

ALL FOR ONE AND ONE FOR ALL: A Celebration of 75 Years of the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC)

Yarsinske

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ALL FOR ONE FOR ALL

A Celebration of 75 Years of the
League of United Latin American Citizens
(LULAC)

by
Amy Waters Yarsinske



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William Clay Ford, Jr.
Chairman
Chief Executive Officer

Ford Motor Company
One American Road
Dearborn, MI 48126-2798 USA

Dear LULAC Member:

On behalf of Ford Motor Company, I am happy to congratulate LULAC on its 75th Anniversary.

LULAC's collective story over the past 75 years is one of triumphs and setbacks, challenges and accomplishments, historic events and private moments. This commemorative 75th Anniversary book provides an opportunity to reflect on the past as you begin shaping the future.

This book also captures the essence of LULAC's theme of family that we share at Ford Motor Company. As the largest and oldest Hispanic organization in the United States, LULAC continues to provide its more than 115,000 members with the necessary tools to be leaders in their communities. Great people making a difference in the community help all of us learn, appreciate and respect the contributions of everyone in our diverse citizenry.

We know that, by working together, Ford Motor Company and LULAC will continue to build better communities and a better quality of life for generations to come, fulfilling the legacy of both our organizations.

Ford has been a member of the LULAC Corporate Alliance for over a decade, and we are proud to support its many programs and initiatives. I hope you will enjoy this complimentary book in appreciation of your personal contributions to LULAC's remarkable heritage.

Congratulations on your success!

Sincerely,







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1. President George W. Bush with LULAC National President Hector Flores at the White House in December 2002.

2. President John Kennedy shakes hands with David Adame, national business manager of LULAC, in November 1963. Vice President and Mrs. Lyndon Johnson are in the background. Also seen are many other members of LULAC.

3. Actress Maria Conchita Alonso, LULAC First Lady Tula Flores, and LULAC National President Hector Flores with the Young Readers. (*LULAC News*, March/April 2003)

4. Actor and activist Jimmy Smits with Brent Wilkes, LULAC's national executive director. (*LULAC News*, January/February 1999)

5. The Reverend Jesse L. Jackson addresses the LULAC membership at the Unity Luncheon at the 68th Annual Convention in Anaheim, California. (*LULAC News*, November/December 1997)

6. Mexican President Vicente Fox (left) met with LULAC leaders in Mexico City on February 27, 2003. LULAC National President Hector Flores listens intently.

7. President and Mrs. Jimmy Carter hosted a White House dinner and reception on May 2, 1978, following presentation of the Public Initiative Council CDOL Manpower Training Program. Left to right are Ed Morga, an unidentified page, and President Carter.

8. LULAC President Rick Dovalina meets with Texas Governor George Bush to discuss education and immigration issues. (*LULAC News*, January/February 1999)

9. Dr. Marie Mahoney, working with the LULAC Central American Medical Relief Fund, aided victims of Hurricane Mitch in Honduras. (*LULAC News*, Spring 1999)

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LULAC would like to thank the following people for their contributions to this book:

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Miguel Fernandez, LULAC National Coordinator of Program Development



Members attending the first LULAC Convention held May 18, 1929.

INTRODUCTION

... Thou wilt most graciously be pleased to dispose us all to do justice, to love mercy, and to demean ourselves with that charity, humility, and pacific temper of mind which were the characteristics of the Divine Author of our blessed religion, and without an humble imitation of whose example in these things, we can never hope to be a happy nation.

—From “George Washington’s Prayer,” George Washington, written at Newburg, June 8, 1783

The founding of the League of

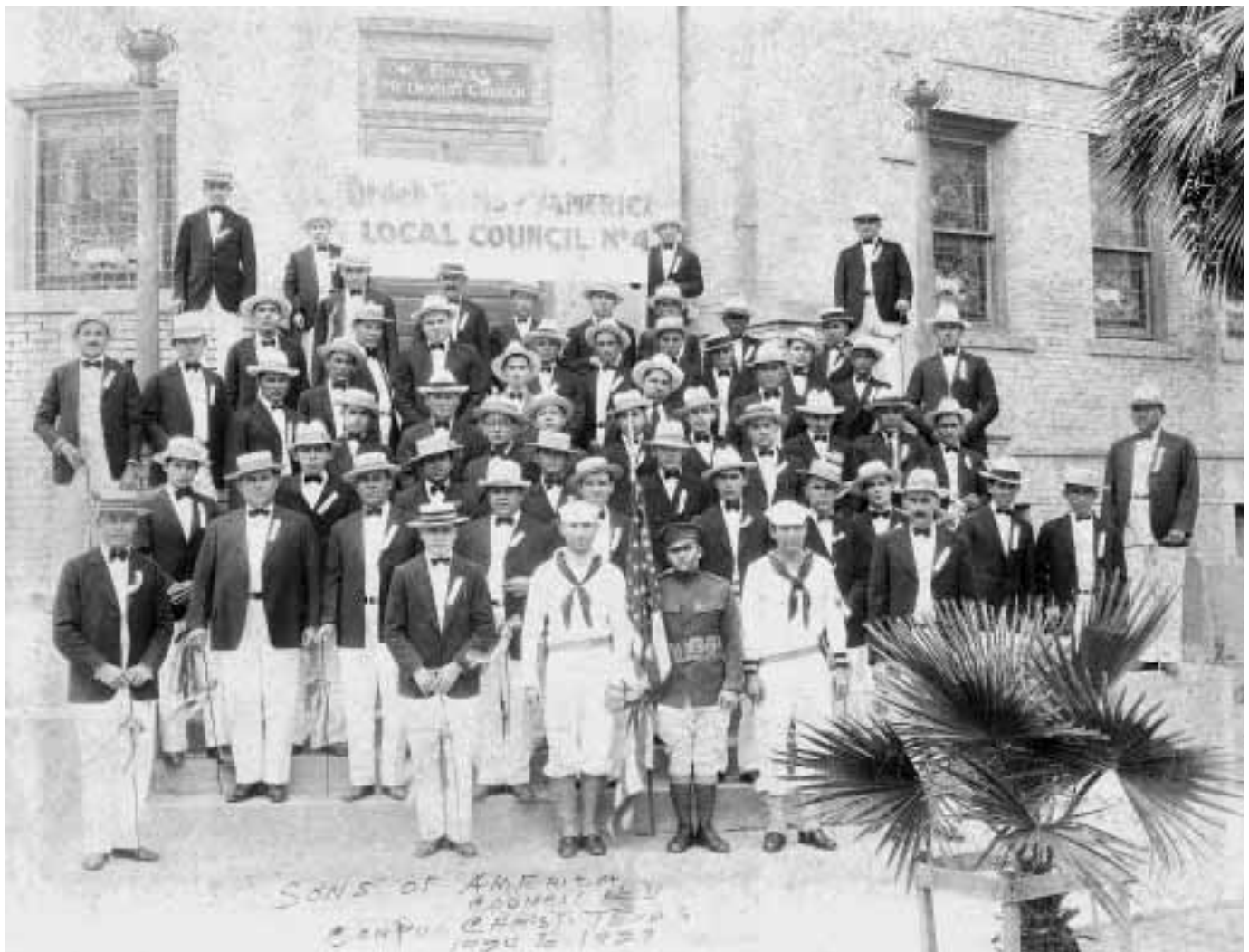
United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) on a cold, rainy day at Salon Obreros y Obreras, Corpus Christi, Texas, on February 17, 1929, marked an important milestone in the history of Hispanic American people in the United States, as LULAC has since evolved into one of the premiere organizations representing the civil rights of Hispanic Americans. The League sprung from the rise of a Texan-Mexican middle class and resistance to racial discrimination. The strength of the organization has historically been in Texas, although it now enjoys widespread support across the country.

LULAC is a multi-issue organization because its founders were confronted with a plethora of the challenges: addressing political disfranchisement, racial segregation, and racial discrimination that plagued Latinos through the early twentieth century. Since its inception, LULAC has responded to deepening issues in American society affecting Hispanic Americans, including racism, lack of political representation and the growing Hispanic vote, the exclusion of Hispanics from juries, and the segregation of public schools, housing, and public accommodations. And though the organization would criticize American society for discriminating against Hispanic Americans, in particular, it encouraged reform rather than an attempt to restructure the political and economic construct of the country.

LULAC is set apart from its peer organizations in the Hispanic community by its political ideology. The founders of LULAC respected the precepts on which the United States was established, including the writings of the country's founding fathers, and in an effort to imbue LULAC with the same spirit of purpose and opportunity that is the foundation of American democracy and free enterprise, they praised the nation in well-crafted written statements and speeches. This deference toward the American way of life was done largely, in the beginning, to placate the American public's suspicion of the organization's motives and to satisfy the personal beliefs and political preferences of the League's membership.¹ Officers and members of LULAC were required to take an oath swearing their loyalty to the government of the United States and their support of its Constitution and laws. The organization would adopt "America" as its official song, English as its official language, and "George Washington's Prayer" as its official prayer. The League's constitution was modeled after the U.S. Constitution.²

LULAC's early activists fought racism in a country that clearly rejected Mexican American people and culture. But the League's members held on to their pride and sought to retain their Latino heritage while also advocating a grasp of the English language, loyalty to the United States, and participation in American civic and social activities, becoming advocates of bilingualism and biculturalism, as long as it was understood that Hispanic Americans' primary loyalty was to the United States and its institutions.³

Order of Sons of America, Local Council 4, was one of the three organizations that merged together to form LULAC. Corpus Christi, Texas 1924-1929.



The founders of LULAC were economic conservatives who viewed racial discrimination, not class domination, as the primary cause of Mexican Americans' problems.⁴

One of the many LULAC gatherings in Texas, April 29, 1929.

At the beginning of World War II, many of the League's councils ceased to exist because their members volunteered or were drafted into the armed services. By the end



of the war, LULAC councils were revived with the return of Hispanic veterans who had constituted the core of activists destined to renew the fight for equal civil rights. For a period of fifteen years post-World War II, the organization conducted a series of lawsuits, petitioned local governments, and mobilized the Latino vote to challenge discriminatory practices in America's Southwest. Along with another organization, the American GI Forum, LULAC was at the forefront of civil rights for Hispanic Americans in the post-World War II years.⁵

The League remains, to this day, unique from an organizational perspective, largely because it had two notable mobilization phases, the first in 1929 when LULAC was established, and the second in 1945 after World War II.⁶ While World War II decidedly interrupted the group's work, and most of its councils disbanded, by war's end Hispanic veterans saw the vast opportunities in a booming United States economy and wanted to participate in the American dream. The period from the end of the war through the late 1950s was a long period of political activism. LULAC's crusade for civil rights moved forward in concert with a libertarian ethic and a strident anti-socialist stand, arguing that discrimination provided an opportunity for propaganda to divide and decimate the country.⁷ Beginning in the late 1950s LULAC created a series of landmark programs for the Latino community that have themselves become important institutions for the advancement of Hispanics. These include the LULAC's Little Schools of the 400 created in 1957 to teach basic English words to Hispanic preschoolers. This innovating program was the model used by President Johnson in the creation of the federal Headstart program.

In the 1960s LULAC councils built more than two dozen housing projects to provide affordable housing to low income families. LULAC and the American GI Forum

Some Junior members who attended the Junior LULAC National Supreme Council meeting September 1965 in El Paso, Texas. Left to right are John Casas, Gabe Sanchez, Martha Ponce, Henry Vasquez, Irene Alvarez, Hilda Campos, Esther Wright, Olga Martinez, Felicitas Pinion, and Cecilia Vela. (Photo by M. J. Romo)

created SER-Jobs for Progress, the premiere Hispanic employment training program in 1966. Today SER provides employment and training services through more than forty-three employment centers located throughout the United States and Puerto Rico. In 1968 LULAC created the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund to provide legal services to the Hispanic community. LULAC's flag ship educational program, the LULAC National Educational Service Centers, was created in 1973 and now provides counseling services to more than 20,000 Hispanic students each year at seventeen regional centers located throughout the United States and Puerto Rico.



