.

The next year, in 1970, Council 2008, guided by the members interested in education, rented a storefront in the Mission District of San Franciso and started a volunteer counseling program. At this time, David Florence, who had been a high school teacher and counselor, took the position of Equal Opportunity Program (EOP) associate director at the University of California at Berkeley, where he was able to obtain some outreach support for the LULAC counseling office. From this position, David Florence was appointed assistant deputy director of California Department of Human Resources Development. This is the employment security system and manages the employment and m anpower offices for the state. Since LULAC efforts had been instrumental in establishing one of these employment offices (HRD Center) in the Mission area to serve the Hispanic population, LULAC was then allowed to establish its education center in this facility. This arrangement allowed a coordinated effort between the employment and training programs of the state and the LULAC educational program.

With the success of this educaitonal project, the members active in the first effort, David Florence, Manuel Larez, John Rodelo and Shone Martinez, worked with the San Franciso community colleges to offer courses for credit in the Mission District and to take a survey of services wanted by the students. By 1971, the LULAC El Colegio de la Mision offered about 20 courses in the Mission District.

Frank Galaz joined the members of Council 2008 in 1971 to petition national president Pete Villa to appoint David Florence as LULAC national education chairman to develop the idea of the educational service centers into a national project. Pete Villa made this selection based on the merits of the program idea and David Florence then wrote the first proposal for the network of educational offices. This concept contained in that proposal developed out of the need for exchange of information about graduate and professional school opportunities in a national system that would be designed to pass knowledge of the best schools and programs around the country.

The LNESC proposal, submitted in 1972 to the Community Services Administration (then named the Office of Economic Opportunity and directed by Philip Sanchez), contained three components. The first provided counseling for those students entering college for the first time; the second coupled a career plan with an education plan to chart an occupational path for each client; and the third concerned itself with graduate opportunities counseling. A copy of the proposal was also sent to the Department of Health, Education and Welfare as an additional step on the difficult road to funding.

Before and during the search for money to start LNESC, a series of meetings held by the LULAC Supreme Council discussed the proposal, selected the sites and strengthened the idea where necessary. The result was very much a joint project of many LULAC leaders and members from around the country. These individuals determined the location of the original eleven LULAC Educational Service Centers following the criteria that:

1. each Center should be placed where the primary factor was the existence of a clear need for educational resources and linkage to educational institutions;
2. a Center should not be located in an area where a comparable, viable program, useful to the Hispanic community, already existed; and
3. the local leadership must be committed to the idea and be able to mobilize resources and personnel to meet the need.

The first proposal called for thirteen Centers plus the headquarters in Washington, D.C., chosen through a collective process by the LULAC National Executive Board, from which CSA selected and funded eleven counseling centers. These were Albuquerque, Boston, Chicago, Colorado Springs, Corpus Christi, Houston, Phoenix, Pomona, San Francisco, Seattle and Topeka. The administrative office was set up in Washington, D.C.

As with the other stages of development of LNESC, the funding finally obtained for the program of the Community Services Administration (CAS) was the result of efforts by several members of LULAC and other friends. Beginning with Pete Villa, some of the people who helped locate support were Judge Alfred Hernandez, Joe Benites, Eduardo Pena, David Florence, Alex Armendaris, and Philip Sanchez. The CSA in Washington at first suggested that the proposal be presented to its regional offices. HEW took no action on the proposal. After months of negotiations with various representatives and departments within the Nixon administration, a grant of $2,000,000 for 18 months was finally approved late in 1972 from CSA, and the first payment was received in January 1973.

Appropriately, Corpus Christi, Texas, where LULAC was born, was also the site of the first LNESC office. In six months other field centers were started, with Boston the last to open in October 1973. The Washington headquarters opened in July 1973, headed by Ernest Robles. Tony Bonilla of Corpus Christi chaired the LNESC Board of Directors both before and after its formal incorporation in the District of Columbia and recognition by the Internal Revenue Service as a tax exempt organization separate from LULAC. Ricardo Gonzales was the first field center director in Corpus Christi. One of the first employees he hired was Jose Longoria, who is now national director of LNEXC in Washington. The years under the chairmanship of Mr. Bonilla were a time for identifying program goals and techniques.

The primary component of the LNESC program was and remains educational counseling for those Hispanics and other economically disadvantaged youth wanting to make the transition from secondary to postsecondary education, i.e., getting the student into school byproviding assistance in choosing a course of study, finding an institution, and putting together a financial aid package in consultation with the financial aid office. The 1973-74 program year of activity in the field was used to establish relationships with the high schools and agencies in the eleven communities and to publicize the new, free service offered to youth in the target areas. During that year, 16,446 students were counseled adn $5,867,700 in financial aid was channelled to the 5,423 enrolled in postsecondary education by LNESC. Some attention was given to the career and graduate counseling components of the original concept, but it was obvious to the staff from the beginning that the need was so great and the resources so limited that the bulk of their work would have to be concentrated on gaining access to colleges and universities for first-time students until additional funding for the other objectives could be secured.

Under the continued direction of Tony Bonilla as chairman and Ernest Robles as national director, LNESC counseled 15,935 students in the second program year, 1974-75, and enrolled 5,280 of these clients in postsecondary programs with $4,559,500 in financial aid generated for their support. During this second year two issues occupied the leadership of the organization: (1) funding, and (2) management improvements. To continue LNESC past the eighteen months of the initial grant, another proposal was submitted to CSA for twelve moremonths,but only interim funding, sometimes in thirty-day segements, was approved. Short term small grants continued until the fall of 1976, when a full year award was again made by CSA.

In November 1975, Eduardo Pena was elected chairman of the LNESC Board of Directors. The years of Mr. Pena's chairmanship can be characterized as a period of stabilization for LNESC. Narciso Cano was hired as acting national director and was confirmed as national director in January 1976. He remained in the position until January 1978, when he became director of the Department of Manpower and Economic Development for the City of San Antonio. With Mr. Pena and following the arrival of Mr. Cano, changes and improvements to the program continued as the strength of LNESC and its full potential began to be realized.

In 1975, the LNESC staff solicited $16,900 from six corporations and awarded scholarships to 44 students selected by the Washington staff.

In 1976, Eduardo Pena and Narciso Cano, as Chairman of the Board and National Director, respectively, created the LULAC National Scholarship Fund, which established the sharing concept, incorporating LULAC councils into the Fund's structure and successfully designing and implementing the first, truly national scholarship entity for Hispanics. The LNSF has grown each year with increasing numbers of LULAC councils and businesses participating. All recipients are now selected at the local level by committees of the participating councils. Awards are generally made in public ceremonies and letters of appreciationare sent from the students to the corporate donors.

Two features of the LNSF have been added to meet the needs of special groups. The first is the Expansion Incentive Program (EIP), which is the Fund's plan to include Hispanic youth in this scholarship opportunity who live in communities where there has not been a LULAC council. EIP money is set aside from the contributions collected by the LNESC national office and allocated in declining amounts over a three-year period to interested community organizations acting as a scholarship committee and working to establish a LULAC council. After three years, the new group should be sufficiently organized to participate on a matching basis as do all other councils, or it will not be viable and will cease to function. The EIP helps to start LULAC councils and extend the scholarship target areas to students who might not otherwise be included.

The second special part of the LNSF will begin in 1979 when the Fund will award annual scholarships in the amount of $1,000 for the first time. These will be called the LULAC Leadership Scholarships and will be given to a few students selected by the LNESC Board of Directors on the bases of sustained community activity, academic achievement and financial need. This second special feature of the LNSF will recognize the young persons in LULAC who willingly contribute extraordinary amounts of tiem and skill to the betterment of their home area.

The goal of the LNSF and its particular efforts in the EIP and Leadership scholarships is to increase each year the participating councils and corporations. This unique sharing relationship ties together the local and national donors in a mutually beneficial structure, with an added value to the student who receives not only financial aid but access to information on career opportunities. The LNSF, now the largest and best known scholarship fund for Hispanics in the U.S., has clearly proven to be a meaningful and successful project of the LULAC National Educational Service Centers.

Jose Longoria became National Director of LNESC in January 1978 and Belen Robles was elected Chairman of the LNESC Board of Directors in March 1978. Following the previous two-year periods of identification and stabilization, LNESC entered in 1978 a time of fulfillment and expansion of the program.

After five years and $6,571,829 of funding from the Community Services Administration, LNESC applied for and transferred its primary funding source to Talent Search within the U.S. Office of Education (OE) as of July 1, 1978, with an initial award from OE of $1,100,000 for ten centers and headquarters for the first year of a two-year grant.

Expansion of LNESC has occurred in many wasy in recent years. From the early days with CSA when the program had one purpose and received about $1 million annaully, LNESC has become a multi-purpose educational organization with a combined budget from a variety of cources in the federal and non-federal sectors totaling $2.1 million

annually. Instead of the original 11 field centers working in local target areas, LNESC now has 18 primary and secondary locations with a statewide subnetwork in New Mexico. LNESC now serves all segments of the Hispanic population – Chicano, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central and South American – with several services in educational assistance and advocacy. With Talent Search, CETA and private financial support, LNESC now provides educational counselling for the secondary to postsecondary transition, for graduates, for vocational training and for specialized career and work experiences such as General Motors Institute and opportunities with Kraft, Inc.

LNESC is now the major institution for Hispanics in higher education, working with secondary and postsecondary institutions as well as community organizations.

Ben Garza Is Elected President Of Latin-American Citizens; 1930 Convention in Laredo

Ben Garza was unanimously re-elected president for the year in ... sessions Sunday after- ... Laredo was chosen as ... tion city in 1930. The d ... for May 1. The Sunday morning ... here



President meets with president; league supports farmworkers

On the eve of President Carter's visit to Mexico, LULAC Presi... Pena joined other Hispanic ... met with the President to ... cerns about the emerging ... relationship in light of vas... in Mexico, and issues in ... Hispanic community.

Carter said the U.S. will ... as an "equal partner" in t... that Mexico is as importa... policy concern as any othe... world.

Pena and the other Hi... resentatives pressed Carte... this meeting would develo...

wage be guarante...





Roberto Ornelas

CHAPTER XI – THE STRUGGLE FOR JOBS

Employment is one area in which LULAC has always been militant. John Herrera remembers that when LULAC first began in Houston a family baking firm with a German name refused to hire Mexican Americans. "So we put out the word and their baking racks were thrown out into the street," Herrera said. Another time he remembers that a brewer which made the beer most popular with Mexican Americans refused to hire Mexicans and LULAC instituted a boycott which ended only after the firm decided to hire Mexican American drivers.

During World War II, the Houston LULAC council was successful in opening up thousands of jobs in defense industry to Mexican Americans. Herrera said that at the start of the war effort the shipyards would not hire any Mexican Americans. "People would come from all over Texas and they would be yanked out of line and told: 'We do not hire Mexicans.' Even after a national defense training school started turning out Mexican American graduates, the shipyards would not hire them. However, persistent persuasion by LULAC finally paid off, Herrera said.

By the end of World War II, Mexican Americans accounted for about 40 percent of 80,000 workers in the shipyards. Therefore, Herrera estimated, LULAC was responsible for $30 million to $50 million in income going to Mexican Americans between 1939 and the end of the war.

LULAC has interceded many times for migrant workers and other farm workers. Judge Alfred Hernandez, while national president of LULAC, walked from the Rio Grande Valley to the capitol in Austin to help farm workers dramatize their need for better wages. Hernandez almost got himself impeached from LULAC's top office for his troubles. "Some of the people in the conservative element claimed I acted without authority," Hernandez said. Impeachment proceedings were started, but Hernandez said he got wind of it and rallied his supporters, and the impeachment turned out to be a testimonial instead, he smiled.

Probably the most militant of LULAC's presidents, Hernandez also took part in the famous "Albuquerque walkout," which some commentators called the Mexican American revolution because, Hernandez said, "it was the first time that Hispanic Americans from all over the nation told Uncle Sam to go to hell and not to tell us what to do but to listen to us."

The meeting was called by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) on March 28, 1966, to investigate Hispanic employment problems. From Hernandez' perspective, here is what transpired:

"We were invited and our expenses were paid. There was a cross-section of Hispanics from all over the nation. When I got there I was picked up at the airport and taken to a motel and asked to come to a meeting before registering. There were people there from the EEOC and they said they would like me to present this and cover that and 'this is what we think you should say and do.'

"I said they should wait a minute. They were telling me what I should say. Here they had invited me to tell them what I thought ought to be done, not to say what they wanted me to tell. I said I couldn't buy it. So after I came out of the meeting I looked around and the others (having had the same experience) asked me what was going on. I said I had just told the EEOC people to go to hell.

"Others felt the same way and we decided to get together that night to prepare position papers. So that night we didn't go to bed. We prepared a position paper and everybody was given a role to say this or that at a given moment. And if somebody said such-and-such we agreed to get up and leave.

"By that time we had a better place to meet at the University of Albuquerque, and there we formed an Ad Hoc committee, which became the nucleus for pushing Washington on many things." That group was to figure prominently on another development which has had a large impact on the lives of Hispanic people.

One of the problems which LULAC had to face in trying to improve the employability of Latin-origin citizens was lack of job training and a skills bank which employers seeking qualified Hispanics could contact.

At that time (the mid 1960s) Robert Ornelas, who was to succeed Judge Hernandez as national LULAC President, and George Roybal were working in providing equal employment opportunity in the Navy. The then director of the Navy's equal employment opportunity program, Mr. Girard P. Clark, agreed with Roberto Ornelas, then Director of Mexican-American programs for the Navy's EEO Program and with George Roybal, Industrial Employment Policy Specialist, that such a program was not only needed, but should be developed, and authorized the two men to direct their efforts toward this end. The sequence of events then quickly formed in the following way: an invitation was extended to the American G.I. Forum by LULAC to join together and pool resources in a regional manpower program to be

called Operation SER; a proposal was prepared by George Roybal and submitted to the U.S. Department of Labor and the Office of Economic Opportunity; a national board was created; the proposal was funded; and what is considered the most outstanding manpower program in the country was thus begun.

