

## ***COMMUNITY EXPANSION AND THE STRUGGLE FOR CHANGE: 1957-1975***

During the period of the 1960s and 1970s, more Anglos left the “inner city” as the area south of Van Buren Street was known, and more Mexican American families spread to different parts of the city. By 1970, 83 percent of Mexican Americans in Phoenix lived south of Thomas Road. The Hispanic community, composing 15 percent of the city’s total population, continued expanding north of the downtown area where historically the heart of Phoenix’s barrios had been located. During this time Hispanic families also moved westward to affordable neighborhoods, such as the Maryvale area and many moved south of the Salt River.<sup>318</sup>

	<b>1960</b>	<b>1970</b>	<b>1980</b>
Total Population	439,170	584,303	789,704
Hispanics	61,460	81,239	116,875
Percent of Total	14%	14%	15%

Freeway expansion and industrial development washed over many of the old barrios, cutting communities in half and sweeping away others. The expansion of Sky Harbor Airport beginning in the 1970s razed the Golden Gate neighborhood. The City of Phoenix relocated over 6,000 people under the West Approach Land Acquisition Project, as the City looked to create commercial and industrial development near the airport. The residents of these old communities were displaced, destroying the physical structures of community.<sup>320</sup> The City purchased the Sacred Heart Church property, and the church held its last mass in 1985. Although the City considered demolishing the church, the residents and former residents of Golden Gate resisted—and the church remains today, as a reminder of the former community and its spirit.

Building on the organizing spirit instilled in Phoenix’s Mexican American community throughout the twentieth century, issues of discrimination, poverty, labor, and political involvement came to a head in the politically charged climate of the 1960s and 1970s. The Phoenix community made political gains at the local and state level. For example, the Mexican American Political Association began organizing voters in the 1960s. Hailing from Phoenix, Democrats Leonardo Calderon, Jr. (1964-1966), David Valenzuela, (1964-1966) and Tony Abril (1967-1970, 1973-1982) joined the Arizona Legislature during this time period.<sup>321</sup>

<sup>318</sup> Luckingham, *Minorities in Phoenix*, 59; see map of barrios in 1970, page 63

<sup>319</sup> U.S. Bureau of Census, *Census of Population, 1940-1960*, (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office).

<sup>320</sup> Luckingham, *Minorities in Phoenix*, 68.

<sup>321</sup> Luckingham, *Minorities in Phoenix*, 49-51; Lucy Gurule HHPS Survey; Leonard Calderon, Jr. was born in 1937 in Phoenix and was the owner of Calderon Ballroom; David Valenzuela was born in Phoenix in 1932 and was a former plumber and heavyweight boxer; and Tony Abril was born in 1924 in Phoenix, was a cement mason, and the first Hispanic Representative from District 23 (South Phoenix).

Manuel “Lito” Peña, Jr. was also an important voice for the Phoenix community. Peña was born in 1924 in Cashion, Arizona and grew up in Tolleson. He worked as a farm laborer, truck driver, and mechanic, until he was drafted into the Army in 1945. With training received at the National School of Meat Cutting in Ohio, he began working in his father’s grocery store. He became involved in voter-registration in the late 1940s and very active in the Democratic Party. In 1952, he became a leader in the school desegregation effort of Tolleson, which was successful in 1955. In the mid 1950s he continued to be politically active, met César Chávez, and was involved in Phoenix through the local Community Service Organization, as well as selling insurance to families in Phoenix’s barrios. He ran for the House of Representatives in 1960 and 1962, but lost. Finally, he won a seat in 1967, where he served until 1972. That year he became a State Senator, where he represented south Phoenix (District 22) until 1996.<sup>322</sup>

Manuel “Lito” Peña, was also involved politically in Phoenix government when he worked with Lincoln Ragsdale in the ACT (Action Citizens Committee) campaign of 1963 to challenge Charter Government candidates. Ragsdale and Peña worked toward cooperation between the African Americans and Mexican Americans, seeking increased voter registration and political activism in minority communities. Peña represents one of the few Mexican Americans who became involved with local African Americans in the effort to push for Civil Rights. Historian Matthew Whitaker notes that between 1950 and 1968 only a small number of Mexican American leaders supported the Black activists’ efforts to end discrimination. Collaboration between Black and Chicano activists became more evident in the late 1960s with the influence of the Chicano Movement. The *Arizona Sun* reasoned that this lack of unity occurred as a result of the “‘divide and conquer’ approach employed by powerful white Phoenixians...African Americans and Mexican Americans, therefore, fought for the few resources that were made available.”<sup>323</sup>