In the last decade, LULAC created the LULAC Corporate Alliance, an advisory board of Fortune 500 companies, to foster stronger partnerships between Corporate America and the Hispanic community and the LULAC Institute to develop and support community-service programs for its volunteer councils.

LULAC has grown dramatically from the small, tightly associated band of South Texas individuals who joined together in 1929 to form the organization. Now a nationwide organization headquartered in Washington, D.C., with more than 700 LULAC councils operating throughout the United States and Puerto Rico, LULAC represents and serves Latinos from all nationalities and backgrounds. LULAC councils award millions of dollars in scholarships to Hispanic students each year, organize citizenship and voter registration drives, conduct thousands of volunteer-based service programs for disadvantaged Latinos, and actively empower the Hispanic community at the local, state and national levels. LULAC, and the family of organizations it helped create, is a tremendous force for advancing the education, employment, housing, health, political empowerment, and civil rights of Hispanic Americans. With a vibrant and growing membership, unparalleled grassroots outreach, innovative model programs, and dynamic leadership, LULAC's best days are still to come.



LULAC members at the LULAC National Convention in Laredo, Texas, in 1951.

CHAPTER 1

All for One and One for All

Respect your citizenship and preserve it; honor your country, maintain its tradition in the spirit of its citizens and embody yourself into its culture and civilization.

—The LULAC Code⁸

When the League of United

Latin American Citizens was established on the cusp of the Great Depression, it followed an extended period of despair for Hispanic Americans. More Mexicans were lynched in the Southwest between 1865 and 1920 than blacks in other parts of the South in the same time frame. Lynching was the accepted penalty for crimes in which Latinos were involved, guilty or not, and regardless of the severity of the crime. No jury along the U.S.-Mexican border would convict a white for shooting a Hispanic. In 1922, *The Nation* documented cases in Texas in which Latinos had been brutally assaulted and often murdered. The lawlessness was so widespread that federal officials warned the governor of Texas that action would have to be taken to protect the Hispanic population of his state. An

editorial in the November 18, 1922, edition of the *New York Times*, stated thusly: “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, to which he replied, “Thirty-seven, not counting Mexicans.”

The early 1920s were remembered as the darkest period for Hispanic Americans. Houston attorney John J. Herrera observed, “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,” he continued. “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.”⁹ The majority of Mexican Americans who resided in South Texas had lived there for four, five, or six generations, but they were not permitted to vote, and state leaders did not want to see them organized. Mexican Americans were kept from the polls on election day through the creation of a white man’s primary. Since Mexican Americans were not white, they were turned away from the polls.

“The Texas Rangers would go out with a warrant to pick up a Sandoval, a Herrera or a Hernandez,” remembered Herrera, “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 Mexican Americans could get into a court of law was to pay their taxes, stand trial, or, when the Selective Service put offices in the state, report for duty in the armed services. “So what was happening,” observed 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.”¹⁰

“A Negro was burned alive in Sherman, Texas, in 1932 or 1933, and in 1919 or 1920, three Mexican Americans were lynched. They were strung up to a telephone post just because one of the brothers was involved in a divorce suit with his wife—and she had an Anglo attorney,” recalled Herrera.

John C. Solis, a resident of San Antonio and a co-founder of the League of United Latin American Citizens, had vivid memories of signs all over town that prohibited Mexican Americans from sharing personal and public space with whites. Signs declaring “No Mexicans Allowed” or “No Mexicans Served Here” were commonplace. “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,”¹¹ Solis stated years later. Worse yet, Mexican American children could not go to decent schools. Judge Alfred J. Hernandez, a LULAC leader for decades, 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.”¹²

But there were other activities from which Hispanic Americans were prohibited. They could not own property in designated residential areas of San Antonio, Texas, for example, and no American citizen of Mexican descent was allowed to serve as a jury commissioner or a grand or petit juror. There was ample economic discrimination also, as

The poster features a decorative border with various symbols: a flag, a shield with stars and stripes, a classical building, a hand holding a torch, and a hand holding a scale. The central text is as follows:

LULAC CODE

RESPECT your citizenship and preserve it; Honor your country, maintain its tradition in the Spirit of its citizens and embody yourself into its culture and civilization; ★ ★ Be proud of your origin and maintain immaculate, respect your glorious past and help to defend the right of all the people. ★ ★ Learn how to discharge your duties before you learn how to assert your rights, educate and make yourself worthy and stand high in the light of your deeds; you must always be loyal and courageous; ★ ★ Filled with optimism, make yourself sociable, upright, judicious, and above all things be sober and collected in your habits, cautious in your actions and sparing in your speech. ★ ★ Believe in God, love Humanity and rely upon the framework of human progress, slow and sound, unequivocal and firm. ★ ★ Always be honorable and highminded, learn how to be self-reliant upon your own qualifications and resources. ★ ★ In war serve your country, in peace your convictions; discern, investigate, meditate and think, study, at all times be honest and generous. ★ ★ Let your finest purpose be that of helping to see that each new generation shall be of a youth more efficient and capable and in this let your own children be included. ★ ★ ★

"All for One~One for All"

CODIGO

Respetar tu ciudadanía, consérvale; honra a tu país, mantén en el espíritu de sus hijos tus tradiciones, incorpórate a su cultura y civilización;

Ama a los hombres de tu raza, enorgullécete de tu origen y manténlo immaculado; respeta tu pasado glorioso y ayuda a vindicar a los tuyos;

Aprende a cumplir tus deberes antes que reclamar tus derechos; dignificate, edúcate, enalécete por tus obras, sé siempre leal y valiente;

Lleno de optimismo sé sociable, recto, juicioso y ante todo sobrio en costumbres, cauto en obra y parco en hablar;

Estudia el pasado de los tuyos, del país a que debes tu ciudadanía, aprende a dominar con pureza los dos idiomas más esenciales, el inglés y el español;

Se siempre digno y altivo, habitúate a depender de ti mismo, en tus aptitudes y en tus propios recursos;

Cree en Dios, ama a la Humanidad y confía en la obra del progreso humano, lenta y segura, inequívoca y firme;

En la guerra sirve a tu país, en la paz a tus convicciones; discierne, investiga, medita y piensa, estudia, sé siempre honrado y generoso;

Que tu propósito más firme sea ayudar a que cada generación nueva de los tuyos sea de juventud más apta, en ello, deja que queden tus hijos comprendidos.

large companies and municipal employers relegated Hispanic Americans, if they hired them at all, to the lowest possible jobs. There were no Latinos in offices or management. Stores in downtown San Antonio refused to employ Hispanic clerks.

In 1921 John Solis, Francisco “Frank” Leyton, and six others met in Helotes, Texas, to discuss the plight of their people—and change the status quo for Hispanic Americans forever. These discussions led to the formation of the Order of Sons of America, which had seven chapters in Texas by 1929. “LULAC’s mother organization was organized . . . in San Antonio by seven men,” remembered Solis later. “Throughout 1920 we met every weekend at Helotes in the northern part of Bexar County. We discussed the pathetic conditions of Americans of Mexican descent. We were highly discriminated [against]. There was a strong race prejudice against our people. We were at the bottom of the totem pole.”¹³ The Order of Knights of America in San Antonio was a splinter group, and an early first attempt to merge these groups into a statewide organization would not occur until the Harlingen Convention in 1927. However, the result was not the unification of various groups but the founding of yet another organization: the Latin American Citizens League.

With Solis at Helotes were Frank Leyton, the oldest member of the group, and his brother, Melchor, Pablo Cruz, Abraham Armendariz, Merci Montez, Leo Longoria, and Vicente Rocha. Leyton made saddles. His brother was a baker. Pablo Cruz was a printer, the son of the founder of the San Antonio newspaper. Armendariz was also a printer. Montez was a professional boxer, at one time lightweight champion of Mexico, and Longoria was his trainer. Rocha was a coffee salesman. During their discussions, Solis and the others decided to establish an organization to better the conditions of Mexican Americans economically, politically,

and educationally. “After working the whole year,” recalled Solis, “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 thirty-seven people at a barber shop owned by Ramon Carbajal. . . . That first night we elected two leaders: James Tafolla, a lawyer, who worked for the district attorney, and Feliciano Flores.”¹⁴

A disagreement soon broke out between the Tafolla and Flores camps. “Tafolla and Flores said we could not have two leaders and urged us to select one,” Solis remarked. “We chose James Tafolla, and Feliciano Flores walked out with seven men.” There were only thirty members left with Flores’ departure. That same night, October 12, 1921, Tafolla drafted an application for a charter and the next morning went to the Texas secretary of state’s office and obtained the first charter ever issued to a Hispanic American organization. “We named our group the Sons of America,” said Solis. “Feliciano Flores organized a political group called the Sons of Texas.”¹⁵

The Sons of America worked for several years organizing councils in surrounding counties, but Tafolla, who worked for a political officeholder, did not want to relinquish the presidency of the organization. Younger members of the Sons of America had objectives very different from Tafolla, so Manuel Gonzales of the Sons of America joined with Solis to form the Knights of America, which consisted largely of the young people whom the Sons had distanced in their agenda. There was no doubt that the idea of organizing Hispanic Americans was drawing enormous attention from white leadership in America’s Southwest to the Latino communities that dotted the landscape of the same.

Since all of the groups tended to follow the same principles and purposes, it was natural that they would eventually attempt to merge into a single organization. The organizational meeting that first brought the key Mexican

American groups together convened at Harlingen in 1927. Perales and other Rio Grande Valley leaders called the meeting, intent on forming a more effectual national organization. Long before Perales called the meeting, Council Number 4 of the Sons of America in Corpus Christi and the Knights of America had been discussing a merger. To these groups, forming still another organization seemed to be a step toward further division and weakness. Thus Benardo F. "Ben" Garza, president of Council Number 4, called a meeting attended by Manuel C. Gonzales, Mauro Machado, and John Solis of the Knights of America in San Antonio, and Perales Saenz and Felipe Herrera from the Valley. But Perales was not giving up on the idea of forming a larger, stronger organization.



On August 14, 1927, representatives of all the key Hispanic American organizations based in Texas met in Harlingen, and, from that meeting emerged a new organization called the League of Latin American Citizens. One event at this meeting, however, carried more long-term historical significance. J. T. Canales proposed that the new organization be composed of U.S. citizens only. Since the majority of those assembled consisted of Mexican citizens, there was a protest demonstration. The decision to exclude noncitizens led to a walkout of some 90 percent of those in attendance, leaving only a few delegates and visitors from Corpus Christi, San Antonio, and Brownsville.

Ben Garza was one of the founders and the first president of the League of United Latin American Citizens. He devoted his lifetime to helping his country and its people. He is best remembered for his statesmanship in creating a better understanding between members of the Anglo and Spanish communities.

Garza was at the head of a group known as Council Number 4 of the Order of Sons of America which merged into what is now LULAC. This historic event took place in Corpus Christi on February 17, 1929.

One of the outstanding achievements of his administration was the formation and adoption of the constitution and bylaws which govern LULAC. It was during his administration that the Box Bill was introduced in Congress. Accompanied by J. T. Canales and Alonzo S. Perales, he journeyed to Washington, D.C., to refute the discriminatory charges that had been leveled against Latin Americans by the author of the Box Bill.

A monument in Corpus Christi, Texas, commemorates the work of this truly great leader who had a special concern and an infinite capacity for love for the less fortunate. (*LULAC News*, February 1979)

After the walkout, the Sons of America, Knights of America, and the new League of Latin American Citizens could not agree on merging.