Ornelas explains the origin of the idea this way.

"We came across the idea that there had to be some kind of project for the Mexican-American if he were to get manpower training and employment," Ornelas said. "Whenever we would go to government contractors and say, 'You can't discriminate,' we would get the same question: 'Where do we go to get Mexican-American employees?' There was no place we could tell them to go. The blacks had the NAACP and the Urban League, the Puerto Ricans had the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico and the Indians had the Bureau of Indian Affairs with all its problems, but the Mexican Americans did not have a focal point where industry could go to get qualified applicants at all levels."

On February 7, 1965, Ornelas appeared before a National Supreme Council meeting of LULAC in El Paso, Texas, with William Bonilla presiding, and spoke on his work with the Navy Department and its special interest in Hispanics. Ornelas said the greatest problem in combatting discrimination against people of Hispanic origin was that there was no referral agency which Hispanic skilled and semi-skilled could register at, and which government contractors could contact for needed personnel.

Ornelas said Houston had been selected as the pilot city to have LULAC establish such a referral agency and that the success of this one program would determine whether it would be expanded to other cities. The National Supreme Council endorsed the plan, and Jess Vela made a motion (seconded by David Adame) that Houston officially proceed as the pilot project for the program.

On February 12, 1965, at a regular meeting of LULAC Council 60, Ornelas made a presentation to the council concerning the action of the Supreme Council. District Director Danny Sendejas was present and pledged his cooperation in this project. A motion to undertake a voluntary program of registering, classifying, and referring Mexican American applicants to industry was made by Ernest Eguia and seconded by Joe Ramon. President Roy Martinez, after discussion had terminated, called for a vote on the motion. It passed unanimously.

Council No. 60 plunged into the vast amount of work necessary to carry out this project with enthusiasm. Committees were appointed and at a committee meeting attended by David Adame, Rev. James Navarro, George Roybal and Robert Ornelas, it was agreed to name the project "LULAC – Jobs for Progress Center."

Work continued at a rapid pace, and because a National Supreme Council meeting was scheduled to be held in Houston on April 10-11, 1965, it was decided to hold the formal opening on April 10. At 10:30 a.m., Judge Alfred Hernandez, master of ceremonies for the occasion, welcomed those present at the LULAC Council No. 60 home. Among those present were William Bonilla, National President, David Adame, Texas State Director, and E.D. Cardiel, New York State Director. Among those representing industry from Houston were representatives of the following companies: Humble Oil and Refining Co., Southwestern Bell Telephone Co., Cameron Iron Works, Shell Oil, General Foods, Gulf Oil, Coca Cola Bottling Co. of Houston, Brown and Root, Houston Lighting and Power Co., Olin Corp., Sinclair Oil Corp., Tellepsen Construction Co., and the Associated General Contractors, Texas Highway-Heavy Branch. Appropriately enough, Girard P. Clark was the main speaker at the formal dedication of a program in which he believed, and to which he was totally committed.

On May 7-9, 1965, the Texas LULAC State Convention was held in Lubbock, Texas, Honorable David Adame, State Director, presiding. At this convention, a major topic of discussion was the establishment of the Houston LULAC Jobs for Progress Center. State Director David Adame requested the Navy Department's representatives Roberto Ornelas, George Roybal, and Robert D. Anthony to expand their efforts and assist in the establishment of similar centers in other areas of the state. Carlos Truan, then National Executive Director, requested that the next LULAC Job Placement Center be established in Corpus Christi. At the following session, the following resolution was passed:

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, the second largest minority group in the United States is made up of some five million Americans with Spanish surnames, and the majority of these Latin Americans live in the Southwest from Texas to California, and

WHEREAS, throughout this vast area they suffer the greatest unemployment and under-employment, the least education and the lowest utilization of any group, and realizing that the Federal Government's Equal Employment Opportunity Program had offered no solution to this deplorable situation, the Department of

*the Navy, through its Director of the Equal Employment Opportunity Program and its Specialists for Latin American Affairs and the National President of LULAC, working together, pinpointed the problem *** the lack of employment recruitment sources, and resolved to correct this situation, and*

WHEREAS, the Supreme Council of LULAC, duly assembled in El Paso authorized the establishment of a Job Placement Center for Latin Americans in the City of Houston, and

WHEREAS, through the efforts of the Field Specialists of the Navy's Equal Employment Opportunity Program and the entire membership of LULAC Council 60, the first Job Placement Center in this Country for Latin Americans has been established and future Job Placement Centers under the sponsorship of LULAC are to be established,

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED, that this convention, assembled in Lubbock, Texas commend the efforts of the Equal Employment Opportunity Program of the Department of the Navy and the entire membership of LULAC Council No. 60, that a copy of this resolution be forwarded to the President of the United States, the Vice President of the United States, the Secretary of the Navy, the Director of the Navy Program, and the President of LULAC Council No. 60.

APPROVED AND SIGNED THIS 9TH DAY OF MAY, 1965, AT LUBBOCK, TEXAS.

/s/David Adame
David Adame
LULAC State Director for Texas

/s/Belen B. Robles
Belen B. Robles
Convention Secretary

****

During the latter part of April, and during May, June, and July 1965, Council No. 60 spent many hours at their LULAC home working on the Center. Since Saturday was an ideal time for those registering the persons coming into the center, the home was open from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. for this purpose. Since the response from the community was overwhelming, it soon became a common practice to see wives of some members lending a hand. On any given Saturday, Mr. and Mrs. Sammy

Aldrette, Mr. and Mrs. Joe Ramon, Mr. and Mrs. Roy Martinez would be seen working along with David Adame, Ernest Eguia, Toby Hernandez, Gilbert Gomez, Juvencio Rodriguez, Benny Martinez, Placido Martinez, and other Council No. 60 members.

In spite of all this work, and in spite of the response from industry, the actual number of registrants placed was discouraging. At a meeting of Council No. 60 in early June, with much discussion on the issue, a motion was made that Council No. 60 close down its voluntary Job Placement Center. The motion was duly seconded, and the president called for discussion on the matter. David Adame was the first speaker against the motion. He argued that if the motion passed, it could mean the end of a project which could alter the destinies and lives of Mexican-Americans in the entire nation. Tony Alvarez followed David Adame and asked the Council to reconsider the project and, if they chose to continue, he volunteered to take over as chairman of the center. After further discussion, a vote was called for and the motion was defeated. Had not David Adame, Tony Alvarez, Joe Ramon and other members seen that this project could be the embryo of a plan that would expand nationwide, Operation SER today could still be but a dream.

On June 19, 1965, the second LULAC Jobs for Progress Center was formally dedicated in Corpus Christi,, Texas. Previous to the opening, Mr. Ornelas, Mr. Roybal, and Navy IPES Gary Larsen and Jim Garfield had met on several occasions with National President William Bonilla and Executive Director Carlos Truan. Mr. Truan spent many hours away from his business and was very instrumental in the formulation of the Center.

In September, 1965, a third LULAC Job Placement Center was opened in Beaumont to serve the Golden Triangle Area. Instrumental in its establishment were many LULACS in the area, including Paul Paredes, Romeo Vera, Frank Rojas, Paul Silva, Dolores Guerrero and Ruby Saldana.

These three LULAC voluntary Job Placement Centers demonstrated very clearly not only the need for those centers, but that industry would respond and avail itself of their services. Because of their success, the Navy Department's EEO Program for the Mexican American was able to direct its efforts towards the establishment of a Regional Mexican American Manpower Program funded by the Federal Government.

The LULAC Vocational Training Centers were so successful that the need for better arrangements became immediately evident. "The demand from industry was so great that we saw it was impossible to continue doing this on a voluntary basis," Ornelas said.

"So Roybal and I prepared the first proposal for funding by the government as a research and demonstration project and we approached the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) and the Department of Labor (DOL) for joint funding. We also approached our national LULAC president, Judge Hernandez, and he very wisely said, 'There are two national Mexican American organizations and if we do this by ourselves then the other organization will want to do it too. So why don't we ask the G.I. Forum to join us?' "

The Forum, headed by Agustin Flores, agreed to join in and Ornelas and Roybal then "wrote and rewrote and re-rewrote" the proposal. Then they traveled across the country trying to sell the idea, which Ornelas said was not easy because petty jealousies arose. The Department of Labor and the OEO agreed to consider the proposal if it would be limited to five states – Texas, Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico and California. However, approval did not come until two years later after Ornelas, Flores and Hernandez had dinner with President Johnson at the White House.

Judge Hernandez was in the midst of a meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee (of Albuquerque Walkout days) in Denver when the summons came to go to Washington that same day for dinner with the President. Some of the committee members were not happy with the idea and told Hernandez that if he met with the President he could no longer be on the Ad Hoc Committee.

"I said I didn't want to go only as LULAC but would rather go as a representative of the Ad Hoc Committee as well," Hernandez said. "I had to leave right away if I was to get to Washington that day. So I asked that they arrange a conference call with all the members. We had everyone from all over the country in on this thing. I said I would call them before I got to the White House and if the Ad Hoc Committee decided they didn't want me to attend I wouldn't go.

"So we got to Washington and there was a car from the EEOC waiting to pick up Flores. I rode with them and as we were approaching the outskirts of Washington one of the guys said: 'Judge, we are running late. Do you want to go to your hotel to freshen up or go directly to the White House?'

"I said I had to go to my hotel because I had to take a conference call and did not know whether I was going to the White House. He asked what I meant. I said again that I might not accept the invitation. He replied that one does not refuse an invitation to dinner at the White House and demanded to know who the hell I thought I was.

"I said he shouldn't misunderstand me. I am Mexican-born, come from a very humble beginning, and I never dreamed that I would be breaking bread with the President of the United States, and this was not an easy decision for me to make - not because I thought the invitation was degrading, not because I thought the President should be snubbed. It was just that I had a commitment to a group of people and unless they approved I couldn't go.

"By the time we got to the hotel the reporters were waiting there. They wanted to know why I was refusing the invitation. I said I would make my phone call and talk to the members of the press later. I made my call and the Ad Hoc Committee said the team was ready to wheel and deal and that if I went I should represent both the Committee and LULAC and then they would know that everybody was protected.

"I sat across from the President. We were very jovial. He said: 'Gentlemen, I am going to have to leave you before too long because I have some black African leaders I have to meet for a minute, but I am coming back because I want to visit for a while.'

"I said, 'Mr. President, before you leave I have something I would like to ask you and it is strictly hearsay. I heard that your budget is going to be cut and if your budget is cut then this proposal that we have submitted is not going to be funded and then we are going to be left out in the cold.'

"The President replied, 'Where in the damn hell did you get that information?' I said it was merely heresay. He said: 'Goddamn, hear it from me. This thing is going to be funded and my budget is not going to be cut and, Goddammit, don't spread lies.'

"He was gone for about an hour and then came back. He ate and drank and drank some more. Then he invited us to see where he ate and slept. He was concerned because one of the girls was finishing her finals and was not back in Washington yet, so he asked us to wait until she got there.

"He told us about Truman's widow and how many problems they had with the damned widow. After the girl got there, personal friends

of theirs joined us and took us to see some movies. We stayed and watched movies until 3:30 in the morning. Then they put us in limousines and sent us to our hotels. Two weeks later, Project SER (Service, Employment, Redevelopment) came into being."

But because the original funding was assured by Presidential assistance, the bureaucrats at the Department of Labor refused to give the program its proper credit. Despite impressive performances each year, Labor Department officials refused to extend the scope of the original proposals. Each year LULAC and the American G.I. Forum would submit a new proposal with modest expansion objectives and each year the reply would come that the Department did not have additional funds and that SER would not get re-funded for the same amount as the previous year.

The response for the fifth year's proposal came in 1970, shortly after Eudaurdo Pena, Jr., had been elected chairman of the National Board of SER. Pena, who was then employed as counsel to the U.S. Senate Committee on Labor and Public Welfare, refused to accept the Department's decision.

After clearing with the rest of the board members, Pena fired off a letter to the Secretary of Labor refusing to accept the limited grant.

"We believe that SER's record of achievement on behalf of better job opportunities for Mexican-Americans is superior to any other similarly funded program. If we are wrong, we should not be re-funded. If we are right, we deserve more than a last minute ultimatum and we should be allowed to expand the program to the West and Midwestern states that have large populations of Hispanics which are not being served by the programs funded in those areas," wrote Pena.

The Department of Labor hastily arranged for a 3-month extension of the contract and hired a consultant firm to evaluate SER's performance. The report was highly favorable and the Department had no choice but to grant Pena's demands. The new SER contract grew from $3.5 million in 13 cities in five states, to more than 10 million dollars, including the states of Wisconsin, Illinois and Nebraska.

Ornelas said that SER started with a grant of $325,000.

Since it opened its doors in 1964, SER-Jobs for Progress, Inc. has successfully served more than 150,000 persons, teaching them the skills necessary to secure and retain gainful employment. SER currently operates 134 projects in 104 cities with each project structured to meet

the needs of a given community (SER Annual Report, 1978:1). In addition to a national office in Los Angeles, this non-profit organization has regional offices in Austin, Texas, Denver, Colorado, Chicago, Illinois, and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. At least partially as a result of SER's efforts, the Hispanic unemployment rate has been decreasing, although it is still much higher than that of the nation as a whole.

Ser has continued to grow rapidly. In 1978, it served 50,000 clients, a 38 percent increase over the 39,000 served in 1977. Its budget increased from $3.5 million in 1977 to $51 million in 1978. (Funding comes from government grants and private donations.) During 1978, a total of 21 new offices were added to the SER network, including the East Coast regional office in Philadelphia and a Youth Programs Office in Washington. New programs aimed at veterans and youths were funded. Over 1,400 persons were employed by SER across the nation in 1978.