Another well-known political figure from Phoenix in the 1950s through the 1970s was Valdemar (Val) Cordova. Born in 1922 to Latin American Club leader Luis Cordova, Val became a decorated U.S. Army Air Corps veteran in World War II. Upon his return from the war, he completed his education, and received his law degree at the University of Arizona. While at the University, he was elected student body President in 1949. He became a member of the Arizona Bar in 1950, and served as a lawyer for Post 41. He followed Adam Diaz on the Phoenix City Council, serving from 1956 to 1958. Cordova served as the first Mexican American Maricopa County Superior Court judge, from 1965 to 1967, and then appointed to a second term in 1976 by Governor Raul Castro. He also spent time in private practice and led the Vesta Club before being appointed in 1979 as a Federal District Court Judge by President Jimmy Carter. Cordova became the first Mexican American to assume a seat on the federal court bench in the District of Arizona. In 2002, the City re-named its Municipal Court building in honor of Cordova.<sup>324</sup>

---

<sup>322</sup> Peña, Wilfredo J. (Sonny). “Biography of Manuel “Lito” Peña, Jr., 1924-1955.” Chicano Research Collection, University Libraries, Arizona Collection, Arizona State University; “Manuel “Lito” Peña Biography File”, Arizona Collection, University Libraries, Arizona State University; Faustino Curiel, Sr., served as President of the committee to desegregate Tolleson. Juan Camacho, Isuaro and Lupe Ramirez Favela, Angelita Fuentes, Patsy Murrietta, and Porfirio Gonzales were also members of the group.

<sup>323</sup> Matthew C. Whitaker, *Race Work: the Rise of Civil Rights in the Urban West*, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005), 167, 199-207.

<sup>324</sup> “Castro Names Former Judge to Court Post.” *Arizona Republic*. August 27, 1976; “Old School Ties.” *Arizona Republic*. November 29, 1982; *En Arizona Quien es Quien/In Arizona Who’s Who*. (Phoenix: Fiesta Productions), 1983, p. 16.

Up until the time Adam Diaz became city councilman, Phoenix Mexican Americans had very little formal involvement in the local government. Part of the reason for the lack of political participation is linked to the restrictive 1913 Arizona Literacy Law, which required an English literacy test in order to vote. Mexican Americans who worked to register voters also had to teach people to read the preamble to the constitution. This discouraged potential voters, especially those who did not grow up speaking English, or who had a poor educational experience. Historically, the Mexican American community (and other minorities) had experienced intimidation at the polls when politically conservative members of the Republican Party arrived to challenge non-Anglo Democratic voters. In the 1960s, these individuals stopped potential voters and handed them portions of the constitution to see if they could read or write English. Symbolic of this activity was the confrontation between Lito Peña and future Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court William Rehnquist at the polls at Bethune School in 1964. Although the U.S. Congress outlawed such literacy tests in 1965, the state legislature did not repeal the 1913 State Literacy Law until 1972. Once this unconstitutional practice of challenging voters was outlawed in Arizona, many more Hispanic voters registered, especially in the early 1970s when they were inspired by local civil rights activities in the Valley.<sup>325</sup>