A year later, on August 4, 1928, leaders endorsed uniting the various groups by issuing a proclamation urging all Latin American civic organizations to merge into one. The committee appointed to bring the organizations together consisted of Ben Garza, Andres de Luna, and E. H. Martin from Corpus Christi; John Solis and Mauro Machado from San Antonio; and Alonso Perales and J. T. Canales from the Valley. Two groups—the League and the Sons of America—had taken firmer steps toward a merger after the 1927 meeting, steps that closed the distance between the organizations and married their objectives. Returning to Corpus Christi, delegates of the Corpus Christi Order of Sons of America (Council Number 4) and the Knights of America of San Antonio agreed to merge even if the Latin American League and San Antonio Order of Sons of America (Council Number 1) could not agree to incorporate. After a year passed, Council Number 4 took the initiative and sent an ultimatum to Council Number 1 notifying the San Antonio chapter that if they did not merge in thirty days, the Corpus Christi chapter would drop out. Failing to receive a response, Council Number 4 severed its relationship with the San Antonio organization. The stage was ultimately set, by this lack of response, for the creation of LULAC.

Eight years after the meeting at Helotes, LULAC was founded by the merging of four organizations: the Corpus Christi Council of the Sons of America, the Alice Council of the Sons of America, the Knights of America, and the Latin American Citizens League in the Rio Grande Valley and Laredo. The Loyal Mexican American Citizens of Brownsville, of which Alonso Perales was president, was another group which figured prominently in the formation

of LULAC. The Loyal Mexican American Citizens of Brownsville counted among its leaders J. T. Canales and Clemente Idar, a brilliant orator who was a national organizer for the American Federation of Labor. An invitation to attend the meeting that merged all of these organizations to form LULAC had been dispatched by a group of friends from Corpus Christi, formerly Sons of America, Council Number 4. John Solis remembered the weather as being cold and rainy as delegates and their guests sought shelter—and resolution of their differences—at the Salon Obreros y Obreras to begin their meeting at one o'clock in the afternoon. Aside from 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. Twenty-five delegates attended the organizing meeting for the new League, including representatives from Brownsville, McAllen, Encino, and La Grulla. James Tafolla, who had been president of the San Antonio Order of Sons of America and of the statewide network since 1921, refused to send delegates, and this chapter did not merge into the organization established in February 1929.

Not everyone was anxious to create one organization out of three groups. Jose Tomas Canales was what some observers described as “lukewarm” to the notion of merging. Alonso Perales wrote that scarcely one week before, Canales expressed the opinion that the Sons of America and Knights of America had not won their epaulets in social and civic work on behalf of the Mexican American.¹⁶ Perales noted that he was finally able to convince Canales that it was logical to establish one organization. Another problem with consolidation was naming the organization. The Corpus Christi group wanted a short new name. But members of the League of Latin American Citizens were loath to surrender their long, but apt, title.

Canales was opposed to dropping the League's name. As the meeting got under way, Ben Garza called the meeting to order. Perales moved that Garza be named chairman of the convention, and Manuel C. Gonzales of San Antonio seconded his motion; it carried unanimously. Gonzales was subsequently elected secretary.

Garza introduced all visitors, many of whom came from San Antonio, Brownsville, La Grulla, Encino, McAllen, Alice, Robstown, and Austin. Andres de Luna of Corpus Christi delivered the opening address, urging delegates to merge into a single organization with only one name and constitution. Perales took the floor again and seconded de Luna's proposal, stating that the Latin American Citizens League was eager to welcome a new organization, one that could begin representing Hispanic Americans as soon as possible. Gonzales then took the floor, pressing members to vote for a merger that he felt strongly would be one of the greatest efforts ever undertaken by the delegates. After Canales gave a stirring address, members voted unanimously to merge the organizations.

The resolution establishing the organization read:

Whereas for many months of untiring efforts a group of citizens of the city of Corpus Christi, Nueces County, Texas, and former members of Council Number 4 of the Order of Sons of America have struggled along using their best means of friendship and accord to unite into solid and great organization two other great 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 beforehand that neither one of these organizations alone, single-handed and divided, could render such help, then,



Mauro M. Machado, a member of LULAC Council Number 2 in San Antonio, served as LULAC's fifth president general in 1933-1934. During his tenure, he was credited with being instrumental in organizing and establishing 85 percent of the councils of LULAC. He was known as a prolific letter-writer and for his contacts in the Hispanic community. (LULAC News, April 1979)

It is resolved by this group of citizens of Corpus Christi, and former members of Council Number 4, of the Order of Sons of America, to issue a call to all these organizations and to use their 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.

James Tafolla Jr. of San Antonio served as LULAC's seventh president general in 1935–1936.

He was recognized as the "dean" of Hispanic attorneys at a time when the Mexican American community was suffering from a lack of Hispanic lawyers. He was educated in San Antonio public schools and attended John K. Weber School of Law, a private institution in the Alamo City. He went on to serve as assistant county attorney and criminal district attorney of Bexar County. (*LULAC News*, April 1979)



A committee consisting of two members of each organization was named to establish rules of order for the new organization. The committee consisted of John Solis and Mauro Machado of the Knights of America, Alonso Perales and J. T. Canales of the Latin American Citizens League, and E. H. Martin and Andres de Luna from the Corpus Christi council of the Order of Sons of America. The group withdrew to another room and eventually returned to announce that the name of the organization would be "United Latin American Citizens." Membership was initially restricted to American citizens of Mexican extraction, although whites were eventually admitted. All local councils of the merging organizations were recognized, but Corpus Christi, as host to the inaugural meeting, was designated Council Number 1 of the United Latin American Citizens.

Ending deliberations at Corpus Christi, the committee recommended that a convention be held there again on May 18 or 19, 1929, to frame a permanent constitution and to elect general officers. The recommendations of the committee were accepted, and an executive committee consisting of Garza, Gonzales, Saenz, and Canales was given the task of making the arrangements. The motto, "All for one and one for all," was chosen and the convention adjourned.

Three months later, in May, a convention was held at Allende Hall in Corpus Christi. Ben Garza was chosen president; Manuel Gonzales, vice president; Andres de Luna, secretary; and Louis Wilmot, treasurer. 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 major architects of the LULAC constitution were Canales, Idar, and Perales, who spelled out the aims and purposes of LULAC in twenty-five 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 an oath saying they would “be loyal to the government of the United States of America, to support its Constitution and to obey its laws.” While its membership was prohibitive, allowing only native-born or naturalized citizens of Mexican American extraction eighteen years of age, it did permit honorary memberships to persons of distinction (other than citizens of Mexican American extraction) or those who had provided distinguished service to LULAC. Mexicans were always honorary members, with the exception of Felix Tijerina and Raoul Cortez, subsequently LULAC presidents. Women were not encouraged to join. LULAC’s membership consisted largely of skilled laborers and small business owners, though a handful of lawyers played a crucial role in the League’s early existence. In South Texas, small capitalists, merchants, and business owners participated in the organization also. Though the 1929 constitution further proclaimed English the official language of the League, the organization nevertheless promoted bilingualism. LULAC selected a shield as its emblem, symbolizing defense against and protection from racism. The League would wait two years—1931—to obtain its charter.



Judge Alfred Hernandez, president of LULAC, was featured on the cover of *LULAC News* in June 1967.

CHAPTER 2

Taking Hold of a Political Platform— and a Purpose

Any time you joined LULAC, it was a labor of love which cost you a lot.

—John J. Herrera, on the early years of LULAC

The League of United Latin

American Citizens' debut was met with mixed reviews. National newspaper journalists were startled LULAC was not inclined to admit noncitizens of Latin or Mexican extraction. John J. Herrera, who joined LULAC in 1939, observed that Houston LULAC Council Number 60 had difficulty keeping its membership active because older men in the organization did not want the assistance of younger members. Herrera noted that LULAC tended to frown upon young people openly involved in politics, particularly in an organization called the Latin American Club of Harris County. After the council suspended its activities as the result of these problems, young Mexican American men finally took over Houston's LULAC Council Number 60, which has met continuously since 1939.

LULAC's proclivity for organizing middle-class Hispanics reassured whites that there would be no class warfare to challenge the status quo. But that was a comforting perception, not fact. "There was a subtle discrimination, [in that they] would look at us as radicals and this was used to disrupt the organization," recalled Hector Godinez, LULAC president from 1960 to 1961. "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," he continued, "the workers were afraid the boss would run them off."¹⁷

Frank Pinedo, of Houston, recalled vividly the animosity, distrust, and antagonism. "When we would complain about police brutality and school segregation, they would listen politely when we made [a] presentation to the school board or city council, and then proceed to vote against us."¹⁸ Whites were hardly disinterested in LULAC's activities, as Pinedo and fellow LULAC members came to realize when they set out to organize new LULAC chapters. Many LULAC members were hounded out of their jobs and businesses for holding membership in the organization. "When we were organizing LULAC councils down in South Texas in King Ranch country," said Herrera, "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 [to reach Kingsville]. This was during the early 1940s."¹⁹

Judge Alfred Hernandez remembered in later years that going into a county or city where the people were anti-Latino could get Hispanic American males beaten or killed. "There was a sheriff [named] Buckshot Lane in Fort Bend County," he recounted. "He ran me and John Herrera out of the county at shotgun point. We were trying to organize [the county] for LULAC. But they didn't want Hispanics.

We were strangers. They felt we had no business in that place. We were agitators.”²⁰

For organizing what Hernandez described as “flying squadrons,” he and his LULAC colleagues drove by car all over Texas. “We had no air conditioning. We had no money to travel. We were on our own. We slept in the cars.” But John Herrera, Hernandez’s friend, remembered something else, something far more poignant. “Any time you joined LULAC, it was a labor of love which cost you a lot. You had to leave your wife and children.”

There were other constraints, too, and they were pervasive, covering the entire Southwest. Violence and intimidation were not uncommon as LULAC expanded its councils in the region. Belen Robles recollected arriving in a community outside El Paso in the 1950s for the formal inaugural of a new LULAC council only to discover whites had intimidated new LULAC members into staying away from the event.

John Solis had memories of the “flying squadron” in San Antonio. “We would go to different towns at our own expense,” tramping along in an old car. “We didn’t have any professionals 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.”²¹ When going through a rainstorm, Solis and his fellow LULAC representatives drew a tarpaulin over their heads to avoid getting drenched. One year, they traveled fifty-two weekends. “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 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?’”²² And when Solis and the others persisted and wanted to convene a meeting, to better the conditions of their people, they said, “Well, you can’t meet.”



Hector Godinez, LULAC president in 1960–1961. (*LULAC News*, April 1979)

White opposition to LULAC's organizing efforts continued unchecked for twenty years after the organization's establishment. When Hector Godinez and fellow LULAC organizers attempted to set up a council in Orange County, California, in 1947, local law enforcement rounded up Godinez, Manuel Viega, Hector Tarango, Eddie Valenzuela, Isidoro Gonzales, and the late Cruz Barrios, who owned a market, taking them away in police cars to the district attorney's office. Representatives of the Associated Farmers watched and listened as Godinez and his friends were issued stern warnings to stay out of Orange County. "We had just formed something they didn't want—the organization. They were afraid of it. You see, our parents had been strongly persecuted in the [mid- to late] 1930s. My father was an activist and when the first strikes were called in the orange orchards, we did not have any protection [whatsoever]. Many of our people were unceremoniously taken across the border. They could do that in the thirties without any fear of retribution."²³

Godinez was shaken by the events in Orange County. "In 1947, when they got us and threatened us, I was twenty-one years old and quite inexperienced. Hector Tarango must have been in his late twenties, [but] more sophisticated." Tarango had had two years of college, and LULAC had given him a sense of empowerment. When challenged by the Orange County district attorney's office, it was Tarango who retorted, recalled Godinez, "[Do] 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 Tarango said this, the district attorney uttered a few words, then came out of his inner office and told the Associated Farmers' representatives, 'You don't have a case.'"²⁴

Many LULAC members were not as persistent as Godinez and Tarango. Too many were scared out of the

organization, and still others left because they were not indoctrinated into social service. But the lion's share of those who fled the councils were simply frightened of confrontation, suspicions, and losing jobs. "Whenever we were going to the little towns where Mexicans were not permitted to enjoy the rights of citizens," recalled Manuel Gonzales, "the law would come." Gonzales and his colleagues, dressed in good suits as all were from the city, attracted police attention because they looked like bootleggers to the officers who searched them for illegal liquor. "They called us agitators, saying we were not going into their town to give false hopes to people when they were content and didn't need any education."²⁵



William D. Bonilla, LULAC national president from 1964 to 1965 meets with President Lyndon B. Johnson.