SER boasts a $1,639 cost per placement as opposed to the national average of $4,395. It has exceeded the national average in the placement of CETA clients, succeeding in 70.2 percent of its cases in finding them permanent, unsubsidized jobs. This compares with a national placement average of 47.2 percent (SER Annual Report, 1978:12).

In addition to training, placing and rehabilitating workers, SER's national office does research on labor market trends and community needs, develops new programs and services and enhances working relationships with business and industry. In 1973, SER brought together a group of major corporations to form a business advisory council called National Amigos de SER. Its purpose was to establish a firm link between the Hispanic community and private business. Today more than 60 corporations participate in this activity. Twenty local Amigos councils have been established, and 16 were organizing in 1978. These identify labor trends, advise on the design of training programs, and help place SER program graduates.

Another way in which LULAC has been able to improve the job situation for Hispanic Americans is through court action. One of the most important cases was that against the City of Santa Ana. The case was filed in the late 1960s and it took five years before all the appeals were exhausted with a complete victory for LULAC.

One of the prime movers of the lawsuit was Ray Villa, a former director of Project SER, although he gives credit also to Gloria Perez, at that time national LULAC vice president. She gave the initial consent to file the suit in the name of LULAC.

The litigation was a class-action suit charging that the City of Santa Ana Police and Fire Departments were discriminating against Hispanics in their hiring practices. Villa said that Hispanics then comprised 25 percent of the city's population but only three percent of the policemen and a smaller percentage of the firemen.

Paul Gray, a bilingual attorney who had practiced law in Mexico City, undertook the case without a fee. But Villa did not have even enough money to pay for the advertisement published in the local press to try to locate Hispanic applicants who had been unlawfully denied employment in the Police or Fire Departments. The ad cost $500 and he had only $400 on hand. Villa said he had tried to start a Legal League Alliance among LULAC councils but only three of the units made the $100 contributions he requested.

Fifteen persons who had been discriminated came forward to become the plaintiffs. They won $500,000 in back wages from the City of Santa Ana. "Today," Villa said, "Hispanics are 29.5 percent of the Santa Ana Police Department, although the Hispanic population of the city has grown to 38 percent.



BEN GARZA HONORED—Officers and members of the League of United Latin American Citizens placed a wreath on Ben Garza's grave at Rose Hill Cemetery, Corpus Christi, Texas, in commemoration of LULAC'S 26th anniversary. Garza was the organization's first national president and was instrumental in founding LULAC. Included at graveside ceremonies were (from left to right) Joe Garza, local president and brother of Ben Garza, S. R. Mora, Jr., Gabe Lozano and M. G. Cortez.

CHAPTER XII -- CIVIL RIGHTS

Voting rights and their concomitants have always been a LULAC concern. The person who wields a vote wields power. Therefore those who wanted to keep the Hispanic people in a posture of subservience used many tactics to keep them from the ballot box. Even to this day the Texas primary election is held in May after about 100,000 migrant farm workers have left the state on their yearly trek northward in the always precarious struggle for a livelihood. Holding the primary at that time, observes Crystal City Judge Jose Angel Gutierrez, robs those workers of a chance to vote.

Another problem was the poll tax, which people who were poor could not afford to pay. Others were intimidated from voting, sometimes with threat of being dismissed from their jobs. Without the vote there was no chance at all of serving on juries.

The absence of Hispanic jurors was something the lawyer leaders of LULAC noticed every time they went to court. It was, in the main, a demoralizing situation, even in the late 1950s. Pete Tijerina of San Antonio tells of one case which came up at that time when he was state chairman of LULAC:

A lady named Munoz in Charlotte, Texas, was injured in an auto accident and had to have a leg amputated. We went to trial in Jordantown, and the first jury panel had no Mexican Americans. So I went to the judge and told him:

" 'You know, there are no Mexican Americans. There is discrimination. I cannot get a fair trial.'

"Well, the judge said: 'Look, I have been very fair. I am impartial. I don't discriminate. I tell these people to call Mexican Americans for juries. So I am going to reset the case for six months hence.'

"Six months later we came back and there were two Mexican Americans on the jury panel. One was deaf and the other couldn't speak English. So again we were left without Mexican Americans. As a result, we had to settle the case for $37,000 when it was easily worth $100,000."

William D. Bonilla has also had bad experiences in Corpus Christi. One time he said he lost a civil suit involving a claim for damages filed in

behalf of a Mexican American girl. Later the one black member of the jury in an otherwise all-Anglo panel told him that some jurors had been willing to award the girl $3,500. But the argument against that was "if you give that girl $3,500 we will be rich and you will never hear the end of it and we will be flooded with lawsuits by the Mexicans."

Of course, simply having brown faces on the jury has not been enough. Bonilla told of another case in 1978 in which his client was found guilty of burglary of a residence on the scant evidence that there was a single print of the little finger of his left hand on a wine glass in the house burglarized. The Mexican American was sentenced to 10 years in the penitentiary even though he had no previous record. There had been enough Mexican Americans on the jury, but one of those who had been for the defendant said it was as if their chairs had been empty. They said nothing during the deliberations.

From LULAC's early days jury exclusion cases proved very difficult. John Herrera told about a case in Fort Bend County which LULAC took to the Court of Criminal Appeals in Texas. The basis for the suit was that, as in another famous case titled White versus Alabama, the Mexican Americans were being excluded from the juries on the basis of race. However, Herrera said, the court ruled: "You cannot parallel or relate the way Mexicans are being treated in Texas and not being allowed to serve on juries, to White versus Alabama because you are of the white race and whites are serving on the juries."

"They were giving us a backhanded compliment," Herrera said. "So then we had to go back to the drawing boards. We decided we were going to have to come in through the back door."

Subsequent cases throughout the nation developed the legal doctrine of "a class separate and apart" and it was that development which set the precedent necessary for Mexican Americans to win their biggest victory in the matter of exclusion of Mexican Americans from juries.

However, it was difficult to get a defendant to agree to appeal because there was always the chance that, in a second trial, he might fare worse. This was especially true in trials involving capital offenses. The defendant who had escaped the electric chair was not likely to agree to an appeal which might give the district attorney a chance to convince another jury that he should get the death penalty.

Eventually, LULAC got the chance it was looking for. The case was that of Pedro Hernandez, a young cripple who was studying to be a barber and went into a dance hall maintained by a "white man's

Mexican" in Jackson County who was getting Braceros in, Herrera said. The manager threw Hernandez out and the youth came back and shot him dead through the heart.

The prosecutor tried to send Hernandez to the chair but he got a life sentence instead. The youth gave LULAC permission to appeal on the basis that never in the history of that county had there been a Mexican American called for duty in a petit jury, a grand jury or as a jury commissioner even though Mexican Americans were up to 18 percent of the population.

"The State stipulated to that and that is where we beat them," exulted Herrera. The case reached the U.S. Supreme Court in 1954 and was argued just one week after Thurgood Marshall argued Brown versus Board of Education, the landmark case which declared school segregation unconstitutional.

Leading the team of Mexican American lawyers who went to Washington to argue the case was the late Gus Garcia, a brilliant lawyer. Also in the group was Carlos Cadena, then city attorney of San Antonio and now a judge, and John Herrera.

Garcia was worried they would be thrown out of court. The reason was that the brief had not arrived within the 60-day time period permitted for submission. It had arrived on the 61st day. Herrera said he had suggested that there must have been a holiday somewhere, and, sure enough , when they counted back they found that Flag Day had saved them from missing the deadline.

Herrera remembers that the case was argued on a bitterly cold day – January 11, 1954. And as the Mexican American lawyers went up the icy steps of that magnificent Supreme Court building, holding on to the rail to keep from slipping on the icy steps, Carlos Cadenas quipped: "Que bueno seria si nos tocaran Zacatecas ahorita." (How good it would be if they would play us Zacatecas now.)

"You have to get there at a certain time and they only give you one hour," Herrera said. "And when you get to the rostrum, it says there that when the green light goes on you have five minutes and when the red light goes on you have to stop.

"Gus stopped when the red light went on but he had been regaling the Supreme Court – and they mentioned this in the decision – with this – 'Your honors,' Gus said, 'when there are over 50,000 calls for jury duty – petit juries, grand juries and jury commissioners – and not a single

Mexican American has been called to serve, there is a white man in the wood pile somewhere.'

"Now this was the same court which one week earlier had heard arguments in Brown versus Board of Education and received many accolades because of their decision, but no one remembers that they also heard Hernandez versus State of Texas," Herrera said.

"Anyway, as Gus wound up his argument, Chief Justice Earl Warren said: 'Now that is very interesting, Mr. Garcia. Will you please continue.' And you know that *ladron* stole 14 more minutes," exclaimed Herrera. Later a court attache told them that never in his 40 years service on the Supreme Court staff had any lawyer been permitted to go beyond his allotted one hour. "And the night before we had had to put him [Garcia] in an ice tub to sober him up," Herrera said. "It shows how God works in wondrous ways. He takes care of LULAC members, drunk or sober!"

Unfortunately, the jury battle was not won with the Hernandez victory. Pete Tijerina said that in 1965-1966 every grand jury in San Antonio contained the names of only one or two Mexican Americans. "So we filed suit against Criminal District Judge Archie S. Brown of Bexar County and were able to prove that Mexican Americans were excluded from grand jury service. We were able to bring people from the lower economic brackets into grand jury service."

There were many other important cases. Tijerina said there was once a law that you had to be a property owner in order to vote. "We went and filed suit against the governor of the State of Texas and eliminated that requirement. Then there was a provision that denied illiterates the right to vote. Well, we were able to prove that Mexican Americans were ready to vote and with a little assistance would be intelligent voters. We won that case and eliminated the literacy requirements for voting. Those are some of the cases in which I was involved.

"We sued every major corporation in the Southwest for employment discrimination and we won every case we tried. The City Public Service board had no [Mexican American] people in training for management or even for office clerks. There was a requirement that you had to be five feet eight inches tall – so you could climb a utility pole. We eliminated that requirement and got them to train Mexican Americans for better jobs. Today at City Public Service [the utility company in San Antonio] you will find Mexican Americans in all levels of employment – in management, as office workers and foremen, in the shops and on the work project."

There have been many other cases, but these are some of the most important. All were a labor of love because LULAC never had adequate funding to be able to compensate its lawyers properly. Some of the expenses were covered from the proceeds of fiestas and the like or from the $1 a month dues paid by members. But there were never enough funds.

Finally in the 1960s, Tijerina was invited by Jack Greenberg of the Legal Defense Fund in New York to some of his seminars on civil rights. "They sent me an airplane ticket and some money to go to a conference in Chicago," recalls Tijerina. "I didn't go because I knew nothing about the organization, but I sent another lawyer. He came back and said they were very interested in talking to me and were willing to introduce me to the Ford Foundation if I was interested in working with the Legal Defense Fund. That meant we would set up a separate fund and work with the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

"I talked with several leaders of LULAC Council No. 2 – Commissioner Albert Peña, Roy and Alvin Padilla and Tony Cruz. They said: 'Why don't you try to get a similar organization for Mexican Americans?'

"So I called Jack Greenberg and he said he would send me $500 so I could bring two persons to meet with the Ford Foundation. Commissioner Albert Pena, president of LULAC Council No. 2, and Roy Padilla, the treasurer, went to New York with me.

"The Ford Foundation wanted to know about our problems. Strange as it may seem, the Foundation did not know that Mexican Americans had any problems in the Southwest. They did not know we existed. So it was up to us to convince them of the police brutality, the segregation in schools, denial of fair trials because there were no Mexican Americans on juries, and employment discrimination. We told them the whole story.

"They said we needed about $6,000 to write a proposal and we thought the project ended there because we had no money. But Jack Greenberg made a phone call and then said he had received a $6,000 grant over the phone from a small foundation for our group. We selected a professor at Columbia University to write the proposal.

"Then the Ford Foundation called to say it could not make the grant to the State of Texas or to LULAC. They said we had to set up a corporation and a five-state organization. They asked me to go through

the five states and organize all the Mexican American lawyers. There was nobody else to do it so I wrote the papers myself and put down the names of Carlos Cadena, Albert Pena and Greg Luna and we incorporated under [the name] State of Texas Mexican American Legal Defense Fund.

"Then I got my family in the car and we drove to New Mexico, meeting all the lawyers there. Then I went to Arizona, California and Colorado. During this time, the Mexican American community was divided into many organizations and if they knew money was coming they all wanted to control it. So what I did was get a whole bunch of people together and say, 'Look, you are president; you are secretary and you are tresurer. When we get the money we will fight, but nobody is going to send in another proposal.'

"There were other problems. In California, militants wanted me to apply for money so they could go to Cuba and work with Castro. In San Antonio, militants who had infiltrated Mexican American organizations were trying to emulate the blacks – the 'burn, baby, burn' dogma. They wanted to march downtown, burn buildings, riot and confront the police. But I could not permit that. I went to these organizations and said:

" 'You have to wait. There will be justice. There is justice in the courts.'

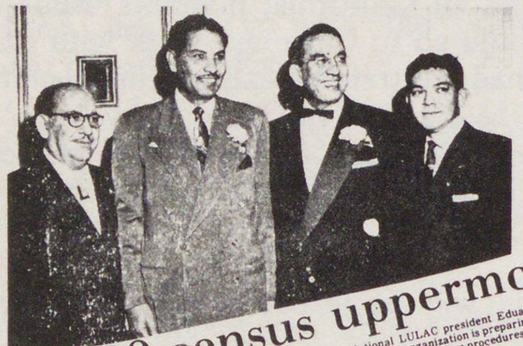
"So after we got all the lawyers together we made our application for $1 million and we sat down and waited. When the Ford Foundation was ready, it called us to a meeting and a very nice gentleman came in and said: 'I am going to read you the text of the award from the Ford Foundation' and very slowly and carefully told us that we had been awarded $2 million instead of $1 million and that he wanted me to set up an organization especially to handle scholarships for Mexican Americans to go to law school. So this meant I had to organize all the deans of the law schools of the five-state area.