Older civil rights organizations began to fade. For example, during the decade of the 1950s, the *Alianza Hispano Americana* Lodge #9's leadership was provided by Carlos C. Morales, Luis L. Lara, Fructuoso L. Meza, Eduardo M. Ramirez, and J.N. Larrañaga, among others.<sup>326</sup> They worked with other *logias* throughout the state to encourage Hispanics to vote for politicians who voiced their concerns for social justice. During the 1960 presidential election, [Lodge #9] was active in developing the "Viva Kennedy" clubs that helped bring about a Democratic victory.<sup>327</sup> The long-time organization came to an end by the late 1960s. Other social organizations like Vesta and LULAC remained active in the community, but with an older, more conservative leadership. Eugene Marín, founder of Vesta, organized the American Coordinating Council on Political Education (ACCPE) in the early 1960s as a non-partisan organization. The organization emerged from an initial meeting held to organize a chapter of the Political Association of Spanish Speaking Organizations (PASSO), which originated in Texas. More suited to Arizona's political needs, the Arizona Coordinating Council on Political Education quickly spread throughout the state. Its members were successful in obtaining town council and school board positions.<sup>328</sup>

By the late 1960s, a new voice of protest arose with the Chicano Movement. This political and cultural renaissance, initiated in California, swept into Phoenix and energized young activists. These young people took on a new name, "Chicano," a term of self-identification that invoked both pride and defiance. It is important to note that this new group of activists did not emerge in a vacuum, rather they were building on the foundation created by earlier social and political activism

---

<sup>325</sup> Luckingham, *Minorities in Phoenix*, 48-49. For more information on the Rehnquist issue see <http://www.commondreams.org/views/120200-101.htm>.

<sup>326</sup> "Junta Especial de la Logia 'Alma Azteca' No. 9, AHA." *Alianza Magazine*. Vol. 43: no. 2, February 1950, 7; "Hermanos y Su Trabajo." *Alianza Magazine*. Vol. 43: no.4, April 1950, 8; "La Logia Ideal." *Alianza Magazine*. Vol. 43: no. 4, April 1950, 10; "Actividades de Logias." *Alianza Magazine*. Vol. 43: no. 3, March 1950, 8-9.

<sup>327</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Mexican American Civil Rights Movement*. Matt S. Mier and Margo Gutierrez, Editors. (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 2000), p. 7.

<sup>328</sup> Matt S. Meier, and Feliciano Rivera, *Dictionary of Mexican American History*, (Westport: Greenwood Press.

in Phoenix, like the 1898 Alianza Hispano Americana Chapter; the 1915 Liga Protectora Latina; the 1932 Latin American Club; the 1941 Phoenix LULAC Council; the 1946 Thunderbird Post 41, and many other examples throughout the history of the Mexican American community.

Another social movement, focusing on the plight of farm workers and headed by Yuma native César Estrada Chávez, emerged in California amid the chaotic times of the 1960s. As the fledging United Farm Workers union (UFW) engaged in organizing struggles in the grape fields of Delano, the Migrant Opportunities Program (MOP) formed to better the lives of agricultural workers in Arizona. Headed by Reverend Jim Lundgren and funded through President Johnson's War on Poverty program, MOP provided education and job training for migrant workers in El Mirage and Guadalupe. Led by Arizonans such as Gustavo Gutierrez and Carolina Rosales, MOP became involved in community organizing.

It was in this setting that the UFW moved its organizing efforts into Arizona in 1967, recruiting Gutierrez as a main organizer. Centering their concerns around issues for workers such as better sanitation, access to safe drinking water, protection from pesticides, child labor, and wages, UFW organizers rallied workers in farming towns all around Phoenix. As some of the lowest paid workers in the country, farm workers were excluded from state and federal unemployment insurance and Arizona's workman's compensation program, and did not receive overtime pay. The farm workers labored under the additional burden of being excluded from organizing rights under the National Labor Relations Act. Infant mortality rates for farm workers were 125 percent higher than the national rate, and overall life expectancy was 49 years, well below the national average.<sup>329</sup>

As the farm workers' movement spread into Arizona, organizers began negotiating contracts and encouraged workers to strike when agreements could not be reached. Gutierrez, now the UFW's state director, instituted the first grape boycott in Arizona, with support from students and various activist and community groups. Students picketed supermarkets to encourage shoppers to boycott grapes and lettuce, and walked in a 20-mile march from Tolleson to the state capitol to publicize farm workers' needs. UFW organizers held presentations about the plight of the farm workers to politicize young Chicanos on campuses in Phoenix and Tempe. The students promoted the national grape boycott and other UFW actions. Inspired by this activism, and the actions and ideologies of student movements in the Southwest, local Arizona State University (ASU) students created the Mexican American Student Organization (MASO) in 1968. Many of the new members of MASO came from mining towns, and brought with them skills of organizing and solidarity, which were very much part of the Mexican American mining town culture and tradition. The students also found a local community base, particularly in Sacred Heart Parish.<sup>330</sup>