Despite its organizational difficulties, LULAC clearly demonstrated that it was an idea whose time had come. By the time LULAC's supreme council had its first meeting on June 23, 1929, the number of councils had burgeoned



LULAC President Belen Robles met with President Bill Clinton at the 1997 LULAC National Convention to discuss immigration, unemployment, education, and the status of Puerto Rico. (*LULAC News*, November/December 1997)

to eighteen, among them Floresville, Sugar Land, Laredo, Crystal City, Uvalde, Del Rio, and Eagle Pass. LULAC's success was unprecedented.

By 1942, Manuel Gonzales, LULAC's third president, wrote: "The establishment of thirty-seven councils in widely separated and distinct sections of the state indicated that the purposes of the League are wide enough to take care of every situation that has arisen, and the incontrovertible fact that the League is flourishing speaks with eloquence that it is powerful enough to supply the needs of its members."²⁶ By the late 1930s, LULAC had established councils in New Mexico and California, and although there are no records to establish whether it occurred or not, Hector Godinez claimed that a LULAC council was founded in San Bernardino, California, in the early 1930s. While five of the first nine presidents of LULAC were from San Antonio and three from the Rio Grande Valley, the first national president from New Mexico was elected in 1939, a testament to the strength of that state's LULAC councils. Filemon T. Martinez, of Albuquerque, became the first New Mexican president, and in the five years that followed his election, three of LULAC's national presidents were from his state. By then councils had been established in Taos, Santa Fe, and Albuquerque. Each leader was a pioneer in some way, and Martinez was no exception.



In October 1996 about 100,000 men and women marched in Washington, D.C., demanding human rights for all immigrants. LULAC member Bennie Martinez holds the LULAC shield at the march.

CHAPTER 3

Going to War for Civil Rights

... We were serving in the foxholes of the South Pacific, so why couldn't we at least grow up as other Americans.

—John J. Herrera, on the fight for Mexican American civil rights and integrated education, circa 1944

In its formative years, LULAC

may have been excessive in its loyalty to the American way, but its members were not acquiescing to or overtly seeking the approval of white society either. If they had, LULAC members would not have worked so hard to secure education, civil, and economic rights for all Hispanic Americans—even Mexican citizens—in those key years before and after the Second World War. LULAC was not advocating surrender of traditional values, but something far different. LULAC wanted its Hispanic American members to make full use of the opportunities and responsibilities of a United States citizen. LULAC wanted Latinos to become involved citizens, and that required learning the English language, getting an education, participating in government by voting, running for

public office, taking part in judicial proceedings by serving on juries, and generally contributing to their communities. Prejudice blocked participation in all of these areas, and so the first task for LULAC was to win those rights for Hispanic Americans. The organization proposed remedies through peaceful, measured, diplomatic actions. And they enjoyed success as a result of taking such careful steps to gain ground.

John Solis was in business in Corpus Christi in the mid-1920s and a member of the Sons of America, when he encountered a man who said that he and his family had been run off the farm where they sharecropped without being paid the money that was due them. But they could not find an attorney because there were not any Mexican American lawyers in Corpus Christi. Men like Solis were shaped by these experiences. “I was a young man then, full of energy,” he would say much later. “I went to see a lawyer, an Anglo named Dudley Parlinton. 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, to which Parlinton replied, ‘I am not going to charge the man a penny.’”²⁷ Parlinton won the case and the sharecropper got the money he was due for his crops. Legal wins gave hope to Mexican Americans that change for the better could be achieved. Faith in the legal system was influenced by the fact that many of LULAC’s founders and a respectable portion of those who became leaders later in the organization’s history were lawyers. “They were lawyers and readers of the Constitution,” said John Herrera. “And they knew damn well that we weren’t being

treated right. 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 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 [fighting in World War II] that showed we were not traitors.”²⁸

Parlington had been an aggressive advocate for his Mexican American client. But many of his colleagues found themselves without their white clients when word traveled that they had represented Hispanics. Herrera recalled 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. When his father and mother came to claim the body, they found him buried in the trash dump.” The disrespectful dispensation of the young man’s body set off an international outcry, and the consul and Herrera appeared before the county commission to protest. The commissioners could not understand the problem. One stated, “Well, Mr. Herrera, what are you complaining about? We have been burying Mexicans there for fifty years.”²⁹

During World War II, one of the cement firms in Houston, Texas, was getting a considerable number of government contracts and, because of the labor shortage, had to hire Mexican Americans. “There were complaints,” said Herrera later, “of



Albert Armendariz was the president of the League of Latin American Citizens during the League’s twenty-fifth anniversary. A practicing attorney in El Paso, Texas, he was president of the local council for one term and national vice president for two terms.

Armendariz’s greatest achievements were in the area of organization and installation of new councils. LULAC is much indebted to the efforts and sacrifices of men like Armendariz. It was his spirit of courage, tenacity, and self-sacrifice which is known as the “LULAC spirit.”

In his keynote address at the Silver Anniversary Convention, he extolled LULAC to continue its work for the cause of peace, understanding, and unity, and to continue its work in promoting education and fostering goodwill among all peoples. (*LULAC News*, February 1979)



VOL. 18 SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS, APRIL, 1938 No. 4



THIS IS AMERICA!
 As citizens we must make some
 contribution to the American
 Stream of Life. As members of
 LULAC we must make that con-
 tribution outstanding.
 Board A. Cortes

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] when 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." Herrera began arguing with the head of Portland Cement Company, who declared, "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, Mexicans had been showering with the niggers for fifty years."³⁰

Herrera recounted, too, a confrontation with Humble Refining Company over three sets of water fountains on its premises, one ivory white, one painted black, and the third painted brown. The latter was intended for Hispanics only. But traveling in America's Southwest in those days, such sights were commonplace.

When soldiers came home from World War II, a former LULAC member, Dr. Hector Garcia, a surgeon, established a new group called the American GI Forum. The American GI Forum was the result of an incident in which a small town funeral home refused to bury the body of a Mexican American killed in the Philippines during the war. The body of Felix Longoria was returned to the United States in 1948 for burial in his hometown of Three Rivers, Texas. The only mortician in Three Rivers refused to hold services in his chapel for Longoria. The resulting headlines led to then United States Senator Lyndon B. Johnson having Longoria buried in Arlington National Cemetery. Dr. Garcia saw a need to establish the forum, an organization dedicated to advancing the rights of Hispanic veterans.

Into the 1950s, Hispanics continued to struggle for voting rights, and many, even if permitted to vote, were precluded from doing so by the poll tax. Too poor to pay,

they were turned away. Some were intimidated from voting, their employers threatening to dismiss them if they went to the polls on Election Day. Without the vote, there was no opportunity for Hispanic Americans to serve on juries. The absence of Hispanic American jurors was noticed every time LULAC attorneys went into court.

In 1951 attorneys James DeAnda and John Herrera defended a client accused of murder in Fort Bend County, which bordered Houston's Harris County. Aniceto Sanchez was convicted and sentenced to ten years in prison. DeAnda and Herrera appealed on the grounds that there were no Mexican Americans—Sanchez's peers—on the jury, nor were there any available to serve in the entire county. They sought to demonstrate that this was the result of "a systematic, continual, and uninterrupted practice in Fort Bend County of discriminating against the Mexican Americans as a race, and people of Mexican extraction and ancestry as a class."³¹ Sanchez's attorneys argued their client had been denied due process and filed a brief, but the court of appeals found no ground for discussing the case further.

One year later, in 1952, DeAnda and Herrera had another opportunity to make their argument when they represented a migrant cotton picker named Pedro Hernandez who was convicted of murder in the district court of Jackson County and sentenced to life in prison. DeAnda and Herrera went to LULAC and the American GI Forum for financial assistance to appeal the Hernandez case as well as engage two more experienced attorneys from San Antonio, Carlos C. Cadena³² and Gustavo C. "Gus" Garcia. Legal analyst Steven Wilson wrote that Cadena and Garcia also argued that Hernandez was discriminated against during his trial because Mexican-descended individuals were deliberately and systematically excluded from both the grand

jury that returned the indictment and from the petit jury that tried the case. In their argument, which went further than the one made by DeAnda and Herrera, Cadena and Garcia claimed that denial of due process was denial of equal protection.

Cadena and Garcia sought to persuade the Texas court to apply the rule of exclusion that the United States Supreme Court had applied in *Norris v. Alabama* in 1935, making it clear to the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals that Mexican Americans were being excluded from juries on the basis of race. The Texas appellate court refused to extend the U.S. Supreme Court ruling concerning race-allegations of ethnicity-based discrimination, thus rejecting Cadena and Garcia's argument. Mexicans, in the opinion of the appellate judges, were whites who were entitled to all the rights, privileges, and immunities guaranteed under the Fourteenth Amendment; therefore, there was no proof that Hernandez had been denied equal protection under the law.³³

With LULAC and the American GI Forum still paying for Hernandez's appeals, Cadena and Garcia, with Herrera and DeAnda listed of counsel, took their case before the U.S. Supreme Court. Garcia was worried their appeal would be thrown out of court because the brief had not arrived within the sixty-day time review period; it arrived on the sixty-first day. Herrera suggested that there must have been a holiday somewhere, and sure enough, counting



Eduardo Peña Jr., a native of Laredo, Texas, and an attorney in Washington, D.C., graduated from the University of Texas in 1958 and the Catholic University School of Law in 1967. He was national president of LULAC during its fiftieth anniversary in 1978–1979. Prior to that he had served as chairman of the National Service Employment Redevelopment (SER) Jobs for Progress manpower program; had been a legislative assistant to U.S. Senator Birch Bayh; a director of government employment at the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission; and was counsel to the U.S. Senate Labor Committee.

His administration sought to alleviate the tension between law enforcement officers and members of the Hispanic community. He worked with attorneys throughout the United States, including Attorney General Griffin Bell, to ensure that the civil rights of Hispanics were not violated. Voter registration was an area of top priority. (*LULAC News*, February 1979)

back they found that Flag Day had saved them from missing the deadline. In their arguments, Cadena and Garcia moved further away from the “other white” strategy of earlier school cases in which LULAC participated. Instead they attempted to show the court that whites in Texas considered persons of Mexican descent to be a separate, subordinate group, apart from whites as defined by prior court rulings. They offered evidence that though many Mexican Americans were on tax rolls, their names never appeared on jury selection lists. State attorneys argued that there were only two races—white and black—in the face of the Fourteenth Amendment. But the justices were satisfied that Cadena and Garcia’s evidence that “just as persons of a different race are distinguished by color, these Spanish names provide ready identification of the members of this class.”³⁴

Herrera remembered that the case was argued on a bitterly cold day, on January 11, 1954, and as Hernandez’s team ascended the icy steps of the Supreme Court building, holding on to the rail to keep from slipping, Carlos Cadena quipped with his colleagues and tried to lighten their mood. Though his argument was limited to an hour before the nation’s highest court, Chief Justice Earl Warren was taken with Garcia’s presentation and allotted more time. “Now that is interesting, Mr. Garcia. Will you please continue,”³⁵ said the chief justice. The U.S. Supreme Court announced its decision in *Hernandez v. Texas* on May 3, 1954, exactly two weeks before their groundbreaking decision in *Brown v. Topeka Board of Education*. Chief Justice Warren spoke for a unanimous court as Hernandez’s conviction was reversed, largely because the justices concurred that the “systematic exclusion of persons of Mexican descent from service as jury commissioners, grand jurors, and petit jurors” had indeed deprived him of due process and equal protection of the

laws.³⁶ The Supreme Court noted it was discrimination of ancestry or national origin. Warren further noted: “. . . throughout our history differences in race and color have defined easily identifiable groups which have at times required the aid of courts in securing equal treatment under the laws.”³⁷

Though the *Brown* and *Hernandez* cases are not inextricably linked, the U.S. Supreme Court’s reliance on the equal protection clause in both cases invites association, proffered Steven Wilson in his analysis of the two landmark decisions. “It is worth noting,” wrote Wilson, “that in *Hernandez* both the Texas and the Mexican American lawyers argued that Mexican Americans were in fact legally white. *Hernandez* committed Mexican Americans to defending their whiteness in future litigation, [leading] them to discount the utility of *Brown*, which kept them too long on what proved to be an unfruitful constitutional path.”³⁸



Some of the first students who attended the Little School of the 400 in Alamo Heights, Texas, in 1960.