"So I started the organization. I had a very good practice (I have been in the same office for 26 years) but I came into the organization as the first executive director. I was very lucky that I was able to convince Mario Obledo, then an assistant state attorney general, to come in with me to train for the top job. He came in and applied himself so that when I left the organization he took over as the executive director.

Today, the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund (MALDEF) which Tijerina and LULAC founded has offices in San

Antonio, San Francisco and Washington and employs 40 persons, 16 of whom are lawyers. Its president and chief counsel is Vilma Martinez, a brilliant 35-year-old lawyer who grew up in a poor barrio of San Antonio. MALDEF's annual budget is $1 million a year, raised through foundation grants and contributions. Pete Tijerina still maintains a lively interest in the organization he created and continues to raise funds for its wide-ranging operations. MALDEF is an aggressive defender of the civil rights of Mexican Americans throughout the nation.

HOUSTON LULACS CELEBRATE...



Twenty Five Years of Community Service 1929 LULAC 1954

To celebrate Lulac Silver Anniver... 11C
sary the Houston Co...
ball at the C...
of th... CORPUS CHRISTI CALLER, Sun., Feb. 11, 1979
this ...

1980 census uppermost LULAC issue

Police brutality, the headline issue of 1978, stands to remain an important topic for 1979 and 1980, LULAC leaders believe.

But rising to the forefront for Hispanics, they say, will be other issues — the 1980 census and its effects on redistricting, fighting Proposition 13-style tax cuts, illegal aliens and coalition building among Hispanic and black groups.

"Clearly the most critical issue is the 1980 census," said state LULAC director Ruben Bonilla. "The census leads to the second most critical — redistricting."

Bonilla and other LULAC officials remind anyone within earshot that Hispanics will replace blacks as the largest U.S. minority group during the 1980s. Redistricting based on accurate census data will play an important role in effective political muscle flexing, they say.

Hispanics and U.S. Census Bureau officials concur that the 1970 census undercounted the Hispanic population.

Accurate census information affects local, state and national voting districts based on the U.S. Supreme Court's one man-one vote ruling. Federal monies targeted for state and local governments are distributed on the basis of population statistics gathered by census takers.

If an accurate population count enhances the potential for greater Hispanic influence, LULAC leaders realize the Spanish-speaking also must register and vote in greater numbers to gain respect from the power structure.

National LULAC president Eduardo Peña said the national organization is preparing a manual for LULAC locals outlining procedures for operating a voter registration drive.

LULAC already has agreed to attend a "summit meeting" of southwestern Hispanic groups determined to see every Hispanic-American counted in the 1980 census. Planning for the meeting is being coordinated by William Velasquez of the Southwest Voter Registration Education Project of San Antonio.

The tax-cutting mood among U.S. voters has LULAC leaders openly worried. Bonilla said maintaining the status quo will be difficult enough without staking out more ambitious grounds for action on behalf of Hispanics.

Both blacks and Hispanics have a big stake in coalescing to ward off drastic cuts affecting programs aimed at minority groups, LULAC leaders say.

On the local level, Elberi Ocañas, LULAC Council president, said tax cuts primarily affect the "little guy" who relies on public services the wealthy can afford on their own.

"As the trend continues to cut back services, we have to become more active," said Ocañas.

Another important topic on the local agenda will be the continuing fight for equality in employment and job promotion, said Ocañas. He singled out Central Power and Light, the City of Corpus Christi and Del Mar College as lagging in promoting Mexican-Americans to high level positions.

"They have always told us to get an education," said Ocañas. "Yet we have not achieved the fruits of that (higher levels of education)."

Mexican-Americans in Corpus Christi also have to "get out the vote" to attain greater representation on public boards and other city offices, he said.

The "illegal alien issue" has been described as among the most explosive in the country today.

Bonilla has been critical of President Jimmy Carter's proposal that would impose sanctions on employers hiring illegal aliens while granting resident alien status to potentially several million "undocumented workers."

LULAC's position is to emphasize stronger bilateral economic and trade relations with Mexico. If Mexican workers are lured to the United States by the prospects of jobs, the economic development of the border areas and U.S. oil and gas agreements with Mexico may stem the tide, say Bonilla and Peña.

Bonilla has called a plan of action for the border equivalent to the Marshall Plan, the program that revitalized Western Europe after World War II.

Peña said LULAC will try to develop with the Department of Commerce and the Department of Housing and Urban Development a series of seminars along the border areas to spotlight the problems of these regions.

And police brutality will remain a high LULAC priority, Peña and Bonilla say.

LULAC's position is to emphasize stronger bilateral economic and trade relations with Mexico. If Mexican workers are lured to the United States by the prospects of jobs, the economic development of the border areas and U.S. oil and gas agreements with Mexico may stem the tide, say Bonilla and Peña.

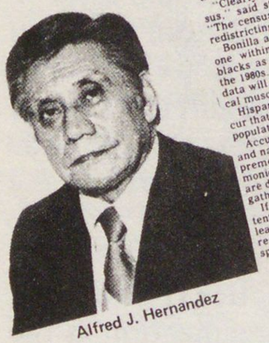
Bonilla has called a plan of action for the border equivalent to the Marshall Plan, the program that revitalized Western Europe after World War II.

Peña said LULAC will try to develop with the Department of Commerce and the Department of Housing and Urban Development a series of seminars along the border areas to spotlight the problems of these regions.

And police brutality will remain a high LULAC priority, Peña and Bonilla say.

LULAC has voiced unequivocal criticism concerning the allegedly laggard pace of the U.S. Justice Department in investigating the U.S. Border Patrol's reputed civil rights violations against minorities.

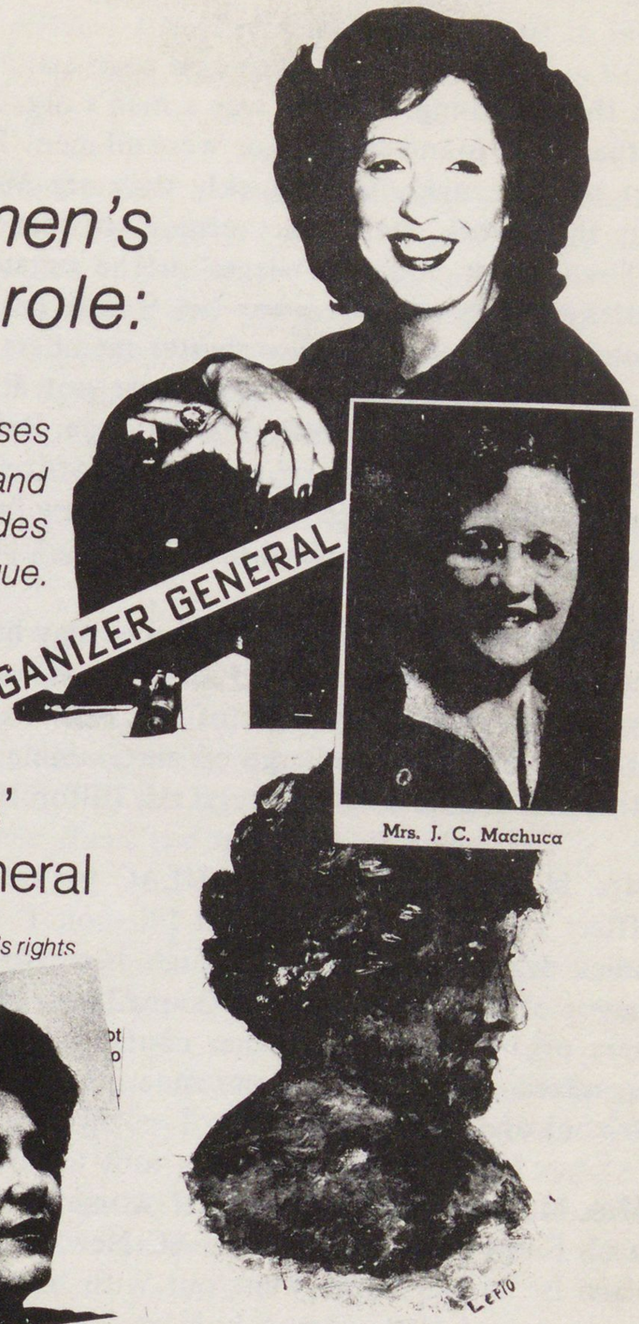
From May 1977 to December 1978, 18 Mexican-Americans in Texas died while under police custody, and promises by high Justice officials to speed up the process have not been forthcoming, LULAC officials charge.



Alfred J. Hernandez

Women's role:

It's in all phases of society and that includes the league.



Mrs. J. C. Machuca

OUR LADIES ORGANIZER GENERAL

First Ladies' Organizer General

She carried the banner for women's rights nearly four decades before the women's mov...

afraid t... long in ...

Appoi... tion in L... enhance... membersi...

The wo... and 7, a w... new in LUL... through, wh... goes out in... selves more...

The meeti... LULAC orga... constitution ... tion."



...Organiza...

Lepio

Mrs. Ester Machuca is shown in a portrait by Lepio Ruybal of Denver. The photo was taken in 1915.

CHAPTER XIII – WOMEN

In the beginning, LULAC was a man's organization. The persons who gathered to found the League were all men. The women, however, were not to be denied. Very quickly they organized auxiliaries. So diligent was their work, states one account, of that period, that LULAC soon offered them equal privileges in the organization. One of the first ladies'councils organized was No. 9 in El Paso. Established in 1934, this council included among its charter members Mrs. J.C. Machuca. There is an indication that the ladies were not at first well received by the general LULAC membership in that area. Records indicate that in 1936, because "of the failure of the general office to cooperate with Council No. 9, the membership voted to withdraw from the League." However, the council was reorganized in 1937.

Whatever initial difficulties the ladies may have had, they soon came to the fore. Mrs. Machuca, who served as treasurer of Council No. 9, was elected the official hostess of the 1938 national convention, held in El Paso. She was in charge of entertaining the women delegates and other visitors, hosting a party at the Hilton Hotel.

Mrs. Machuca, who served LULAC for decades, was the first general officer appointed by President Filemon T. Martinez, being named the ladies organizer general. Through her efforts, wrote Mr. F.I. Montemayor of Laredo, Las Vegas Council No. 21 and Dallas Council No. 22 were organized. Several other councils were in the process of getting organized when her term ended, one in California, another in Arizona and two in Texas.

Mrs. Montemayor was the first woman vicepresident on the national level. She once wrote in LULAC News: "The idea that the woman's place is in the home went out with hoop skirts and bustles. Now it is recognized that women hold as high a position in all walks of life as do men. Women have come to play a vital part in the political, religious, social and cultural aspects of the modern world that was unheard of until a relatively short time ago...and LULAC women must realize that it is now time to get into our League and stay in it." This at a time when the women's liberation movement was still decades away.

Highlights of their work, in addition to many unsung duties, included the May, 1939 edition of LULAC News, a well written and well-documented issue which rivalled the silver anniversary effort in 1954. The work for the 1939 special issue was done largely by the Las Vegas ladies council(No. 21).

The ladies have also played a leading role in developing youth leaders, aiding the socially and financially deprived as well as the elderly. It is through the efforts of women LULAC members that projects such as ABRAZAR got started in Arizona. This program, established in 1974, began with a survey of Arizona's elderly. The focus, wrote Ray A. Gano, was on the needs of Spanish-speaking elderly, who, as it turned out, had been undercounted in the 1970 Census by 150 percent. As a result of the survey, the LULAC homemakers project was implemented in Phoenix. It provides home care, help in getting services from government(such as food stamps and welfare) and social contact to combat loneliness.

Women have taken an ever larger role in LULAC since those early days in 1930 when Council No. 9 had difficulties gaining recognition. Lois Moreno earned the distinction of being the first woman elected director of LULAC District No. 7 in the Austin, Texas, area. Three other women have that post since then, the most recent being Naomi Villareal.

Amadita Valdez, first president of LULAC Council No. 9 is still active, attending meetings and taking part in projects.

In the late 1950s, LULAC in El Paso attracted another woman who was to gain national prominence: Belen Robles. By then LULAC in El Paso had expanded to a total of four councils, Nos. 8, 9, 132 and 335. Belen said she joined LULAC in 1957 because she was impresssed by the strong united effort that was being put forth in the area of education.

"I had not been married too long but I already had two children and I had had a very sad experience that made me realize that something needed to be corrected," Belen said. "There were many companies in El Paso that did not hire people of Mexican descent. I felt that the only way this could be remedied was to make our children better qualified. Otherwise they would not be given a chance."

That decision became 21 years of commitment which led her to her becoming national secretary, executive director and chairman of the board of directors of the LULAC National Educational Service Centers, Inc. Looking back over her years in LULAC, Belen said: "We have been involved with just about every type of issue–medical facilities for the poor, school districting, school segregation, voter registration, housing for the elderly, discrimination in housing, literacy training for resident aliens."

During this time El Paso LULAC members have made impressive national contributions. Five national presidents have come from El Paso--Modesto Gomez, William Flores, Frank Galvan, Albert Armendariz and Paul Andow. There have been countless vice presidents and other officers.

In the 1960s, a new phenomenon appeared in El Paso–the first joint men's-ladies' council (No. 110). Until that time there had only been men's or ladies' councils. Youth councils, of which there are three now in the area, began in the 1950s. Belen, a customs official at a border crossing, took part in all this growth, including the organization of surrounding areas. As a result today El Paso is the heart of an entire LULAC District.

Many other women have played an important role in LULAC, not least of them Isabel Verver, the teenage teacher who proved that the basic idea of the Little Schools of the 400 was viable, and Janice Carroll, president of the Irvine (Calif.) Council who was one of the children in whose behalf LULAC filed its landmark school segregation suit in the 1940s in Orange County.

International

Hispanic lobby urged by LULAC president

Mexican-Americans are hoping to capitalize on the clout oil discoveries brought their homeland by setting up a lobby in the United States similar to that of Jewish Americans.