Encouraged by their work with the UFW, members of MASO set out to fight discrimination in the local community, and they received particular support from Father Yoldi at Sacred Heart Church. During the same year they became an official student group, MASO decided to address claims of discrimination in pay and promotion against Mexican American laundry workers at the Phoenix Linen and Towel Supply Company. Since this company contracted with the university, MASO

---

<sup>329</sup> José Maldonado, *¡Si Se Puede! The Farm Worker Movement in Arizona, 1965-1979*. (M.A. Thesis, Arizona State University, 1995), 6-9; *Voice of the City*, (Phoenix, AZ), August 20, 1972.

<sup>330</sup> Maldonado, *¡Si Se Puede!*, 10-15; Nick Tapia, *Cactus in the Desert: The Chicano Movement in Maricopa County, 1968-1978*. (M.A. Thesis, Arizona State University, 1999), 49-81; MASO later was renamed MEChA (Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlán) as part of a national affiliation.

members decided to demand that ASU break off the contract. MASO, along with members of ASU's Students for a Democratic Society and Young Socialist Alliance, organized a rally and sit-in at the ASU President's office. Nearly 300 students showed up. After several meetings with President J. Homer Durham, ASU agreed to end the contract. Father Yoldi angered state legislators by speaking at the ASU rallies, but he countered by saying: "you can't teach people with empty stomachs. . . . I saw they had a just cause. They needed a decent wage." In support of the workers' issues, MASO continued to picket outside of the Phoenix Linen and Towel Supply Company, located at 702 S. 3<sup>rd</sup> Street. MASO also participated in local Vietnam War protests and called for more Mexican American faculty and culturally related classes.<sup>331</sup>

The growing farm worker movement, the protest activities of MASO, and the organized barrio residents of Phoenix inspired the creation of what is today one of the largest social service organizations in Phoenix. Future Arizona senators Joe Eddie Lopez and Alfredo Gutierrez, among many others, founded Chicanos Por La Causa (CPLC) in 1969.<sup>332</sup> It is important to note that the Chicano Movement in Phoenix was centered in the neighborhoods under the Sacred Heart Parish, including Golden Gate, *Cuatro Milpas* and *El Campito*. For example, the Wesley Community Center helped the CPLC organization by providing its leaders with office space. Father Yoldi, one of the first board members of CPLC, also provided the Santa Rita Center in *El Campito* as office space. Eventually CPLC began their first permanent site at 9<sup>th</sup> Street and Buckeye Road, in a former church building. Members of CPLC, following the Chicano Movement ideal of community empowerment, worked to build an organization that would provide social and economic benefits for the Mexican American community, and much of that was focused in the neighborhoods of the Sacred Heart Parish. They confronted economic, educational, youth, and housing issues. At first though, CPLC focused on activism and protest issues.<sup>333</sup>

Organizing a boycott at the Phoenix Union High School (PUHS) became the organization's first major action within the city. In 1970, racial conflict within PUHS had grown into a major issue. As the high school with the largest minority population of any in the state (over 60 percent), major problems occurred, related to violence between Blacks and Hispanics, high drop out rates, and minority students being pushed into vocational tracks. Parents were very concerned for the safety of their children and the quality of education they received. Parents met with CPLC and drafted a list of demands for the principal, demanding more Hispanic teachers and courses, better facilities, and increased security. When the school did not respond to the parents' satisfaction, CPLC leaders such as future State Senator Joe Eddie Lopez and future State Representative Earl Wilcox, and the students' parents organized a boycott in October. Nearly one-half of the students at PUHS stayed home or attended alternative schools in local churches or community centers, set up by the Barrio Youth Project, headed by future State Senator Alfredo Gutierrez. After three weeks, CPLC

---

<sup>331</sup> Tapia, *Cactus in the Desert*, 49-81; Patricia Adank, "Chicano Activism in Maricopa County—Two Incidents in Retrospect" in *An Awakened Minority: The Mexican Americans*, ed. Manuel Servín, 249; Dimas, p. 81

<sup>332</sup> Other founding members of CPLC include Juan Alvarez, Luz Baeza, Frank Hidalgo, Geneva Escobedo, Cathy Castro, Rosie Lopez, Ronnie Lopez, Manny Marin, María Martinez, Manuel Dominguez, Terry Cruz, Danny Valenzuela, Ralph Velez, Pete Garcia, Tommy Espinoza, John Cordova, and others.