CHAPTER 4

A Beacon of Light for Education

Education is the foundation of culture, progress, liberty, equality and fraternity, which in turn form the basis of peace, security and happiness, the goals of our people, our country, our world.

—Dr. George I. Sanchez, distinguished educator, on the meaning of education to him and the League of United Latin American Citizens, circa 1947

The founders of the League

of United Latin American Citizens had a vision for education that is still being realized in the twenty-first century, as new challenges step up to replace old ones. LULAC's founding fathers believed that education was the key to solving many of the pressing problems of Hispanic Americans, particularly those that spotlighted the rights and responsibilities of citizens. All of this effort added up to an education on the uses of power. Over time, LULAC learned the power of the ballot, and though the organization was nonpartisan, many LULAC members sought public office and some were successful. United States Senator Dennis Chavez, of New Mexico, was one of the first Hispanic Americans to reach the pinnacle of national power.

From the very beginning, too, the first priority of LULAC was a quality education, and the only way to achieve that goal was to integrate the educational system that was segregated in three ways throughout America's Southwest. William D. Bonilla, a lawyer and former president of LULAC (1964–1965), recalled that schools were for blacks, whites, and Mexican Americans. Mexican American schools in Texas were the worst in the state because there was no law that said that the separate facilities had to be equal to either black or white schools. "In most communities there was absolute segregation," observed Ezequiel Salinas. "The conditions were deplorable. Nobody was going to spend money for the Mexican [American] schools."³⁹ With Hispanic children isolated in inadequate schools, there was no opportunity for them to learn English. "They would get to be thirteen or fourteen years old and not know any English and they felt humiliated and embarrassed when they tried to speak it," Salinas continued. During his term of office as president of LULAC in 1939–1940, the first step was taken to improve the deplorable condition of Hispanic American education.

Salinas approached L. A. Woods, state superintendent of schools, to bring to his attention the plight of Hispanic students. Woods was spurred to action when he observed how deeply concerned LULAC was over the condition of schools, and he started a movement to provide better



Ermilio Lozano, a native of San Antonio, served as the sixth president general of LULAC in 1934–1935. It was during his administration that LULAC introduced the system of responsibilities under a "governor" for certain regions, and in some cases states. During his tenure, Lozano continued to stress education and, as a result, saw the League prosper in membership.

To Lozano goes the credit for bringing about a reform in the state prisons. It was he who went to the governor of Texas and explained that it was impossible for Hispanics who knew no English to understand orders from the guards. Failing to obey they were severely punished. He pointed out that these people were innocent and needed guards who could speak the Spanish language. The governor agreed and bilingual guards were hired. (*LULAC News*, April 1969)

schooling for Latino children. Among his actions, Woods threatened to cut state funding from the Ozona School District for segregation of Hispanic American children. In a letter to the president of the school board, Woods wrote:

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.⁴⁰

Salinas also appeared before an education conference attended by one hundred school superintendents in Texas, and among other points he made, he noted that history books used in elementary schools were the worst kind of propaganda because they reached the individual at an impressionable age. He said that the textbooks taught students that thousands of Mexicans had killed thirty to forty Texans at the Alamo. He informed conference attendees that it was not the Mexican people who had killed the Texans, but soldiers of Santa Ana, a man subsequently ostracized by the Mexican people. Salinas noted that the heroes at 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 whites against the Mexican Americans living in their towns and cities.

Salinas aptly noted that very few children and perhaps fewer superintendents of public schools in Texas knew

that Captain Juan Seguin was the one who drafted the eulogy delivered at funeral services for the heroes of the Alamo, or that Lorenzo de Zavala was as good a patriot and Texan as could be found anywhere, having called the convention for drafting the Texas Declaration of Independence, and having become the first vice president of the Republic of Texas. He further informed the superintendents that Francisco Ruiz was another signer of the Declaration of Independence of Texas, 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 that very few American students of Mexican or Anglo-Saxon extraction knew the reason why, because the facts were concealed and omitted from Texas history books.

Texas was not the only state where there was a problem. Segregation of Hispanic American students was prevalent throughout the Southwest. But California had, by far, the worst segregation record, far worse than New Mexico, Arizona, and Colorado. Leon Perales, former editor of *LULAC News*, once described how it was to go to school for a Latino, 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 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 atmosphere. You just couldn't do anything."⁴¹

Latino children continued to attend segregated schools in most areas because whites 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 of the Texas Supreme Court. Another LULAC national president, Pete Tijerina, recalled that Daniels was once asked the question: “Under what basis can Mexican American schoolchildren be legally segregated in the state of Texas?” Daniels replied that under no circumstances could Mexican American children be segregated in Texas, though he added that for pedagogical reasons they could be placed in a separate room for special instruction.

“What it meant,” Tijerina 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.”⁴² Daniels’ ruling retarded progress for Hispanic American schoolchildren and forced LULAC to find new ways to end segregation. LULAC repeatedly confronted school authorities, attempting to persuade them to improve conditions. John Herrera remembered an incident in 1944 when he was district governor of LULAC. A complaint had come from



Richard Fimbres, who served as LULAC vice president for the far west from 1999 to 2003 and who was the longest serving elected member of the LNESCB board, presents an award to a student in the LNESCB Young Readers Program.



All for One -

Aims and Purposes

We believe in the democratic principle of individual political and religious freedom, in the right to equality of social and economic opportunity, and in the duty of cooperative endeavor towards the development of an American society wherein the cultural resources and integrity of every individual and group constitutes basic assets of responsibilities and duties and assert our rights and privileges in the pursuit of a fuller and richer civilization for this our native country.

We believe that education is the foundation for the cultural growth and development of this nation and that we are obligated to protect and promote the education of our people in accordance with the best American principles and standards. We deplore any infringement of this goal wherever it may occur and regardless of whom it may affect.

We accept that it is not only the privilege but also the obligation to uphold and defend the rights and duties vested in every American citizen by the letter and the spirit of the law of the land.

As members of a democratic society, we recognize our civic duties and responsibilities and we propose:

To use all the appropriate means at our disposal to implement with social action the principles set forth above.

To foster the acquisition and facile use of the official language of our country that we may hereby equip ourselves and our families for the fullest enjoyment of our rights and privileges and the efficient discharge of our duties and obligation to this, our country.

To establish cooperative relationships with other civic organizations and agencies in these fields of public service.

That the members of the League of United Latin American Citizens constitute themselves into a service organization to actively promote suitable measures for the attainment of the highest ideals of our American society.

That in the interest of the public welfare, we shall seek in every way possible to uphold the rights guaranteed to every individual by our state and national laws and to seek justice and equality of the treatment in accordance with the law of the land. We shall courageously resist un-American tendencies that deprive citizens of these rights in educational, economic pursuits, and in social and civic activities.

(LULAC News,
January 1979)

Missouri County, eighteen miles outside Houston. Latino students were being forced to attend a dilapidated one-room school while whites had modern facilities. Even though Missouri County was one of the richest in the state, fifty-one students from grades one through five were crammed into that one-room school. LULAC could not intervene until all student families agreed on a course of action. Since one family had a member working in the school, the child's parents were slow to act, and did not do so until a little girl almost choked on a piece of bread because there was no indoor water supply 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 [at that time] because even though the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) had [openly pursued] civil rights cases, they were always ready to lop our heads off," said Herrera. "So we always got sworn statements, for instance, before we went to the city council." With the boycott in progress, LULAC members went two or three times a week to teach the children. Herrera, who was one of the volunteer teachers, remembered one bright-eyed fourteen-year-old who wanted to be a doctor.

"Thirty years later this boy went to Laredo as the main speaker [at] 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 United States bishop of Mexican descent,"⁴³ said Herrera.

LULAC's boycott of Missouri County schools was characteristic of the organization's activities in the field of education. The League avoided taking cases to the courts, except when violation of the law was so egregious court

action was the only option. The first important case involved the Del Rio Independent School District, which, as so many other Southwest school districts during the first half of the twentieth century, were segregating Hispanic American children. Jim Crow laws at that time did not openly address the issue of schoolchildren of Hispanic descent. Texans, however, found a way to close this loophole in Jim Crow when the state legislature enacted a statute in 1905 that stated as follows: “It shall be the duty of every teacher in the public free schools to use the English language exclusively, and to conduct all recitations and school exercises exclusively in the English language.”⁴⁴ Most Texas education officials and legislators wrongly believed that Hispanic American schoolchildren were incapable of English proficiency. This had early on led to separate classrooms for children of Hispanic descent. In 1930, LULAC filed the first lawsuit to challenge the segregation of Latino students. The state judge’s opinion acknowledged: “It is to the credit of both races that, notwithstanding widely diverse racial characteristics, they dwell together in friendship, peace, and unity, and work amicably together for the common good and a common country.” He added, “[I]t is a matter of pride and gratification in our great public educational system . . . that the question of race segregation, as between Mexicans and other white races, has not heretofore found its way into the courts of the state. . . .”⁴⁵

The case, *Del Rio Independent School District v. Salvatierra*, was not hard to understand. Del Rio, a town on the Rio Grande, operated an elementary school exclusively for Mexican-descended children, although no statute authorized the Del Rio Independent School District to establish such an institution to segregate Mexican American youth. LULAC-sponsored attorneys sought a state court injunction to end the segregation, but the Del Rio school super-

intendent justified the segregation by noting that many of the Mexican American children in question were from migrant families who worked on distant farms well into the school term. Because white children would have several months' advantage in class, migrant students would suffer from low self-esteem if measured against that standard. Also, the superintendent claimed, migrant students' persistently lower English-language proficiency would thus result in similar damage to their morale. The superintendent claimed that the segregation was not race-based, but offered "fair opportunity" to all children. Segregation, he argued, benefited all students by meeting each group's



Tony Bonilla, president of LULAC from 1981 to 1983, is pictured with a Feria de las Flores Queen. Each year this popular event raises money for scholarships and helps young women develop speaking and leadership skills.

“peculiar needs.” Despite this contention, he admitted that white migrant students who entered school late each term were not segregated.⁴⁶ To LULAC’s great disappointment, the state court refused to act on the Del Rio case. But LULAC’s lawyers appealed.

Del Rio Independent School District v. Salvatierra was brought to the United States Supreme Court, but the justices refused to hear the case on the grounds that the high court lacked jurisdiction. Some progress was made, however, because the Texas Court of Civil Appeals subsequently ruled that Hispanic American children could not be arbitrarily segregated on the basis of race. Despite the appeals ruling, Texas districts continued to apply the linguistic separation criteria indiscriminately for many years to come, the *Salvatierra* decision notwithstanding. Segregation of Latino children, ostensibly on linguistic

LULAC held a raffle for a refrigerator to help raise funds for the *Mendez v. Westminster* case. Pictured to the left of the queen of the raffle is Isadore A. Gonzales; to the right, Alex Maldonado. (Photo courtesy of Hector Tarango)



grounds, became rooted even more deeply in the Southwest, despite the protestations of LULAC members and their attorneys.