Edward Pena, national president of the League of United Latin American Citizens, has urged formation of the lobby in light of both national and international attention now being focused on Mexico.

"The secretary general of the United Nations, the pope and the president o the United States have all visited Me ico since the beginning of the y showing the new found significanc the Hispanic hemisphere has ta the world stage," he told the session of LULAC's national co

"I think we have to deve sensitivity to our surroundir this time, to seize thi more

FOREIGN POLICY

Our contacts with Mexico and Latin America ve always been strong — after a re indelible ties of language even family.

B mic and political rel loping, wait- ir through-

Speaking in support of increased, rather than decreased, American assistance to the region, Pena said "I don't believe people want to come 6,000 miles if they have dignity and can feed their families in their own countries."

Pena was joined in his argument by representatives of other groups attending the meeting including the AFL-CIO and the Council of the Americas.

After the briefing by AID officials, Pena and the others met separately to plan a strategy to lobby Congress to increase aid to Latin America.

They agreed to meet with Congressmen on the house appropriations committees overseeing aid to Latin America to argue for larger amounts of assis-

aid increased Amer

p hu be ing pro Th prog alien ing a cent wage a ciation ican uni It also manent r living in t increase t gration qu nually.

This story Light and wa ternational (L



LULAC VILLAGE APARTMENTS
Corpus Christi, Texas

CHAPTER XIV – THE HISPANIC AGENDA: LULAC IN THE 1980s AND BEYOND

LULAC'S 50th Anniversary Celebration commemorates not only the founding of the largest, oldest and most prominent national Hispanic organization in the United States but also the beginning of the Hispanic decade of the 1980s–when Hispanics become the largest minority and enter a new era of power and prosperity.

"But it won't happen simply by itself," says LULAC President Eduardo Pena, Jr. "We have to make it happen."

In this year then, Pena explains, he has been concerned that LULAC lead Hispanics as effectively in this environment as it has led them in the past fifty years.

"Only by leading people to emerging issues and being the first to seek solutions can we lead our community to LULAC," Pena said.

It is a time, therefore, of looking at the needs of our community for this year and for the next fifty, and trying to sort out the significant issues in the swirl of concerns confronting our community.

One of the great needs of our community, says Pena, is to look beyour borders to our brothers and sisters to the south as a means of building the economic base of our community."

"We are developing a "Hispanic Lobby" in Washington, D.C. to deal with this country's relations with Mexico and Latin America. It's very simple--we have the political numbers in this country and Mexico has the economic clout. Putting that combination together you have Hispanics here who can lobby for better treatment by the U.S. towards Mexico and a Mexican government which can boost the economic base of our community by using Hispanic businessmen and entrepreneurs in commercial dealings with the United States."

Moreover, Pena says, "Hispanics here in the United States and Hispanics there in Latin America have a truly common heritage and a common need to build ourselves into a powerful economic and political force that transcends any geographic boundaries. Our community in the United States is the fourth-largest Spanish-speaking country in the world and 62 percent of the Western Hemisphere is Hispanic. Our roots reach back nearly 500 years and in 1992 we will be celebrating 500 years of Hispanic presence in this hemisphere. Truly it is time that our 'Hispanic Hemisphere' became an actor on the world stage."

Earlier this year, Pena participated as one of the invited guests of the Mexican government in the 50th Anniversary celebration of the Partido Revolucionario Institutional, the leading political party in Mexico.

"I've also spoken three times with President Jose Lopez Portillo of Mexico since becoming LULAC President because I want him to develop a personal relationship with Hispanics in this country and he has personally expressed his interest in developing a dialogue with our community," Pena noted.

But as LULAC looks to other Hispanic countries as a source of strength it must also look to developing the precious human resources within our own community.

"Half of our Hispanic population is under 21," he said, "and they will be the manpower in most Southwestern labor markets and many other cities across the country as well in the coming years."

Pena, therefore, has spent a lot of time thinking about youths' needs and working to ensure that their potential is developed in order to benefit our community.

As Secretary of the National Ser-Jobs for Progress board, Pena's lobbying efforts in Washington, D.C. paid off this year when SER was awarded a contract to open a Job Corps Center site in Laredo, Texas. The center will train hundreds and eventually thousands of youths, equipping them with the skills necessary to get a job and get ahead in a highly competitive society.

Also, Pena has begun new initiatives on behalf of youth in order to involve them in the League's efforts to improve the quality of life in the Hispanic community.

A 50th Anniversary Essay Contest on "The Hispanic Agenda: 1980 and Beyond," was initiated with the winner to be chosen and announced at the Golden Anniversary Convention in Houston, Texas, June 13 to 17, 1979 and Pena named a LULAC National Youth Commission to ensure that Hispanics give input into the federal government's own National Youth Commission which is considering the concerns of young people across the nation. "1979 is the International Year of the Child," Pena stated, "and because we are proportionately, the youngest part of the American population, it is incumbent upon us in the nation to seriously consider the needs of our Hispanic youth, particularly in this year."

As LULAC members celebrated their 50th Anniversary then, they were intrigued by the prospects of starting a Hispanic decade, looking to Hispanics throughout the Hemisphere as a source of mutual assistance and reaching into their own communities to invest in the most plentiful and precious resource--the youth.

"This is our moment, our time," Pena said, "as LULAC members, as Hispanics and as members of this Hispanic Hemisphere and LULAC's legacy of landmark achievements for our community gives us the responsibility to make the most of this moment to improve the lives of those less fortunate in our community. For only when we have all achieved a status of dignity can we really believe that any of us have made it."



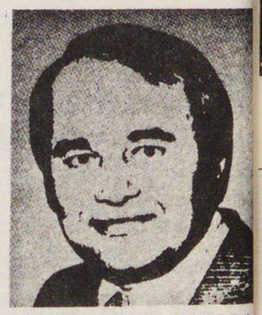
PETE V. VILLA
1971-1973



MANUEL GONZALES
1975-1977



EDUARDO MORGA
1977-



EDUARDO PENA
1978-1979

Former LULAC Presidents



BEN GARZA
[illegible]-1930



ALFONSO S. PERALES
1930-1931



MANUEL C. GONZALEZ
1931-1932



J. T. CANALES
1932-1933



MANURO M. MACHADO
1933-1934



ERMILO LOZANO
1934-1935



JAMES TAFOLLA, JR.
1935-1936



FRANK J. GALVAN, JR.
1936-1937



RAMON LONGORIA
1937-1938



FILEMON T. MARTINEZ
1938-1939



EZEQUIEL SALINAS
1939-1940



ANTONIO M. FERNANDEZ
1940-1941



GEORGE I. SANCHEZ
1941-1942



BEN OSUNA
1942-1943



MODESTO A. GOMEZ
1943-1944



WILLIAM FLORES
1944-1945



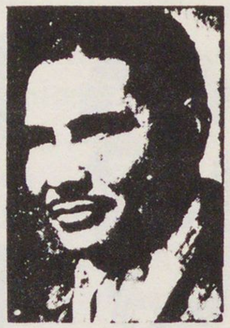
ARNULFO ZAMORA
1945-1947



JOSE MALDONADO, M.D.
1947-1948



RAOUL A. CORTEZ
1948-1950



DR. GEORGE J. GARZA
1950-1952



JOHN J. HERRERA
1952-1953



ALBERT ARMENDARIZ
1953-1954



FRANK PINEDO
1954-1955



OSCAR LAUREL
1955-1956



FELIX TIJERINA
1956-1960



HECTOR GODINEZ
1960-1961



FRANK VALDES
1961-1963



PAUL ANDOW
1963-1964



WILLIAM D. BONILLA
1964-1965



JUDGE ALFRED J. HERNANDEZ
1965-1967



ROBERTO ORNELAS
1968-1970



PAUL GARZA, JR.
1970-1971

BEN GARZA (1929-1930)

His father died when Ben was only 15 years old, and, being poor, young Garza had to quit school to do odd jobs to help his mother, who took in washing, to support a family of eight. A younger brother, Joe, reminisced in 1970 that when he was growing up in Rockport, Mexican American children had to go to a one-room school out in the brush. In the distance, the children could see the fine brick school Anglo children attended. Ben never forgot those early experiences of discrimination and dedicated his adult years to help improve conditions.

When he was 18, Ben moved to Corpus Christi to take a job as a waiter in a cafe. He lived frugally so as to be able to share his earnings with his family. Through his efforts, Joe was able to complete high school and two years of college. Returning to Rockport during World War I, Ben worked in the shipyards. Back in Corpus Christi in 1919, he lived through a hurricane which devastated the downtown area.

Married in 1918 at the age of 28 to a young woman 18 years old, Garza confidently purchased the Metropolitan Cafe in Corpus Christi after the hurricane in a partnership with Santos Benavides and two other men. The restaurant was at 617 North Chaparral, now the site of Franklin's Dress Shop. The Garzas prospered and five children blessed the marriage. Ben branched out into real estate but still found time to help his fellow man. Eventually, Benavides and Garza bought out their other two partners.

"Ben spent half his time helping others and taught me lessons about civic responsibility which I never forgot," his admiring younger brother Joe said in 1970. "He always thought of establishing an organization to defend the people because he did not like the way they were treated here," his widow remembered him in 1978. "He knew how the Raza could better itself."

Ben was the head of a group known as Council No. 4 of the Order of Sons of America which merged into what is now the League of United Latin American Citizens at Corpus Christi, Texas, on February 18, 1929. The following May 19 at LULAC's first annual convention, he was elected president general of the new organization.

Illness and the depression destroyed the bright future which Ben faced. The restaurant closed in 1931 and Ben entered a sanatorium in Kerrville in 1933 to seek a cure for tuberculosis. Even then, his widow remembered, "when LULAC called he would get out of his sickbed and go to their aid. I would get mad at him but he would always tell me that there were other people who were worse off than he was and that he was going to keep LULAC alive because some day LULAC was going to be known all over the nation, which was his dream." He left Kerrville for a time to take a job with Southern Alkali Corporation but returned in 1935 and died in 1937 at age 44 of double pneumonia. He had attained such prominence that the flag was lowered to half mast in Corpus Christi as a sign of mourning and the governor of Texas wired personal condolences to the family.

Ben had amazing foresight and faith in the growth of Corpus Christi. He bought 10 acres next to Wynn Seale Junior High School in Corpus Christi which increased in value many times the $1,000 per acre that he paid. He bought the land on which his restaurant stood for $23,000 in 1920 and in the early 1960's his estate turned down an offer of $145,000 for the site.

Despite the fact that he lived in Corpus Christi only 17 years, six of them in poor health, he left an imprint which will never be forgotten. He took part in many benefit drives and was director of the Chamber of Commerce. To aid poor children at Christmas, Mrs. Garza, accompanied by another woman named Stillman, went from store to store soliciting aid. They began collecting in October and by Christmas had enough to give aid to 1,500 children.

The passage of four decades since his death has not dimmed the love and good memories for his widow and five children. Ben Garza, Jr., a justice of the peace in Corpus Christi, said in 1978: "I knew my father– I was 14 years old when he died– and he was a very compassionate man." His widow said: "My children and I still cry for him and miss him very much, but I know that his death was not in vain."

Ben was the head of a group known as Council No. 4 of the Order Sons of America which merged into what is now the League of United Latin American Citizens at Corpus Christi, Texas, on February 18, 1929. The following May 19 at LULAC's first annual convention, he was elected president general of the new organization.

ALONSO S. PERALES (1930-1931)

A native of San Antonio, Alonso S. Perales was one of the founders of the League of United Latin American Citizens and also its second president general. He was president of the League of Latin American Citizens, one of three groups which merged to create LULAC in 1929.

An international figure who represented the United States in many meetings in Latin America, Perales, a lawyer, devoted his time as president general to the organization of new councils and to putting into practice the aims and purposes of the new organization.

Accompanied by Judge J.T. Canales of Brownsville and Ben Garza, Perales went to Washington, D.C. to testify in congressional hearings against the Box Immigration Bill, which would have placed a quota on Mexican immigrants to the United States. The bill failed to become law.

During Perales' administration, new councils were organized in South Texas. Perales devoted much of his leisure time to accomplish that. He and other volunteers traveled at all hours of the day and night, sometimes in inclement weather, doing their organizing work. LULAC News said of such effort: "LULAC is much indebted to the efforts and sacrafices put forth by these pioneers like Alonso S. Perales. It was this spirit of courage, tenacity and self-sacrafice which in the early history of our organization became known as the 'LULAC spirit'."

At the completion of his term of office, Perales turned over to his successor an organization with 24 active councils.

MANUEL C. GONZALES (1931-1932)

The most obvious accomplishment of the administration of Manuel Gonzales as president general was the doubling of the councils from 24 to 48 in a single year. However, organizing was not the only thrust of LULAC during those early depression years.

During that period LULAC began its crusade to change the system in counties like Sonora, Ozona, Uvalde and Dimmit which denied Mexican Americans service on either grand or petit juries. Similarly, LULAC began to combat the segregation of Spanish-speaking children in the

schools. Thus the ground work for the Del Rio school lawsuit was initiated.

A lawyer, Manuel Gonzales served the League in many ways as legal counsel and also as executive secretary under various national presidents for several years. He was employed for many years by the Mexican consul in San Antonio and in that way came face to face with problems of Mexican Americans which the Mexican government could not solve.

At a special convention held during the Gonzales administration, the monument fund previously created in honor of Ben Garza was changed to the Scholarship Fund.

J.T. CANALES (1932-1933)

J.T. Canales, a great humanitarian, was the fourth president of LULAC, and is regarded as one of the great pillars of the organization. Elected during the height of the depression he saw clearly that education was the best hope for Hispanic Americans. During his administration the Scholarship Fund was put on a workable basis, giving young men and women a start in higher education. Throughout his life, he donated sizeable amounts to the Scholarship Fund in honor of his brother.