<sup>333</sup> "Chicanos Por La Causa," (ME-CHI-O43.1), Chicano Research Collection, University Libraries, Arizona State University.

negotiated a settlement and the students returned. In response to these protests, Phoenix Union High started bilingual classes and eventually included Spanish electives and Chicano literature in their curriculum.<sup>334</sup>

An example of the roots of the boycott's community support is found in the person of Abraham F. Arvizu, who participated in the marching and picketing and provided all the support he could. Arvizu, a Sacred Heart parishioner and long involved in youth development, was the driving force behind Sacred Heart Parish's Southside Catholic Youth Centers, a forerunner to Barrio Youth Project (founded in 1970) that coordinated the alternative school run by the community during the boycott.<sup>335</sup>

During the early 1970s, CPLC continued to grow as a community-based organization, operating primarily in the south Phoenix area. The group received funding from foundations and churches, as well as through government programs. It divided its programs into several areas: (1) neighborhood planning, which provided technical support for groups in the community; (2) housing, which helped individuals negotiate for low-income housing and to maintain their homes; (3) economic development, which provided legal, economic and technical assistance to small Hispanic businesses; (4) youth projects, which taught young people Chicano art and culture, and helped them get jobs; and (5) an educational division, which developed training programs for teachers, and advocated for Mexican American-related curriculum in the high schools and at ASU. CPLC also organized and supported health programs throughout Maricopa County, headed by women. CPLC members and other activists also formed the Valle del Sol Institute (focused on mental health and drug use issues) and the Barrio Youth Project (focused on services for youth). The early goals of CPLC helped guide the organization in its transformation from a grassroots protest and advocacy group to its present status as a nationally recognized non-profit community development organization.<sup>336</sup>

While encountering a receptive audience among some Arizonans, the UFW faced stiff resistance from conservative agricultural interests, which held a firm economic and political grip on the state. In early 1972, Phoenix Representative Stan Akers, backed by the Arizona Farm Bureau, introduced House Bill (HB) 2134 into the legislature. HB 2134 restricted the power of unions to strike during harvest and required that laborers work in the fields during labor disputes, or face criminal penalties. Strikes were illegal unless all farm workers had voted for the action through secret ballot, supervised by the Agricultural Employment Relations Board. The bill did not allow unions to recruit workers while on the grower's property. Boycotts toward products and retailers were prohibited — the action had to be directed against the grower. The bill gave the police the right to monitor union hiring halls and other types of activities related to the potential for strikes, and prohibited union organizing activities in the fields. HB 2134 also gave the grower full power to discharge, hire and suspend workers, decide on the size and composition of work crews, and what types of farming equipment they would use. Members of the religious community and supporters of the UFW followed the bill's progress, demonstrating at the state capitol and lobbying legislators to oppose the measure. Senators Manuel "Lito" Peña and Sandra Day O'Connor publicly opposed the bill.<sup>337</sup>

---

<sup>334</sup> Tapia, *Cactus in the Desert*, 49-81.

<sup>335</sup> Dimas, p. 78-83.

<sup>336</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>337</sup> Maldonado, *¡Si Se Puede!*, 10-11.