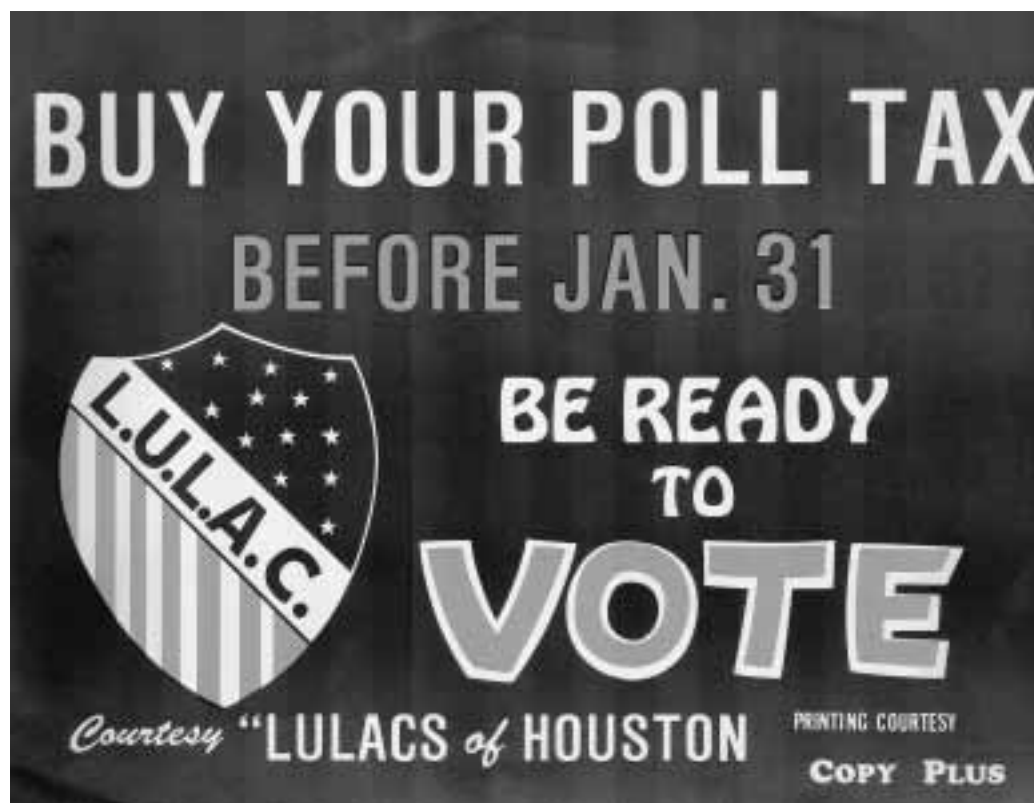
Gradually educators, including Dr. George I. Sanchez, continued to attack segregation on the grounds it deprived Hispanic American students of the opportunity to learn the English language by barring them from integrated classrooms. At a conference held at the University of Texas in 1945, segregation was called “a highly undesirable practice that should be eliminated at the earliest possible moment.”⁴⁷ Educational specialists concurred that segregation handicapped Hispanics who wanted to learn English. Such views, however, did not bring needed changes. Legal challenges lay ahead. The next landmark case occurred in 1946 in Orange County, California, setting precedents invoked in the famous *Brown v. Topeka Board of Education*. Members and founders of Santa Ana LULAC Council Number 147, Manuel Veiga Jr., Cruz Barrios, and Hector R. Tarango, helped organize the class action lawsuit. In *Mendez et al. v. Westminster School District of Orange County et al.*, notably, LULAC cooperated with the NAACP’s Legal Defense Fund (LDF) in a case in which the Westminster School District maintained segregated classrooms for its schoolchildren of Hispanic descent. The district claimed the children were kept apart from their peers because they were “less clean, more diseased, more poorly clothed and mentally inferior to ‘white’ or Anglo-Saxon children.”⁴⁸

NAACP LDF attorney Robert L. Carter contributed the *amicus* brief when the case reached federal court, as the case gave the NAACP the opportunity to test some of its arguments later used in *Brown* without risking a reversal.⁴⁹ The *Mendez v. Westminster* case became what one observer called a “strikingly similar precursor to the *Brown* decision’s condemnation of ‘separate but equal,’ the

federal judge [Paul F. McCormick] ruling that equal protection requirements cannot be met merely by providing ‘separate schools [that had] the same technical facilities.’”⁵⁰ McCormick ruled that all classes must be open to all children by unified school association regardless of lineage. He concluded that commingling of the entire student body was appropriate in the aftermath of the recently concluded war—a war ironically against racism and fascism—because “commingling . . . instills and develops a common cultural attitude among the schoolchildren which is imperative for the perpetuation of American institutions and ideals.”⁵¹ The United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit, on the state’s appeal, upheld McCormick’s decision for the Hispanic plaintiffs. Interestingly, the appellate judges upheld McCormick’s ruling because California’s Jim Crow statutes, similar to Texas’ laws, did not expressly mention Hispanic Americans, meaning separation denied them due process and hence, equal protection. The court had ruled against the school district only because its administrators had acted beyond their statutory authority.⁵²

With the Ninth Circuit’s support for language segregation in *Mendez*—and implied endorsement of segregation as long as it was rooted in the statute⁵³—Texas, in the federal Fifth District, and its Jim Crow laws were not directly affected by the federal ruling in the Ninth District. Since the separation had to be predicated on other grounds, Price Daniels, the Texas attorney general and a future governor, issued an advisory opinion inspired by the court’s *dicta*. Daniels forbade automatic, blind segregation of students of Hispanic descent, but continued to justify the retention of separate classes for what he dubbed “linguistically deficient” students.⁵⁴ Daniels’ advisory opinion subsequently became the centerpiece of *Delgado v. Bastrop Independent School District*.

The Minerva Delgado case was the first in which the court ruled that it was unlawful and unconstitutional to segregate Hispanic American children in the public schools of Texas. Federal Judge Ben C. Rice of the Western District of Texas decided that linguistic segregation in the Bastrop School District, located near Austin, violated the Fourteenth Amendment because, as it was implemented, Bastrop's segregation was arbitrary and discriminatory. Much akin to Price Daniels, Rice did not criticize all language segregation, but he did declare that the Bastrop District could segregate any individual student—white or Hispanic—only after school authorities determined the student's English proficiency.⁵⁵ "We presented the case so ably that we didn't even have to file the lawsuit," claimed 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 [American] schools in Texas.”⁵⁶ The *San Antonio Express* reported that the decision affected objectionable school practices in 190 Texas school districts. While a victory, even *Delgado* did not completely end school segregation in Texas or other states; the end of segregation would come in time and at great cost to many members of LULAC who resisted discrimination in all forms, including that which was inflicted on Latino schoolchildren.

Felix Tijerina, restaurateur and philanthropist, was the second member of Council Number 60 to be elected national president of LULAC.

There is little doubt that LULAC’s most far-reaching achievement in education was a program called the “Little Schools of the 400,” the model for what later became the Headstart program funded by the federal government. Headstart has come to the aid of thousands of young people, enabling them to gain extra preparation for school.



The father of the Little Schools of the 400 was Felix Tijerina, a wealthy Houston restaurant owner and president of LULAC from 1956 to 1960. Judge Alfred Hernandez, also of Houston, had a hand in bringing the schools to fruition, sharing in one of LULAC’s most successful initiatives in its seventy-five-year history.

The Little Schools of the 400 was an idea that germinated when Hernandez was a prelaw student at the University of Houston where he met a professor of

psychology with an idea that intrigued him. The professor and Hernandez discussed many times the value of testing Hispanic students with examinations designed for middle-class students in mainstream American society. Their conclusion was that these tests were not valid for poor students from Hispanic culture who were unfamiliar with English. The professor had a theory that with 400 basic words, a Latino first grader could get along in English, and he planned obtain a grant to prove his hypothesis.

Hernandez completed his degree at the University of Houston, and the professor went to Puerto Rico, but the idea of the 400 words stayed with Hernandez. As a state LULAC director, he was asked what he would like to do and he replied that if it was possible to teach Hispanic American schoolchildren some words of English before they entered the first grade, there would be fewer dropouts, as the children might have a better chance of understanding their English-speaking teachers. Hernandez might never have seen his idea come together had it not been for Tijerina.

“I established the LULAC Educational Fund from which we created the schools of the 400,” Hernandez said later. Tijerina’s money paid for a study at the University of Texas to determine how many words were necessary for a Spanish-speaking child to have basic knowledge of English. Tijerina could appreciate the value of learning as the only son of a poor Mexican-born farmworker. He had to leave his home in Sugar Land, Texas, at the age of thirteen to look for work in Houston. Since he had never gone to school, Tijerina lacked a working knowledge of English, so he took night courses while working as a dishwasher, eventually studying a few textbooks on his own. With his “working knowledge” of English, Tijerina became the owner of three restaurants grossing close to a half-million dollars a year.

In 1957, Tijerina, as LULAC president, appeared before the Texas State Board of Education to sell the idea of pre-school language training for Hispanic American children. When the board offered nothing in response, Tijerina enjoined LULAC to come up with a solution of their own. With the results of the university study in hand, Tijerina contacted a teacher in the Baytown area, where there was a 99 percent concentration of Hispanic students. The teacher, Elizabeth Burrus, decided which 400 words should be taught. Tijerina paid a seventeen-year-old Mexican American from Sugar Land named Isabel Verver, a high school sophomore with aspirations of becoming a teacher, to test the program with forty-five students. "All through the summer of 1957," wrote Marjorie Jean Fuquay, "Isabel 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."⁵⁷ The program was such a success that Lady Bird Johnson came to visit the school and was so impressed that she took up the idea later and established Headstart.

Seeking in later years to expand the Little Schools of the 400, Tijerina went to the Ford Foundation, which offered to contribute \$100,000 if Tijerina could raise another \$50,000 in Texas. The best he could do was \$3,000, but Tijerina was ultimately able to persuade the state of Texas to fund the program. The stipulation was, however, that the parents of Hispanic children had to request the service; therefore, not everyone could benefit from the training. The Little Schools of the 400 eventually spread all over Texas, despite the state's programmatic restrictions. To get school system funding, LULAC had to convince the state it would save money if fewer Latino students had to repeat the first grade. It was estimated at

that time that each failure cost the school districts \$22,000 per child. The Little Schools of the 400 ran for several years until Lyndon Johnson became president of the United States and Lady Bird Johnson pushed the Headstart initiative.



LULAC Picnic with Lady Bird Johnson in Austin, Texas, in 1947. Mrs. Johnson and Lyndon B. Johnson, who served as a U.S. Congressman at the time, were instrumental in the expansion of the Little Schools of the 400 program. This program eventually led to the Headstart program.

While Hispanic Americans started becoming more integrated in the public school system, there remained a clear absence of Latinos in institutions of higher education during the 1960s. Full-time enrollment at college campuses during this time fell well below that of other ethnic groups. This was mainly due to their lack of preparation and access to higher education. Barriers such as culture, language, and low-income status were all factors that greatly affected the opportunities for Hispanic American students.

In 1970, LULAC Council 2008 of San Francisco decided to do something about the educational disparities. Members of this council noted that postsecondary schools in their region had developed special ethnic studies and admission programs that left out provisions for Latinos. As a result, the council rented a storefront in San Francisco's Mission District and started a volunteer counseling program to help Hispanic students with their

educational goals. With the assistance of the University of California, the counseling program began to grow and gain recognition from leaders in local high schools, colleges, and universities. Soon, the U.S. Department of Labor took notice of this program and offered funding to continue these important efforts. Collaborating with the San Francisco community colleges, the center began offering courses for credit. By 1971, the center called “El Colegio de la Mision de LULAC” offered about twenty courses to students in the region.

Left to right are Ed Peña, LULAC national president for 1978–1979; Lee J. Leyba, New Mexico LULAC state director; Leo Cardenas, vice president, Southwest Region; and Rudy Beserra, New Mexico director of LULAC Educational Service Centers. (*LULAC News*, January 1979)

That same year Pete Villa was elected LULAC national president. He considered education a top priority. Villa appointed David Florence, a former high school teacher who spearheaded the efforts of the counseling center, to the position of chair of LULAC’s National Education Committee. Florence later went on to become director of the Educational Opportunity Programs at the University of California at Berkeley. During the time he served as chair, Florence and other members of Council 2008



wanted to create similar counseling centers across the nation to meet the needs of Latinos nationwide.

In 1973, the LULAC National Education Service Centers (LNESEC) was incorporated in Washington, D.C. Florence proceeded to write proposals to obtain further funding and was successful in obtaining it in the form of a \$2 million grant from the government. The first center opened in Corpus Christi, Texas, the birthplace of LULAC. During the next six months the remaining field centers would open, with the last center opening in Boston in October of 1973. Today, LNESEC also has centers in Houston, Miami, Philadelphia, Albuquerque, Pomona, Los Angeles, El Paso, Pueblo, Colorado Springs, Denver, San Antonio, Chicago, Dallas, Kansas City, Bayamon, Puerto Rico, and of course, San Francisco.

LNESEC offers several programs to assist students of all ages. The Young Readers program, for example, assists elementary students with their reading skills. The Washington Youth Seminar brings students from all across the country to Washington, D.C., to learn about the legislative process, meet their congressmen, and develop leadership skills.

In 1975, LNESEC created the LULAC National Scholarship Fund (LNSF) which secures annual contributions from major corporations to fund scholarships for talented Hispanic students across the nation. The program expanded in 1976 to include funds raised by LULAC councils at the grassroots level which are then matched by corporate grants. This partnership between communities and corporations helps LNSF to maximize the amount of scholarship support provided to needy students. Over the past twenty-five years, more than \$13 million has been awarded to almost twenty-five hundred students. Former recipients of LNSF scholarships are now leaders in the fields of business, government, and education.



Volunteers for Operation SER in San Antonio, Texas.

CHAPTER 5

The Struggle for Jobs

Hispanic Americans are known

for their work ethic, yet having the right attitude does not necessarily guarantee a good job. During the 1960s there were plenty of government employment programs but none of them specifically addressed the needs of Spanish-speakers. Because poverty and unemployment were some of the major concerns for Hispanics at that time, these issues were among the main topics of discussion during a LULAC meeting in Houston, Texas, in 1964. As a result of this meeting, LULAC decided to open a job placement center that was specifically designed to address Latinos' employment needs. This volunteer-run center was the first of many centers that later became known as SER Jobs for Progress, Inc.

SER clerical and secretarial trainees on Graduation Day.





SER students visit the national office in Los Angeles. The students were from the nearby West Los Angeles SER program.



A SER Jobs for Progress class in San Antonio, Texas.

SER is the verb “to be” in Spanish. The name was chosen to inspire Hispanics “to be” their best. SER also stands for service, employment, and redevelopment, the three goals of the organization. In the beginning stages of SER, the program was given guidance and support from Roberto Ornelas, then director of Mexican American programs for the Navy’s Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) program. LULAC also invited the American GI Forum, a veteran service group, to join them by pooling together their resources to form the regional manpower program. The program, which received funding from the Department of Labor, was initially modeled after the Navy’s EEO programs, and by 1965 SER had centers in Houston, Corpus Christi, and Washington, D.C.



Word-of-mouth referrals have brought tens of thousands of unemployed Latinos into SER local programs for training. Unemployed youths who otherwise might have gotten into trouble with so much free time on their hands, are now gainfully employed by local employers.

Today SER is a national-private nonprofit organization that operates forty-three centers throughout the United States and Puerto Rico. SER serves the economically disadvantaged with programs designed to place participants into permanent, unsubsidized and productive employment. Thanks to this program many Latinos have a brighter future today.



Many signs like these were commonplace in Texas in 1949. (Center for American History, UT-Austin, Lee (Russell) Photograph Collection, 1935-1977)

CHAPTER 6

A Lesson in Civic Engagement for All Americans

Social movements in the context

of communities of color hold specific significance due to the size and location of the groups, their social history in relation to processes involving the accumulation and distribution of wealth and power, and the contemporary material conditions of constituents of these groups.⁵⁸ While much can be gleaned—and continues to be observed—of the role Hispanic Americans have played in key movements such as civil rights and education in the past seventy-five years, much has also been overlooked.

From its beginning as a cadre of South Texas Mexican American Leaders, LULAC's membership has grown to over 115,000 advocates who represent the geographic and ethnic diversity of the Hispanic community in the United States and Puerto Rico. LULAC's concerted efforts to organize Youth and Young Adult Councils has put a youthful face on an organization that has been in existence for more than seven decades. While women were initially excluded from membership in LULAC when it was established in 1929, today they constitute more than half of LULAC's membership. LULAC is one of the first national organizations to place emphasis

on the role of women in power. The League's first women's council, Council Number 9, was established on February 22, 1934, in El Paso, Texas. Four years later, in 1938, the League created the first women's national office with Ester Machuca as ladies' organizer general. The growth of women in LULAC continued to flourish, and in 1981, the League's first national vice president for women was elected. Programs for women are carried out today at the local level through the efforts of deputy state directors for women.

The League's public profile has grown steadily since its founding, and the organization is now involved in a broad range of political activities including lobbying local, state, and national governments, voter registration, legal action, coalition development, and grassroots mobilization. In addition, the organization continues to strengthen its unparalleled network of volunteers and community-based programs to such an extent that a remarkably high number of Latinos have now benefited from LULAC in one form or another. LULAC's professional staff has also grown, helping to institutionalize the formidable grassroots power of the nation's largest and oldest Hispanic organization.

Much of LULAC's success is due to the unique membership structure of the organization which allows local LULAC councils to have wide autonomy in helping Hispanic communities change for the better. This structure has allowed the organization to tailor its services and advocacy to the unique needs and concerns of individual communities and to maintain a widespread LULAC presence throughout the country. While LULAC's support from public and private entities has grown substantially, LULAC's local councils are able to conduct programs to benefit their communities with support generated largely at the local level. With more than seven hundred councils across the country and a strong network of LULAC-

affiliated community-based organizations, LULAC has a presence in Hispanic communities that no other organization can match.

With the dawn of a new century, LULAC's national leaders recognize the importance of spurring members to action, and of finding commonality that brings its members together on issues of great significance to the Hispanic American community. LULAC officials are widely regarded as leading Latino representatives and are considered experts on Hispanic American issues within and without the community. Since the 1960s, LULAC has served as a political pulpit for its national, state, and local officials. The media, for example, published the opinions of Ruben Bonilla when he was Texas state director and

Members dining at the National Convention held in 1951 in Laredo, Texas.





Gloria Molina, Los Angeles County supervisor, speaks at a LULAC Women's Luncheon. (*LULAC News*, November/December 1997)



Henry Cisneros, who served as Secretary of Housing and Urban Development under the Clinton Administration, addresses the membership during the LULAC Presidential Banquet. (*LULAC News*, November/December 1997)

national president of LULAC on such issues as political appointments, the Ku Klux Klan, federal aid to cities, racism on campus, and discrimination in hiring.⁵⁹ Bonilla used the media to bring pressure to bear on public officials by calling for investigations on such problems as police brutality and bias in the criminal justice system. More recently, LULAC National President Hector Flores has received nationwide media coverage for his stand on school finance, judicial diversity, electoral representation, and immigration reform.

Aside from its strong membership, perhaps one of the main reasons LULAC has remained so successful over the years is its corporate sponsors who provide funds for important LULAC programs. The LULAC Corporate Alliance advises the national organization on program strategies and resource development. LULAC in return has provided valuable insight and outreach to the Hispanic

Oscar Moran, who served as LULAC's forty-first president for three terms, introduces Secretary of State Colin Powell at the 2002 National Legislative Awards Dinner in Washington, D.C. Mr. Moran was elected at the 1985 convention held in Anaheim, California, at the 1986 convention held in Las Vegas, Nevada, and at the 1987 convention held in Corpus Christi, Texas. Also pictured (left to right) are Raquel Egusquiza, Ford Motor Company Contribution Programs manager, and Mr. Moran's wife, Margaret Moran, who is the current LULAC Texas state director.



LULAC President Ruben Bonilla.
(*LULAC News*, April 1979)



LULAC President Tony Bonilla.
(*LATINO*, April 1983)



community for alliance members who recognize the growing purchasing power and importance of the Hispanic community. As the organization celebrates its 75th anniversary, it has received multi-million-dollar grants from its strongest corporate partners who are working with LULAC to launch the LULAC Leadership Initiative—an ambitious project to revitalize Hispanic neighborhoods from within by creating innovative grassroots programs in over 700 Hispanic communities served by LULAC councils.

LULAC continues to be the cornerstone of Latino political access in Washington and state capitals, and those in key leadership positions have regularly cited the importance of LULAC as a vehicle through which they could address the Hispanic community. Every President from John F. Kennedy to George W. Bush has addressed the group as have hundreds of elected officials and candidates. LULAC today remains the powerful and dedicated voice of the Latino community that was envisioned by the League's founders in 1929. During all these years, LULAC members have remained true to their motto: "All for one and one for all." Most importantly, they are stepping into a century of new challenges, remembering as their founders did, to embrace the diversity and energy of their Latino members nationwide to achieve great ends.



LULAC President Mario Obledo.
(*LATINO*, June/July 1984)



The new Young Adult Council is paving the way for Hispanic professionals in Boston, October 1998.

LULAC TODAY

A Snapshot of Our Recent Past

Over its seventy-five-year history,

LULAC has continually grown and is widely considered the premiere national Hispanic civil rights organization. Today LULAC's membership extends into every state in the Union and Puerto Rico with over seven hundred councils nationwide. Through the Youth, Young Adult, and Adult Councils, LULAC offers membership opportunities to all age groups. LULAC also reflects a broad cross-section of Hispanic Americans including Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, Cubans, and Central and South Americans.

LULAC members are the driving force behind significant advancements in and improvements to the quality of life for Latinos across the country. The organization has helped to bring about many of the positive social, economic, and political changes that Hispanic Americans enjoy today. One of LULAC's most successful empowerment strategies has been to form new organizations dedicated to specific LULAC mission objectives. These LULAC spinoff organizations have gone on to become very successful Hispanic national organizations in their own right and include the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund (MALDEF), SER Jobs for Progress, and the LULAC National Educational Service Centers.

Each of these organizations provide vital services to the Hispanic community throughout the United States. MALDEF serves as the legal arm of the Hispanic community and brings cases before the judiciary system that address discrimination, inequality, and other matters that affect Latinos. SER Jobs for Progress, Inc., offers job training and assists thousands of Hispanic Americans in finding new jobs at forty-three locations throughout the United States. The LULAC National Education Service Centers (LNESC) provides educational advice, tutoring, mentoring, and millions of dollars in scholarship funds through its nationwide network of seventeen educational centers.



Representative **Ciro Rodriguez** (D-TX), LULAC Vice President for the Southeast **Elsie Valdez** (from 1999 to 2003), and current LULAC National President **Hector M. Flores** during a board meeting in San Antonio, Texas, in 2003. (*LULAC News* July/August 2003)

Frequently policymakers, media, and educators alike turn to LULAC's expertise in Hispanic affairs. Today, LULAC's national office, located in Washington, D.C., serves as a government liaison for Hispanic Americans by providing policymakers with the Latino perspective on immigration, affirmative action, business, education, and other issues impacting the Hispanic community. In addition, LULAC leaders from across the country frequently communicate with U.S. presidents and top agency leaders to help effect change. With Hispanics now the largest minority group in the United States, politicians make a special effort to attend LULAC State and National Conventions.

Much of LULAC's success is due to its partners. LULAC has long enjoyed strong support from visionary corporate partners who recognize the importance of working with the growing Hispanic community. In 1995, LULAC National President **Belen Robles** created the LULAC Corporate Alliance to foster stronger partnerships between corporations and the Hispanic community and to provide advice and assistance to the LULAC organization. Corporations participating in the Alliance work with LULAC in developing national and community-based programs to address the needs of the Hispanic community and

to ensure that the nation's future workforce obtains the necessary education and skills to keep America productive.

Today the LULAC Corporate Alliance is comprised of more than thirty Fortune 500 companies and is widely credited with helping LULAC to



strengthen its financial base. In fact, at press time, three Corporate Alliance Members—Ford Motor Company, General Motors Corporation, and SBC Communications—have announced 75th Anniversary Partner Grants to LULAC of \$1 million each—a fundraising record for the organization. Thanks to the strong support of the LULAC Corporate Alliance, more Latinos will be served by LULAC programs during its 75th anniversary year than during any time in its history.

LULAC continues to work for the betterment of Hispanic Americans by offering programs and services such as voter registration drives, citizen education programs, job training, and health and financial education programs, to name only a few. LULAC will continue to fight discrimination, poverty, educational inequalities, disparities in political representation, and immigration injustices with the support of its membership. LULAC will forever address those issues that impact the lives and future of all Hispanic Americans. It will continue to work to ensure that future Hispanic American generations receive all the constitutional rights due them as citizens of the United States.

LULAC President Rick Dovalina meets with Texas Governor George Bush to discuss education and immigration issues. (*LULAC News*, January/February 1999)



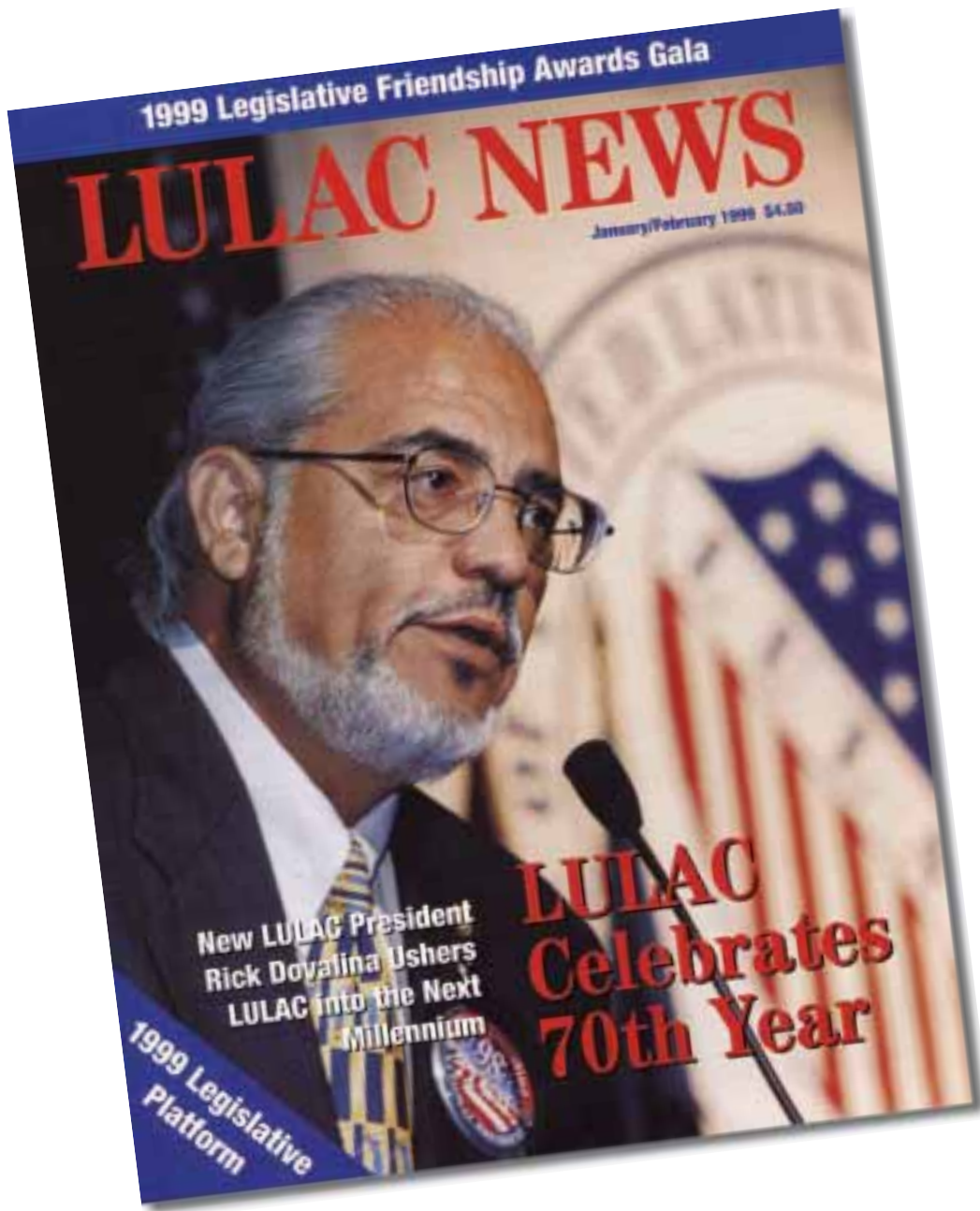
Actor and activist Jimmy Smits with Brent Wilkes, LULAC's national executive director. (*LULAC News*, January/February 1999)



Dr. Coralia Brown, a native of El Salvador, worked with the LULAC Central American Medical Relief Fund in Honduras following the devastation of Hurricane Mitch. Dr. Brown tended to seven hundred children on her first day, many of whom suffered from severe malnutrition, respiratory problems, and skin infections. (*LULAC News*, Spring 1999)



Dr. Marie Mahoney, working with the LULAC Central American Medical Relief Fund, aided victims of Hurricane Mitch in Honduras. (*LULAC News*, Spring 1999)



LULAC celebrated its seventieth year in 1999. President Rick Dovalina ushered LULAC into the next millennium. (*LULAC News*, January/February 1999)



LULAC National President Hector Flores, First Lady Laura Bush, President George W. Bush, and LULAC First Lady Tula Flores at a White House Christmas party, December 2002.



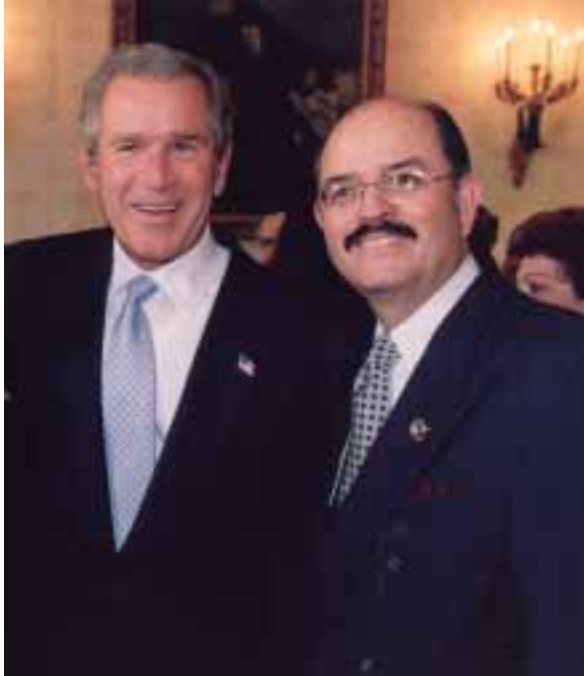
The Ford Motor Company announced its \$1 million grant in support of the LULAC Leadership Initiative, LULAC's groundbreaking initiative to increase program services to the Hispanic community at the Seventh Annual National Legislative Awards Gala. The LULAC-Ford PAS Science Corps Program is a science enrichment program for middle school students. Left to right, Ford representatives Raquel Egusquiza, Contribution Programs manager; Ziad S. Ojakli, Ford Motor Company group vice president of Corporate Affairs; and Sandy Ulsh, president of the Ford Motor Company Fund, present the check to current LULAC President Hector M. Flores.



Hector Flores, LULAC national president, spoke before the Mexican Senate on February 27, 2003. Seated to his right is Mexican Senator Silvia Hernandez, chair of the Foreign Relations Committee, along with other senators serving on the committee. (Photo by Luis Nuno Briones/*Hispanic Journal*)



Mexican President Vicente Fox (left) met with LULAC leaders in Mexico City on February 27, 2003. LULAC National President Hector Flores listens intently.



President George W. Bush with LULAC National President Hector Flores at the White House in December 2002.



Mexican President Vicente Fox posed with LULAC board members and advisors on February 27, 2003, in Mexico City. (Photo by Luis Nuno Briones/*Hispanic Journal*)



These women were inducted into the LULAC Women's Hall of Fame at the National Convention in June 2002. (Photo by Luis Nuno Briones)



Current LULAC National President Hector Flores and LULAC First Lady Tula Flores lead LULAC members in the march for immigrant rights in Washington, D.C., in 2003. (*LULAC News*, November/December 2003)



LULAC ladies at a December 2002 White House reception.



Victor Cabral, vice president of the Americas for Verizon and LNESEC board member; Richard Roybal, LNESEC executive director; actress Maria Conchita Alonso; LULAC First Lady Tula Flores; and LULAC National President Hector Flores with the Young Readers. (*LULAC News*, March/April 2003)



2003 Washington Youth Seminar students. (LULAC News, November/December 2003)



Current National Youth President Manuel Olguin shares a book with a child from the community during a book drive organized by the LULAC Youth. (*LULAC News*, September/October 2003)



Attendees at the 2003 National Women's Conference in Arizona. (*LULAC News*, July/August 2003)

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1. Marquez, Benjamin. *LULAC: The Evolution of a Mexican American Political Organization*. Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 1993, p. 10.
2. Sandoval, Moises. *Our Legacy: LULAC 50th Anniversary*. Washington, D.C.: League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), 1979, chapter 3, pp. 12–13; Marquez, Ibid.
3. Marquez, p. 2.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid., p. 10.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid., p. 13.
8. The LULAC code is the statement of principles and rules of conduct for the LULAC organization. It was written by Eduardo Idar and adopted by LULAC in 1929.
9. Sandoval, pp. 4–5.
10. Ibid., p. 5.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid., pp. 6–7.
13. Ibid., p. 7.
14. Ibid.
15. Ibid., p. 8.
16. Sandoval, p. 11.
17. Ibid., p. 16.
18. Ibid.
19. Ibid., p. 17.
20. Ibid.
21. Ibid., pp. 17–18.
22. Ibid., p. 18.
23. Ibid.
24. Ibid.
25. Ibid., p. 19.
26. Ibid., p. 20.
27. Ibid., p. 30.
28. Ibid.
29. Ibid., p. 31.
30. Ibid.
31. Wilson, Steven H., “Brown over ‘other white’: Mexican Americans’ legal arguments and litigation strategy in school desegregation lawsuits,” *Law and History Review*, Volume 21, Issue 1, 2003.
32. Carlos Cardena was city attorney of San Antonio, Texas, at the time he argued on the Hernandez team. He was later appointed a judge.
33. Wilson, Ibid.
34. Ibid.
35. Sandoval, p. 66.
36. Wilson, Ibid.
37. Ibid.
38. Ibid.
39. Sandoval, p. 33.
40. Ibid., p. 34.
41. Ibid., p. 33.
42. Ibid., p. 35.
43. Ibid., p. 36.
44. Acts of 29th Legislature, Chapter 124, Section 102. Legislators later amended the law to prohibit the use of textbooks not printed in the English language. The statutes did not, however, prevent teaching or learning languages other than English.
45. Wilson, Ibid.
46. Ibid.
47. Sandoval, p. 38.
48. Ibid.
49. Wilson, Ibid.
50. Ibid.
51. Ibid.
52. Ibid.
53. Wilson, Ibid.
54. Ibid.
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56. Sandoval, p. 38.
57. Ibid., pp. 42–43.
58. Marquez, Benjamin and James Jennings, “Representation by other means: Mexican American and Puerto Rican social movement organizations,” *PS Online*, Volume 33, Number 3, September 2000, a publication of American Political Science Association (APSA).
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The audio book edition of *No One Left Behind* won *Publishers Weekly’s* Listen Up! Award for Nonfiction in 2002, and *ForeWord* magazine’s Gold Medal for Nonfiction Book of the Year at the 2003 BookExpo held in Los Angeles. Prior to the book’s publication, Yarsinske’s six-part feature series with staff writer Lon Wagner on Scott Speicher, titled “Dead or Alive?,” ran on the front page of *The Virginian-Pilot* from December 30, 2001, through January 4, 2002, and garnered Yarsinske and Wagner a Pulitzer Prize submission and a Virginia Press Association award for feature writing. Yarsinske has investigated the Speicher case since 1993.

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