J.T. Canales brought LULAC to the attention of John Garner, then Congressman of the 15th District of Texas, who was so impressed with the work of the organization and with the aims and purposes of the group that he presented LULAC with an American flag that had long waved over the Capitol in Washington.

Judge Canales drafted the LULAC Constitution at Corpus Christi in 1929. After his term ended, he kept in constant touch with LULAC and was always ready to give a helping hand. LULAC News eulogized: "No man has worked so untiringly and so long to see that those principles upon which LULAC was founded are not trampled.

"Following the dictates of his heart and (of) his great love for his fellowman, he caused such a stir in the Texas State Senate that the Ranger Force was reorganized."

MAURO MACHADO (1933-1934)

Mauro M. Machado earned the accolade of being LULAC's master organizer. Here is what LULAC News had to say about him:

"Mauro M. Machado was one of the stalwarts of LULAC...One of those cornerstones on which the building of LULAC was laid and cemented for all time....

"In the pressure and hurry of our everyday life, we may momentarily overlook...or seemingly forget...what MAURO did and stood for... but not for long.

"His work will stand forever in the annals of LULAC; his name an everlasting part of the History of LULAC, as one of its immortals.

"Upon his deathbed, on the very brink of the grave, his last thoughts were for LULAC....His last breath was a prayer; his last words a benediction and an appeal: "Keep up the work of LULAC...."

"We remember Mauro....working all day to make a living for himself and his family...using every minute of his spare time writing letters... writing letters...Always writing letters...for LULAC....

"San Antonio Council No. 2, during our formative years, was credited with being instrumental in the organization and establishment of 85 percent of the Councils of LULAC. This was true because of the contacts made by Mauro Machado....

"He knew leaders in practically every community in our Great Southwest...knew them by their first names.

"That was the secret of his success. That is why he will forever stand ace high as The Organizer for LULAC..."

ERMILO LOZANO (1934-1935)

Ermilo Lozano introduced the governor system to LULAC and advanced the educational program of the organization. "His untiring efforts were repaid by the great increase that LULAC membership made during this time," LULAC News reported.

Lozano is also credited with improving conditions in state prisons. He went to the governor of Texas and explained that it was impossible for Mexican American prisoners who knew no English to understand orders from guards who spoke only English. As a result, the Spanish-speaking prisoners were being severely punished for disobedience. The governor agreed that bilingual guards were needed and some were hired.

JAMES TAFOLLA, JR. (1935-1936)

The fifth president general from San Antonio, "Jimmie" Tafolla, as known to his many friends and acquaintences, was born in Bexar County on August 31, 1898–the son of James Tafolla, Sr., who helped start the struggle for recognition of the so-called Mexicans as Americans "back when it took real guts to stand up for your rights," as LULAC News put it.

"Jimmie was one of those who in their youth literally pulled themselves up by their bootstraps," LULAC News said. "He is a worthy son of a worthy father; you remember, that old line tradition of the 'chip off the old block'."

Educated in the San Antonio public schools, Jimmie Tafolla later graduated from the John K. Weber School of Law in San Antonio and passed his bar examination. He set up his private law practice in San Antonio and later served as assistant district attorney of Bexar County for many years.

"Jimmie was one of the best known (lawyers), the 'dean' of Latin American attorneys of San Antonio from the standpoint of ethical and civic service to the community," LULAC News wrote admiringly.

The story is told that one afternoon a judge asked him why there were "some Mexicans who resent being called Mexicans." Jimmie replied: "Judge, I am going to give you a bit of back history, and then answer

your question by asking you a question.

"My great grandfather was a native-born American citizen; my grandfather was a native-born American citizen; so was my father; so am I, and so are my children. Five generations of native born citizens of this country. Now, do you think my children ought to be called 'Mexicans'? "

The old judge just smiled and said: "I guess you're right, Jimmie."

FRANK J. GALVAN, Jr. (1936–37)

The first of several national presidents from El Paso, where the first LULAC Council came into being in 1930--Frank J. Galvan, Jr. was born on Feb. 11, 1908, at Santa Barbara, Mexico. He married Dulce Chaves and they resided at 7263 Highway East in El Paso County.

A lawyer, Frank Galvan studied at Jefferson University in Dallas and began his law practice in 1932, later becoming a partner in the firm of Galvan and Galvan. A member of the American Bar Association and of the Texas State Bar, he was elected president of LULAC at a convention held at Laredo.

RAMON LONGORIA (1937-1938)

Born in Live Oak County on Sept. 9, 1893, Ramon L. Longoria of McAllen, Texas, expanded LULAC during his administration to California and Colorado. A lawyer, he was appointed consulting attorney for the Mexican consulate in 1938, three years after he was admitted to the practice of law after passing his bar exam in 1935.

During his administration, a rule was passed that there could be only one council in each city. At the time there were two councils in San Antonio--Nos. 2 and 16--and the latter had to be disbanded.

A great surge in the organization of ladies' councils occurred during the tenure of Longoria, more than had been installed up to that time. An honorary council was also organized in Washington, D.C., in honor of Senator Dennis Chavez, a LULAC member who had waged a life-long fight against school segregation in Texas.

FILEMON T. MARTINEZ (1938-39)

Filemon Martinez has the distinction of being the first president of LULAC from a state other than Texas, New Mexico. Elected at a national convention held in El Paso, Martinez began his administration by visiting local councils, starting with San Angelo, Texas where he was appalled to see "No Mexicans Allowed" signs in many public places.

Martinez approached the public officials of San Angelo and after a friendly chat the discriminatory signs were removed. He was also instrumental in helping to solve the school segregation problem in Hondo, Texas, where Mexican-American children were offered very poor facilities. Correspondence with the state superintendent of public instruction erased other discriminatory practices, one of which denied Spanish-speaking students the opportunity to attend high school in some areas. School districts were informed that state school funds would be withheld if such discrimination continued.

During Martinez' administration, 14 LULAC councils were organized in New Mexico. Councils also came into being in Denver and Trinidad, Colorado. Organizing work also took place in Arizona and California, two states which up to then had no LULAC councils except for one in Sacramento.

Martinez was from Albuquerque, N.M.

EZEQUIEL SALINAS (1939-1940)

Ezequiel Salinas was born March 20, 1908, in Laredo, Texas. He obtained his primary education in the City of Laredo and was graduated from the Law School of the University of Texas in 1933. He was awarded a scholarship to the International School in Mexico City with the University of Mexico where he attended and obtained a law degree. He began his practice in Laredo in 1935 and became the General Counsel of the Housing Authority in the City of Laredo. He was instrumental if not responsible for bringing the first Public Housing Units to Laredo. In 1939, he became the President General of LULAC and soon thereafter became Assistant District Attorney.

In January, 1942, Judge Salinas entered the service of the State Department where he was given a special assignment to the Ambassador in Montevideo, Uruguay. He remained in the foreign service for five years, returning to Laredo in 1947 where he reentered the private practice of law. In 1950, Mr. Salinas became the first native born District Judge of Laredo, being at the same time the first Latin American to be elected as District Judge in Laredo, Texas, though some have served in an appointed capacity.

ANTONIO M. FERNANDEZ (1940-1941)

Antonio M. Fernandez holds the distinction of being the only LULAC president who has been a U.S. Congressman. From Santa Fe, New Mexico, he was U.S. Representative in the 1950s. He also served on the New Mexico Legislature in 1935, focussing his efforts on improving the public school system. He maintained that interest while serving as chief tax attorney for the New Mexico State Tax Commission during 1935 and 1936 and also when he was first assistant attorney general of the state from 1937 to 1941. As a result of his efforts, the state upgraded the quality of teachers in the poorer counties.

Fernandez first became a court reporter for the Eighth Judicial District of New Mexico. Then he entered the law school at Cumberland University at Lebanon, Tenn. He was admitted to the practice of law by the Supreme Court of New Mexico in 1931.

He married Cleo Chavez of Raton, N.M. in 1924 and they had five children.

GEORGE I. SANCHEZ (1941-1942)

The author Stan Steiner described George I. Sanchez as a "salty-tongued, aging and indestructible advocate of La Raza." Sanchez was a teacher for almost half a century, the chairman of the Department of History and Philosophy of Education at the University of Texas, and the director of its Center for International Education. He was the pioneer Mexican-American educator, upon whose shoulders fell the task of defending his people against the racist claim that they were congenitally inferior intellectually.

"See these gray hairs, these scars," Sanchez told Steiner. "They come from calling a spade a spade." He was a man who liked to "put it on the line," to ask others but mostly himself to deliver. For that he is the model of teaching excellence and intellectual candor to which a new generation aspires.

Born in Albuquerque, New Mexico, on Oct. 4, 1906, Sanchez became the 13th president general of LULAC.

BEN OSUNA (1942-1943)

He was born in Albuquerque, New Mexico on October 12, 1908, the son of Dr. Eligio Osuna and Aurelia Martinez Osuna. His father died in 1916 making it necessary for his 8 children to work for their livelihood, which they did with determined effort. He received most of his schooling in Albuquerque graduating from the University of New Mexico in 1930 with a Bachelor of Arts degree. In 1934 he received his LLB from the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor and began the practice of law the same year in Albuquerque. In 1936 he was elected Probate Judge of Bernalillo County, New Mexico, for a term of two years and re-elected in 1938 for another two years. In 1941 his term having expired (New Mexico Constitution limited county offices to two terms) and having no elective office, he became an active rather than an active "passive" member of LULAC and was elected as president of LULAC Council No. 34. In 1942 he was re-elected. At the June 1942 National Convention he was elected President General.

Even during his "passive membership" he attended many National Conventions as an advisor for the delegates, and thereafter as delegate. Upon his return from military service in 1946 he again became active.

MODESTO A. GOMEZ (1943-1944)

Born in El Paso in November, 1895, Modesto A. Gomez attended local public schools and St. Edward's College. A veteran of World War I, he served with the 90th Division as a sergeant in artillery and participated in the major offensive of 1917 and 1918.

Upon returning home, he became a salesman in the wholesale grocery business and after a few years he established his own wholesale grocery enterprise.

Gomez was one of the charter members of Council No. 8, which was organized in 1931 and was very active in LULAC until 1945. Illness forced him to give up social and civic duties then.

He assumed the office of national president when Ben Osuna was called into the Armed Services in 1942. During those war years he kept in contact with all the councils and thus was able to keep the organization alive at a time when few were left to carry on.

Gomez was also the organizer general during the administration of Filemon T. Martinez.

WILLIAM FLORES (1944-1945)

William Flores was born in the town of Socorro in El Paso, County, Texas–a descendant of prominent Spanish pioneers who settled in New Mexico long before that territory was annexed by the U.S.

His father, Don Manuel E. Flores, was one of the most learned and respected Latin American residents of El Paso for half a century and his name was repeatedly connected with the early history of the Southwest.

William Flores attended various schools and colleges in El Paso, enlisted in the Army in 1917 and served until 1919, and was one of the most active members of LULAC in El Paso. He was secretary, director, president and district governor. During that time he revised and compiled the by-laws of the El Paso Council. He was also a delegate to various national, regional and district conventions.

ARNULFO ZAMORA (1945-47)

Arnulfo Zamora was the first LULAC member to serve two consecutive terms as President General of the organization. He was elected to his first term at Corpus Christi, Texas, on June 18, 1945 and re-elected by acclamation at Houston, Texas, on June 16, 1946.

On assuming the Presidency of LULAC, Mr. Zamora called upon all Latin Americans to unite in a common effort to bring about a general betterment in the economic condition and welfare of all Latin-Americans.

"I am humbly proud of this great honor which has been conferred upon me," he stated, "but I must plead with you to help me in a successful administration by uniting to achieve our aims. This administration offers you nothing but work and more work; sweat and more sweat; but all this effort will be fully repaid. We can be strong and we can be powerful by taking in all work for the good of the community where we reside, but cannot be achieved until and unless we join forces among ourselves to bring this about."

Immediately he began to set the example. Under his able direction LULAC News resumed publication and the Laredo Council sponsored five out of 12 issues of our official organ that were published during his first term. During his two terms of office over 20 LULAC Councils were reactivated, bringing new blood into the organization.

JOSE MALDONADO (1947-1948)

Jose Maldonado was the first medical doctor and the second LULAC member from Santa Fe, N.M., to serve as national president.

During this administration, several important events took place in LULAC. The preceding administration had begun a reorganization of dormant councils, and he continued to activate those councils which because of the war had been inactive. New councils were also organized, and the older councils conducted active campaigns to increase their membership.

The most important and real accomplishment of this administration was the decision of Federal Judge Rice of the Austin, Texas U.S. District Court, abolishing public school segregation in Texas. To accomplish this required a great deal of time and effort from the National Office of LULAC. The President made two trips through Texas to encourage support to those who were actively engaged in the legal battle. Many of the members were dubious of the outcome of this legal action. Some lawyers were doubtful, but Gus Garcia and those who surrounded him did not give up. One could not name all those who actively participated in this big effort but Gus Garcia deserves a great deal of the credit for the success. George I. Sanchez was another participant.

RAOUL CORTEZ (1948-1950)

After an absence of 12 years, the national presidency returned to Council No. 2 of San Antonio when Raoul Cortez, a long-time popular figure in the city, was chosen in 1948. The Texas regional LULAC governor in 1947, he saw the successful conclusion of the Delgado case which ended school segregation of Mexican-Americans in Texas.

As president of LULAC, Cortez travelled to Mexico City to talk with President Miguel Aleman and later to Washington, D.C. to see President Harry S. Truman. His mission–to speak on behalf of the much-abused so-called "wetbacks" entering the U.S. to seek work. He was credited with influencing improvements in the contractual agreements between the Mexican and U.S. governments regulating the bracero program.

Cortez owned Radio Station KCOR in San Antonio, being the first man to promote radio in the Spanish language in the United States. He dreamed of being the first to have a Spanish-language television station.