The Arizona Legislature passed the HB 2134 on May 11, 1972. The next day, 500 farm workers and a diverse group of supporters marched from the Wesley Community Center, located at 1300 S. 10<sup>th</sup> Street, to the state capitol to protest the law. United Farm Workers union president and civil rights leader, César Chávez, along with UFW Vice-President Dolores Huerta, spoke at the rally. At the press conference, Chávez announced that in protest of the law he would hold a “fast of love.” He selected the Sacred Heart Parish’s Santa Rita Center in the barrio *El Campito* to headquarter his protest. The UFW, Chicano activists, and religious leaders all spoke out against the bill, vowing to test the constitutionality of the law after it went into effect in August. They argued that the bill severely limited organizing activities, encouraged intimidation tactics by farm owners, cheated workers out of show-up pay, undermined collective bargaining, and destroyed the unions’ effectiveness in negotiations with growers. They also protested the fact that the new law imposed up to a \$5,000 fine and a year in jail on anyone in front of a supermarket who carried a sign supporting a boycott.<sup>338</sup>

Once Governor Jack Williams signed the bill into law, the Arizona UFW began a campaign to recall him, prompted by Williams’ “undue haste” in signing the controversial farm labor law. UFW supporters worked to gather recall petition signatures, registering voters throughout the state. Fifteen days after the recall effort began, 28,000 people had signed the circulating petitions. It was during the recall campaign that the famous slogan, *Si Se Puede*, was born. According to one UFW organizer, when faced with the daunting task of unseating a popular governor, Chávez, replied, “¡Si se puede!” and the phrase stuck. Meanwhile, the nation’s eyes turned toward Arizona and the Santa Rita Center at 1017 E. Hadley Street as Chávez’s highly publicized hunger strike brought thousands of supporters to visit him. National newspapers such as the *New York Times* and *Los Angeles Times* published articles on the fast.<sup>339</sup>

On May 26, 1972, forty-three representatives of churches and religious organizations from across the country gathered at the Santa Rita Center, “the nerve center of the Chicano Movement.” This was the 14th day of Chávez’s fast and religious leaders came to express their support and to denounce the farm labor law. Reverend Leo Nieto of the United Methodist Church joined Chávez in his fast for eight days. Presidential candidate Senator George McGovern, folk singer Joan Baez, and Coretta Scott King, wife of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., all visited Chávez at the Santa Rita Center. As Chávez’s fast reached its 21<sup>st</sup> day, as many as 1,500 Yuma cantaloupe workers held a strike in support. Local supporters included rabbis, priests, ministers, Phoenix council of LULAC, the local chapter of the National Organization for Women, various AFL-CIO labor union locals, Arizona Young Democrats, and many other organizations.<sup>340</sup>

After losing 30 pounds, Chávez was hospitalized on the 21<sup>st</sup> day of the fast. He ended the fast on June 5<sup>th</sup>, having lasted for 24 days without food. At a well-attended mass held at the central Phoenix Del Webb Townhouse ballroom, dedicated to the memory of Senator Robert Kennedy,

---

<sup>338</sup> Maldonado, *¡Si Se Puede!*, 18-28.

<sup>339</sup> *Ibid.*, 28; *Voice of the City*, August 20, 1972; Benny Abeytia, Interview by Jean Reynolds and Cheryl Colan, 2002. Some of the national articles include *Los Angeles Times*: “Chavez Stricken on 24<sup>th</sup> Day of Fast,” 1 June 1972; and “Chavez Ends Fast After 24 Days,” 5 June 1972; and the *New York Times*: “Notes on People: Cesar Chavez,” 31 May 1972; and “UFW-Leader Ends 24 Day Fast on June 4,” 5 June 1972.

<sup>340</sup> Maldonado, *¡Si Se Puede!*, 25, 28; *Arizona Republic* May 26, 1972; *Voice of the City*, August 20, 1972.

Chávez broke his fast by taking communion. More than 5,000 people came to the mass, including Joseph Kennedy (Robert's son), folk singer Joan Baez, the Chávez family, and many others. His longest fast, 25 days, occurred in 1968 in California, at the start of the national table grapes and lettuce boycott. Chávez said when he completed his fast, "Our opponents in the agricultural industry are very powerful, and farm workers are still weak in money and influence. But we have another kind of power that comes from the justice of our cause . . . God give us the strength and patience to do it without bitterness so that we can win both our friends and opponents to the cause of justice." After recovering from his fast, Chávez returned to Arizona to heighten support for Governor Williams' recall and to support the UFW's organizing efforts.<sup>341</sup>

In defense of the new Farm Labor Law, the Arizona Farm Bureau argued that since crops were perishable, growers needed legislation that provided them with a ready supply of labor. The Bureau claimed that the argument that farm workers were "down-trodden and poverty-stricken," a point made over and over by concerned clergy, was a myth. Cecil Miller of the Bureau called Chávez and the union "immoral, unethical, and un-American." The Bureau charged that those encouraging and supporting the strikes and the recall effort were mostly "outside agitators," farm workers and supporters from other states such as California. Conflict continued over the new law and the recall effort.<sup>342</sup>

By August of 1972, twenty-nine other organizations joined the recall movement. This coalition, known as the Citizens' Committee to Recall Jack Williams, battled against Governor Williams' supporters. By March of 1973, the coalition had gathered 108,000 signatures, well over the required number of 103,000, for a recall election. By this time, Democratic Phoenix attorney Jerry Pollock had thrown his hat into the political ring as a gubernatorial candidate, with backing from recall supporters. Secretary of State Wesley Bolin and County Recorder Paul Marston were faced with a new situation: the first recall of a governor in Arizona history, validating signatures, and creating a special election to take place no less than 20 days and no more than 30 days after the petitions were filed by the county attorney. After a series of delays related to validating signatures, State Attorney General Gary Nelson declared one-third of the signatures invalid in July of 1973. This announcement terminated the recall election process.<sup>343</sup>

Immediately, the UFW and others representing deputy registrars and citizens who signed petitions filed a lawsuit. In September of 1975, Judge Carl Muecke ruled that Nelson's opinion which ended the recall was "based on some vague suspicion of wrongdoing and was contrary to state law." The UFW and other plaintiffs won the two million dollar lawsuit. Due to lengthy proceedings, the case's ruling came after the end of the governor's term. In 1978, the Farm Labor Law was declared unconstitutional by the Ninth Circuit Appellate Court. The three-judge panel ruled the law violated the freedoms of speech and assembly for farm workers, and was unconstitutional in its entirety. In 1979, the United States Supreme Court reversed the decision. The failed recall dealt a blow to the strength of the UFW in Arizona, and the union shifted its efforts to other states.<sup>344</sup>

---

<sup>341</sup> *Arizona Republic*, June 5, 1972; *Arizona Daily Star*, (Tucson, AZ) June 28, 1972; *Voice of the City*, August 20, 1972.

<sup>342</sup> *Weekly American* July 17, 1972; *Arizona Daily Star* June 2, 1972.

<sup>343</sup> Maldonado, *Si Se Puede!*, 33, 40-46; *Arizona Republic* July 29, 1972.

<sup>344</sup> *Arizona Republic*, 18 September 1972; *Phoenix Gazette*, April 21, 1978; Maldonado, "Si Se Puede!," 47-50

The recall movement, although strongly supported at the grassroots level, failed to gain enough political allies to successfully challenge a conservative governor in a strongly conservative state, during a tumultuous period when the ideals and actions of national movements polarized all Americans. On the other hand, the recall movement demonstrated several interesting points: the social justice ideals of the UFW brought together a diverse coalition of Arizonans; the movement demonstrated the growing public unhappiness with conservative Republican leadership; and the petition drive registered as many as 10,000, new Mexican American voters in the state.

The culmination of all of these factors, in addition to the efforts of older generation political activists like LULAC members and others, helped more Latinos and progressive-minded leaders in the mid to late 1970s to get elected to city councils, school boards, and to prominent county and state political positions. For example, 27-year-old Alfredo Gutierrez, a former student activist and founding member of CPLC, successfully ran for the Arizona Legislature and became a state senator in 1972. Born in 1945 in Miami, Arizona, he served in the U.S. Army in the early 1960s and attended Arizona State University from 1965 to 1968. On campus, he became active in the Mexican American Student Organization. In 1970, he headed the Barrio Youth Project under Chicanos Por La Causa, and was the main coordinator for the Phoenix Union High School boycott.<sup>345</sup>

Finally, in 1974, Arizonans elected the state's first and only Mexican American governor, Raul Castro. