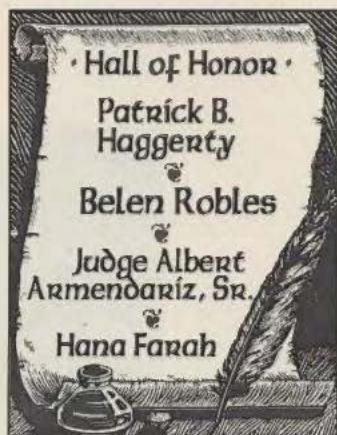


• Hall of Honor •
2014

Belen Robles



Belen Robles was born in El Paso in 1936, the fifth child of ten. She attended parochial school at St. Mary's and began high school at St. Joseph's before graduating from Bowie in 1957.

She soon began work as a clerk in the U. S. Department of Justice, Immigration and Naturalization Service. Fifteen years later she joined the U. S. Customs Service where she became a senior officer and the first woman chief inspector in El Paso.

In 1957 Robles joined the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), Ladies Council No. 9. She served as president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer and trustee. While working and raising her family, she remained involved with LULAC and was appointed national secretary in 1974, a position she held for six years.

In 1970 Robles became the first woman to run for national president of LULAC. She lost that election but continued to run for office and in 1974 was elected the first woman to serve as National Vice-President for the Southwest. In 1994 she again ran for president at the LULAC national convention in El Paso. She won, making her the first woman to be elected national president.

During Robles' presidency, LULAC held its first educational summit, first civil rights symposium, and supported court challenges to Proposition 187, about immigration law in California. She was also instrumental in establishing the LULAC National Scholarship Program, the Young Readers Program, and the Youth Leadership Institute held in September every year in Washington, D. C. When Robles ended her four years as president of LULAC in 1998, the maximum tenure permitted under LULAC By-Laws, she remained an active member on both the local and national level.



Belen Robles

Her community involvement includes: Trustee, El Paso Community College Board; President, International Hispanic Cultural Institute, Inc.; chair, Paso del Norte Immigration Museum Board; Member of the Board, Hispano-American Biomedical Association, Inc.; Director, El Paso Hispanic Chamber of Commerce; Member of the Board, National Border Leadership Institute, National Association for Corporate Responsibility, National Hispanic Leadership Agenda, LULAC Project Amistad.

On the federal level, Robles involvement has included: Member, Commission for Better U.S.-Mexico Relations; Advisor, Cabinet-level Hearing on Mexican American Affairs; Panel Member, INS/Border Patrol Merger; Chair, National Advisory Committee to INS Commissioner; Member, Decennial Census Advisory Committee to the Secretary of Commerce.

Robles has received many awards. Among them are as follows: induction into the El Paso Women Hall of Fame; a Hispanos Truinfadors award; U. S. Hispanic Leadership Institute National Hero Award; Hispanic Mezzanine Leadership for Community Service; Governor of Puerto Rico's Governor's Service Award; El Paso Greater Chamber of Commerce, Community Leader Award; El Paso Association of Jewish Women's Women in Leadership Award; Conquistador Award; induction into the LULAC Women's Hall of Fame; Outstanding Women in Federal Service Award; and a Chamizal Medallion presented by President Lyndon B. Johnson.