GEORGE J. GARZA (1950-1952)

George J. Garza of Laredo was installed as LULAC National President in June, 1950, at El Paso, Texas, and for a second term at Laredo in 1951. To the top executive office he brought a rich and varied experience accumulated through years of faithful service and through tenure in such administrative positions as vice president and president of the San Marcos and Laredo councils, district governor, national director of publicity and editor of LULAC News, national first vice president, and national director of Junior LULACS.

His administration was marked by three definite qualities–a strict economy in all that pertained to administrative and organizational matters, an enlightened conservatism in regard to all matters and problems affecting LULAC and its principles, and an emphasis on the educative process in carrying out the aims and purposes of LULAC.

They were not epoch-making actions designed to give LULAC notoriety as an organization but rather, they were well-planned and constructive moves intended to give LULAC a close family intimacy.

Highlights of Garza's administration were listed as the establishment of friendly and cooperative working relations with government officials and agencies, the solution of the poll tax segregation problem and of a hospital problem in Wharton County (Texas), solution of a school problem in Pecos and also in two other nearby communities, the clarification of personnel classification at Ft. Benning, Georgia, the invitation of the President of the United States to LULAC to take part in the mid-century White House Conference on Children and Youth in 1950 and the emphasis on the establishment of ladies' councils.

JOHN J. HERRERA (1952-1953)

His working life began early in the cotton fields of Texas and stretched to the beetfields of Michigan. But one day he found himself practicing law before the Supreme Court of the United States as part of a team of lawyers arguing the landmark jury exclusion case of Pedro Hernandez. In between those two points, John J. Herrera, the son of a San Antonio policeman descended from one of the original 14 families to settle there, lived a life of struggle but, to hear him tell it, also of fulfillment and unending satisfaction. In a personal interview in 1978, he said the highlight of his personal associations and the source of much of his personal inspiration could be traced to LULAC.

He was with Houston's Council No. 60 from the very beginning and served in many offices. The passage of time did not dull the anticipation with which he looked forward to the meetings and the sharing which they entailed.

During his administration, joint sessions were held for the first time between national officers of the American G.I. Forum and LULAC. Funds were collected to fight the continuing segregation of Mexican American children in Pecos, Texas.

LULAC News said this of Herrera's administration: "Great strides were made to spread the word of LULAC throughout the states of Texas and New Mexico. Districts were established in which LULAC needed to operate, numbering 15 in Texas and four in New Mexico, in order that the district governor would be able to keep LULAC closer to the people. The first steps were taken to build a LULAC shrine in Corpus Christi to depict the history and the founding

of LULAC.

Herrera went to Arizona and New Mexico during his term as national president and organized and reorganized many men's, ladies' and junior councils–53 in all. He was proud that he left over $50,000 in the treasury.

"If I seem to be very emotional about this," he said as he eyes misted, "I want to assure you that the only reason is that I used to sit with all the early founders of LULAC. I approached these giants with timidity but they welcomed me and gave me a lot of advice."

ALBERT ARMENDARIZ (1953-1954)

Albert Armendariz, who was national president during LULAC's 25th anniversary, says organizational work was the highlight of his administration, besides having the honor to head the League during the silver jubilee. During his term of office California, which previous to that was independent even to having its own shield, came into the main LULAC Organization. He also initiated organizing work in the Midwest, "reawakened" some of the councils in New Mexico and started others in Colorado. "When I got LULAC it was largely a Texas-based organization," Armendariz said.

Another accomplishment was the reorganization of the constitution and bylaws into their present form. Housing efforts began at that time and Armendariz later headed LULAC's first housing committee. This led to the League's first housing development–200 units built in El Paso. "El Paso was the forerunner of LULAC homes," Armendariz said. "These consist of apartments giving Mexican Americans a better place to live at a price they can afford." A lawyer, Armendariz said he also created the LULAC housing units in San Antonio.

Another highlight of the Armendariz administration was the history compiled by LULAC News for the 25th Anniversary. However, another bold initiative nearly got him impeached even though it enabled LULAC to pursue its most important civil rights case to victory before the United States Supreme Court–the landmark Pedro Hernandez jury exclusion suit. To be able to pay some of the legal costs after the American G.I. Forum had run out of funds to pay for the litigation, the lawyers–Gus Garcia, Carlos Cadena and John Herrera–asked for $2,000. Armendariz diverted $1,000 earmarked for

the scholarship funds and Pete Tijerina, then president of San Antonio Council No. 2, did the same thing. "We knew we would get hell but faced the ire of our constituents," recalled Armendariz. "This is the only case dealing with the civil rights of Mexican-Americans that has reached the U.S. Supreme Court."

Joint men's-ladies' councils came into being during the Armendariz administration after "a great big fight." Prior to that, the women had won another struggle to have their own councils. No. 9 in El Paso was one of the original women's councils. In the beginning they could only be auxiliaries. Armendariz credits the women with having been very helpful in all aspects of the movement.

Armendariz has been chairman of the Civil Service Commission in El Paso and of the Catholic Welfare Board and has served on the Child Welfare Board, the Catholic Diocesan School Board and the Advisory Committee on Juvenile Delinquency. He has also been chairman of the board of the Mexican-American Legal Defense and Educational Fund.

"I credit LULAC with whatever success I have had," Armendariz said.

FRANK PINEDO (1954-1955)

Frank Pinedo was born in Austin, Texas, on Sept. 17, 1925, and graduated from Austin High School in 1943, having entered the V-5 Naval Reserve Program as a senior. He continued the V-5 Program at Southwestern University and 16 months later was sent to midshipmen's school in New York City, where he was commissioned an ensign in the Naval Reserve in 1945.

He was on active duty until 1946 and in the Naval Reserve in a Law Company until 1974 when he retired with the rank of Lieutenant Commander. Returning to college in 1946 and majoring in government, Pinedo graduated from the University of Texas in 1948 with a bachelor of arts degree and in 1950 with a law degree. He was admitted to the bar in 1950, practiced law in Austin until 1950 when he was appointed assistant state attorney general of Texas. From that post he went on to become an attorney for the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) office in Houston, becoming attorney in charge in 1958.

Pinedo left the SEC in 1960 to enter private law practice, first with a firm and then by himself. In 1968 he formed a partnership with Austin Wilson and Jerry G. Hill. Now he is back in law practice by himself, specializing in corporate and securities law.

He is a vice-chairman of the Houston Chamber of Commerce's governmental affairs committee and chairman of the crime control committee. He is a former legal advisor of the American G.I. Forum and former member of the board of trustees of the Houston Legal Foundation. He recently ended several years' service on the school biracial committee appointed by the U.S. District Court to study and comment on the implementation of the school segregation plan by the Houston Independent School District.

Married to the former Edith (Bunch) O'Kruhlik of Praho, Texas, Pinedo and his wife have three sons.

OSCAR M. LAUREL (1955-1956)

Oscar M. Laurel was born in Laredo, Texas, on June 8, 1920. He attended Ursiline Academy and graduated from Martin High School. Then he enrolled in Loyola of the South before volunteering for the Army Air Corps in 1941. After service as an airplane mechanic on B-17 and B-29 bombers, he was discharged as a staff sergeant in 1945. Then he enrolled in pre-law at the University of Texas and graduated from the South Texas College of Law in Houston in 1950, passing the bar exam the same year.

Laurel was a special investigator for the District attorney's office in Laredo from 1952-56, was elected state representative for the 80th district for two terms in the 49th judicial district beginning in 1961, served on the national advisory commission on rural poverty in 1967, on the National Transportation Safety Board between 1967 and 1972 and was executive director of the Good Neighbor Commission of Texas between 1973 and 1975.

He married; Elsa Gonzales in 1951, and they have two children, Elsa L. Nicholson, and Oscar M., Jr.

Laurel was chapter chairman of the National Foundation of Infantile Paralysis in 1964-65 and 1977-78, president of the Optimist Club of Laredo and president of the International Good Neighbor Council in 1977-78.

FELIX TIJERINA (1954-1960)

Felix Tijerina, the son of a farm worker, found himself with the heavy responsibility of helping support his widowed mother and three sisters when he was barely nine years old. He toiled in the cotton fields and had no opportunity to go to school. As the hard years went by, he finally went to Houston, got a job as a dishwasher, taught himself English, married, and established his own restaurant.

He was very successful and eventually became the proprietor of three restaurants. Wealth brough him invitations to join civic organizations, including LULAC, and he served in important offices, including the presidency. He was also a director of the Rotary Club, of a bank and of numerous enterprises.

Never forgetting his own hardships as a boy who could not speak English, Tijerina was the inspiration and financial backer of the Little Schools of the 400, the precursors of the Headstart program.

HECTOR GODINEZ (1960-61)

Born on the grounds of the San Diego (California) Mission, Hector Godinez attended schools in Santa Ana, California, and entered the Armed Services after his high school graduation. He participated in the Allied invasion of France and the ensuing major battles that led to victory in Europe. He returned home in 1946 and went to work for the Post Office as a clerk, rising to his current position of Southern California District Manager of the U.S. Postal Service. At the same time he attended Santa Ana College at night, majoring in business Administration.

Also in 1946, Godinez joined LULAC and served in every office from president of his local chapter to district director in 1955-56, state director of California in 1958-59, national vice president for three terms between 1957 and 1960 and, finally, the top national office. At the end of his term, LULAC was a strong, viable organization with a surplus in its treasury and new councils.

Godinez was a member of the LULAC council (No. 147) which successfully litigated the school segregation case of Orange County versus Mendez, which set precedents not only for the similar Salvatierra case in Texas but also for the landmark Brown versus Board of Education case which led to the outlawing of all school segregation by the

U.S. Supreme Court in 1954. The Mendez case was filed in 1947 and decided by the San Francisco Circuit Court of appeals in 1948.

Godinez is president of the board of trustees of Rancho Santiago College, founder and first chairman of the board of directors of Banco del Pueblo, a member of the board of directors of half a dozen organizations, including the LULAC Foundation, a member of the state attorney general's advisory commission on police-community relations, a former president of the Santa Ana Chamber of Commerce and a member of the Santa Ana Urban Development Commission. He and his wife have four children.

FRANK VALDES (1961-1963)

A registered architect, Frank Valdes was LULAC president during a time of reorganization. The League at that time was in 17 states and plans were made during his administration for expansion into others. A start was also made in providing a life insurance program for LULAC members, although subsequent administrations did not make those plans a reality. Appropriately, this was the beginning of LULAC's venture into houseing with the purchase of the project in El Paso. Valdes was the architect on several other LULAC housing developments – San Antonio, Corpus Christi and Sinton, Texas.

In LULAC since 1952, Valdes held several important offices in addition to the presidency. He was the state director, the president and secretary-treasurer of Council No. 2. A native of San Antonio, he has served on the board of directors of the city Urban Renewal Agency, on the San Antonio Planning Commission, the board of directors of the local public broadcasting television station, the folkloric festival of the Institutie of Texan Culture, the board of ths San Antonio Symphony, and is a past president of *Sembradores de Amistad,* an international social and cultureal organization. He is a member of the American Institute of Architects and of the San Antonio and state units of the Society of Architects.

Valdes has been a practicing architect since 1952, heading his own firm in San Antonio since his graduation the same year from the University of Texas in Austin with a bachelor's degree in that field. His firm designed the federal office building in San Antonio, is an associate architect in the second phase development of the University of Texas branch in San Antonio, did the design of the Texas Employment

Commission building in that city, has done the design of many schools and churches in the area, and is currently doing a solar-cooled elementary school.

He is married to the former Magdalena Valdes of Laguna Beach, California. He and his wife have four children: Frank, 16; Lance, 14; Janina, 13; and Damian Omar, 11.

PAUL ANDOW (1963-64)

A native of El Paso, Paul Andow headed LULAC when the civil rights movement was just beginning, voicing concerns for which the League had been working quietly for more than 30 years. His most cherished moment was visiting with President John F. Kennedy on the last evening of Kennedy's life. This happened in Houston on November 21, 1963. The President, in Texas on a political trip, visited Houston's LULAC members. John Herrera recalls that the First Lady addressed the LULAC assembly in Spanish and the President spoke about the Alliance for Progress. The President had had a free hour before going to a meeting of the Democratic Party, and out of more than 1,000 invitations he chose to spend the hour with League members. Nineteen hours later he was dead.

An attorney, Andow said he dedicated 10 years of his life to LULAC before he was "put out to pasture" after being national president. "LULAC teaches us to be good American citizens, decent human beings," he said. "I would say that LULAC has been very important in my life."

An attorney, Andow incorporated LULAC as a state corporation during his term of office.

He is the father of five children, "all of whom have reached maturity and are making a life of their own," he said.

WILLIAM DAVID BONILLA (1964-1965)

Born in the small farming community of Calvert, Texas, William David Bonilla started his schooling in a segregated Mexican country school but was later allowed to attend Calvert public schools, from which he graduated with honors. At Calvert High School, he played football and basketball, was on the track team and served as president of his senior

class. Being the second of eight children of Ruben Bonilla, Sr., he helped support himself by working at a grocery, drug store, and service station, and also in the cotton harvest.

After graduating from high school, Bonilla worked his way through Baylor University in Waco by serving meals in the dormitory dining room. However, he made good grades and found time to be active in the Newman Club, the Pre-law Club and Alphi Chi Honorary Scholastic Society. He received his bachelor of arts degree in 1951 and continued his studies at Baylor Law School, where he was elected president of the freshman class. In 1952 he transferred to the Texas University Law School where he was a member of the Texas Law Review. He worked for a law firm in order to pay his expenses in law school.

After receiving his law degree in 1953, he opened his first law office in Corpus Christi and is now a senior member of the law firm of Bonilla, Read, Bonilla and Berlanga.

Bonilla has held every local LULAC office, was state director for two terms, national legal advisor and national secretary, in addition to holding the national presidency. He was presented the Outstanding Citizen Award by the United Married Couples Club in 1962, founded the Mexican Unity Council of South Texas in 1974, was a Texas delegate to the 1964 convention, served on the Texas Good Neighbor Commission between 1962-65, was appointed to the National Advisory Council of the office of Economic Opportunity of President Lyndon Johnson, served as a consultant to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, was a member, secretary and chairperson of the National SER board and has served as secretary of the LULAC Foundation.

Serving on many city boards and commissions, Bonilla was also a substitute corporation judge for three terms, a member of the National Guard from 1947 to 1953 and chairman of the board of a local TV station. He has received numerous awards for his services to Hispanics.

Bonilla and his wife are the parents of six children: Mrs. Mary Helen Battles, William David, Jr., Jonathan Richey, Elizabeth Annette, Martha Suzanne, and Robert Patrick.

ALFRED J. HERNANDEZ (1965-1967; 1969-1970)

When Alfred J. Hernandez joined LULAC 35 years ago, he considered it "an apostolate". Sitting in his law office in downtown Houston, he recalled: "The people in the League at that time were very dedicated

and had no personal gain in mind. They were devoting their efforts, energy, money and many times risking their lives to better conditions and situations of the Mexican Americans of this nation."

Imbued with that sense of commitment, Hernandez held many LULAC offices as the years went by – president, secretary and treasurer of his local council in Houston, state director in Texas and national legal advisor for a number of presidents. The leading activist of LULAC national presidents, he helped organize the Selma (Texas) action which began – wrote Jose A. Chacon – as a labor strike, turned into a protest march and ended in a confrontation with Gov. John Connally on the highway near New Braunfels. He was the president who brought LULAC closer to the activism prevalent in that era. The highlight of his militancy for Hispanic rights was a memorable evening spent in the White House with President Lyndon B. Johnson and several other Hispanic leaders.

Born in Mexico City, Hernandez came to the U.S. at the age of four, enlisted in the Army after graduating from high school, and saw military action in Africa and Europe during World War II. He became a naturalized citizen in 1944 while soldiering in Italy. Returning home with the rank of technical sergeant, he took advantage of the G.I. Bill and enrolled at the University of Houston. He received his law degree from South Texas College of Law in 1953.

Because he served a stint as a local judge in Houston for a time, he is still called "judge" by all who know him, although he long since returned to the practice of private law. A few years ago his eyesight began to fade and, fearing that he would one day have to stop practicing law, he established a restaurant in downtown Houston specializing in Mexican food. It is so popular that at lunchtime it is not uncommon to find a line of customers waiting patiently outside.

Judge Hernandez and his wife, the former Minnie Casas, have two sons, Alfred Jr., a physician, and John Joseph; and a daughter, Anne Marie.

ROBERTO ORNELAS (1967-1969)

His first experience with the League was as a Junior LULAC member in Laredo in 1947 under Dr. George Garza. Twenty years later, Roberto Ornelas was elected to LULAC's top office in Phoenix. In between, he was a League member in McAllen, where he is a charter member, and in Houston.

Ornelas has had a hand in many LULAC accomplishments. During his two-year term as president, the League built approximately 2,000 units of low-income housing worth $4 million. Although these were not the first LULAC housing projects, it was the first time that the League was accepted as initial sponsor by the government. In the previous two projects, LULAC had taken over after the first sponsor had backed out.

As a result of such LULAC efforts a retired couple at the modern East Park Place Apartments in San Antonio can still get a two-bedroom unit with central heating, central air-conditioning and all utilities paid for only $50 a month. Thus people who might otherwise have to settle for hovels have an opportunity to live in dignity.

During Ornelas' terms of office, the initial moves were made to establish the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund, which has provided $750,000 in scholarships for deserving students and has continued the struggle for Hispanic civil rights.

During the LULAC presidency of William D. Bonilla, Ornelas and George Roybal, both navy employees at the time, made some very significant moves in the area of employment for Mexican Americans. Seeing that their people were the only minority without an agency to train and place workers, Ornelas and Roybal asked Bonilla to have LULAC sponsor a voluntary pilot project in Houston where industries looking for new employees could be put in contact with qualified prospects. From those beginnings came Project SER, started by President Johnson with an initial federal grant of $325,000 and now a program with a budget totaling more than $25 million and centers in many areas of the country.

Unlike many other LULAC presidents, Ornelas did not drop out of the organization when his term of office ended. "I still continue to be very active in LULAC," he said. An assistant regional administrator of the Office of Contract Compliance of the U.S. Department of Labor in Dallas, Ornelas received his law degree from St. Mary's University in 1952. He is chairman of the board of directors of the LULAC Foundation; was director of Mexican American programs for the Department of Defense, Office of Contract Compliance; and previous to that held a similar position in the Navy. He is a former city attorney of Donna, Texas.

"LULAC is an organization of committed people who have a firm belief that this is the greatest country in the world," Ornelas said. "They know there are problems in the country – the cancer of bigotry and prejudice – but say, 'Let's not kill the patient; let's cure it. Let's use the American system as it was designed, but let's make sure that it applies to all of us."

PAUL GARZA, JR. (1970-1971)

Paul Garza, Jr., graduated from Texas A&M University in 1955 with a bachelor of science degree in civil engineering and then attended the Texas Traffic Institute in 1956. After a stint as assistant traffic engineer in Waco, he went to Laredo, where he served as director of urban renewal, director of planning and public works, technical advisor and acting director of the City Planning and Zoning Commission and, since 1965, has been a self-employed consultant in urban affairs.

He was selected engineer of the year by the Gateway Chapter of the Texas Society of Professional Engineers in 1965, was a finalist in the 1965 White House Fellows program and was listed in *Who's Who in the South and Southwest.* He is a past president of Laredo LULAC Council No. 12 (1963-65), chairman of the technical committee of the Laredo Urban Transportation Study, a member of the board of directors of the South Texas Chamber of Commerce, of the LULAC Foundation, of the Tesoro Savings and Loan Association of Laredo and of the Webb County Chapter of the March of Dimes.

A registered professional engineer, Garza is a member of the Texas and National societies of Professional Engineers, has been president, vice president and state director of the Gateway chapter of the same organization, and was a member of the Texas employment commission advisory committee for the development of the manpower plan for the State of Texas.

PETE VASQUEZ VILLA (1971-1973)

Pete Vasquez Villa was born on April 15, 1922, and graduated from Corona (Calif.) Senior High School in 1942. He served in the U.S. Army during World War II, receiving the theater service, good conduct, Asiatic Pacific service and victory medals.

His academic career includes studies in business administration at Santa Ana and Chaffey College, leadership program and social welfare seminar at the University of California. From 1955 to 1965 he supervised building and maintenance at Norco Junior High School, then organized community action groups for two years, served as area coordinator and later assistant director of the Economic Board, community development director of a management and public relations firm, and national board chairman of SER Jobs for Progress. He was executive director of Natrional LULAC Abrazar, administering and providing policy direction for a staff of 140 workers seeking to identify the socio-economic needs of elderly Spanish-speaking people.

His activities for LULAC include being California state director, Southern California executive director, director of two districts, member of the National SER board, president of Council 2001 and 1016, LULAC organizer in the desert area, assistant national director of the War on Poverty program, state chairman of the LULAC migrant program and representative of LULAC on the Interagency Committee on Mexican American affairs.

Villa has also been a member of President Richard Nixon's Rent Advisory Board, member of the advisory board for Project Headstart, member of the Department of Labor Ad-Hoc Committee, and Riverside (California) County board member.

Villa and his wife, Rose, have two children, Richard, and Elizabeth.

MANUEL GONZALES (1975-1977)

A jobber and wholesaler in Waco, Texas, Manuel Gonzales has been a member of the boards of directors of the LULAC Foundation, the McLenna County Aid, and the Boys Club of America in Waco. He was the founder and promoter of the Fiesta de la Raza in Waco and has been a member of the Urban League Manpower Planning Council, the Governor's Planning Council, and the Equal Opportunity Advancement Corp.

EDUARDO MORGA (1977-1978)

A native of Los Angeles now residing in Huntington Beach, California, Eduardo Morga is a certified public accountant working as a supervisory auditor for the Department of Defense, his employer since 1958.

Morga has been a member of LULAC since 1969, holding many important offices, among them the post of national treasurer for two terms under the presidency of Pete Villa, California state director twice, and vice president of the Far West region one term. He has also served on the board of directors of the LULAC National Educational Service Centers and is now completing his fourth year on the board of directors of SER.

He said that the highlight of his administration as national president of LULAC was the focus on international relations. He met with Mexico's President, Jose Lopez Portillo, four times, to discuss (among other

subjects) how to better the conditions of undocumented workers in the U.S. and how Chicanos and Mexicans could work together for common goals. His proclamation that Chicanos and Mexicans are natural allies made national news and triggered criticism from some commentators. Tying into an existing scholarship program, LULAC was able to augment the number of scholarship offered to U.S. Hispanics by Mexico from 50 every five years to 50 annually.

Morga also involved LULAC in the struggle to end police brutality against Hispanics. After Jose Campos Torres drowned in 1977 in Houston after he was beaten by police and thrown into a bayou, he went to that city to meet with the police chief, who agreed that a citizens' committee should be appointed to advise him on police relations with the community.

A graduate of Theodore Roosevelt High School in East Los Angeles, Morga has an associate degree in arts from Compton College, a bachelor of science degree from UCLA, and has done post-graduate work at Cal State in Los Angeles. He is one of the founders of Image, the national Hispanic organization for federal and other public employees, was a member for two years of the Santa Ana Draft Board, and is currently on the Orange County Manpower Commission, a private industry council dealing with the implementation of Title 7 of the Comprehensive Employment Training Act (CETA). As a member of that group, he was invited to the White House for a briefing in 1978. He is also on the board of directors of the Mexican American National Organization, which made news in May, 1979, by publishing a full-page advertisement in the Los Angeles Times informing President Carter of his unfulfilled promises to Hispanics. He is very active in seeking to improve the performance of the justice system toward Hispanics.

He is married to the former Aurelia "Dee" Gonzales.

EDUARDO PENA, JR. (1978-

Eduardo Peña Jr., the 37th President of LULAC, has had a long and distinguished career in public service, working for the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), the United States Senate and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). A native of Laredo, Texas, he is a two-time recipient (1968 and 1969) of the Department of Labor's award for meritorious achievement. Between 1960 and 1966, Pena was a wage-hour investigator and wage-hour analyst for the DOL. Then he became a senior compliance officer with the DOL's Office of Federal Contract Compliance, planning, directing and supervising work under

Executive Order 11246 aimed at preventing discrimination in employment by Federal contractors. He became director of that office in 1969 but in 1970 joined the Senate Committee on Labor and Public Welfare as counsel. After a brief leave to work as a campaign coordinator for Senator Ralph Yarborough, he rejoined the Senate Committee, analyzing legislation from the sub-committees and recommending action to the chairman. He also drafted legislation on manpower, equal employment opportunity, minimum wage, labor relations, poverty, citizenship, disaster relief and other subjects. He also prepared testimony committee hearings.

In 1971, Peña became a legislative assistant to Senator Birch Bayh, working for six months on domestic social legislation. Later that year he became director of the Office of Compliance Programs for the EEOC, supervising the headquarters staff group responsible for providing guidance on means to eliminate job discrimination. During the five years he was in that post, the number of discrimination complaints resolved increased from 8,000 to 74,000 per year. In 1977, Peña became acting director of the Office of Government Employment at EEOC, managing a newly created office focusing on the problems of employees under merit and tenure systems of state and local government agencies and educational institutions. On January 1, 1979, Peña resigned from government service to enter private law practice.

Peña won the LULAC President's Award for Outstanding Service to the Hispanic Community 1967, 1968 and 1973. He has also been chairman of two LULAC-initiated projects – the National Educational Service Centers (LNESC) and SER/Jobs for Progress. LNESC has 10 field centers across the country, providing counseling and scholarships for college-bound youth and SER offers job counseling, training and placement in more than 120 locations in 70 cities throughout the nation, with an annual budget of nearly $50 million. This is the largest manpower program aimed at the nation's Hispanic population.

A 1958 graduate of the University of Texas in Austin with a B.A. Degree in marketing, Peña earned his law degree from Catholic University in Washington while working full time for the Department of Labor. He graduated in 1967.

Peña and his wife, Ada, have two children, Celinda Marie, and Eduardo III; they reside in Bethesda, Maryland.

'I want to show that LULAC is not a closed organization'

National Youth President opens drive to increase role of youth councils in league.



Sandra Quintero

LULAC PRESIDENT SAYS
HISPANIC POWER GROWING

The Albuquerque Tribune, Thursday, November 9,1978



Hispanic political power in America is growing, the president of the country's largest Hispanic organization said today in Albuquerque, and will continue to grow if organization officials have their way.

"We have become much more aware of the way the system works," said Eduardo Pena, national president of the League of United Latin American Citizens "And we are beginning integrate ourselves into system."

PENA WAS in to day to attend the opening of LULA state headquarters Second N.W. LULAC has consolidated its Educa Service Center and its state offices at the address.

LULAC will celebrate its 50th anniversary in J uary.

Pena, an attorney living in Washi-



Ada Peña
First Lady of LULAC
50th Anniversary Year

, he said, had dif-
ses in different places. In his native Laredo, Texas, he recalled farmers would hire massive numbers of Hispanics on election day, to keep them away from the polls.

IN NEW MEXICO, he said, Hispanics have had a relatively comfortable position politically, because they were able to hold on to a measure of political power as Anglos trickled into the state.

He said LULAC is also working on numerous other issues, including inflation.

"AS LEADERS IN THE HISPANIC COMMUNITY, WE DO NOT TAKE LIGHTLY OUR RESPONSIBILITY TO CONTINUE OUR GOOD WORK, FOR IT FLOWS FROM A LEGACY THAT EACH LULAC GENERATION IN TURN HAS UPHELD FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE OVERALL COMMUNITY."

EDUARDO PEÑA,JR, NATIONAL LULAC PRESIDENT, 1979

Price: $7.50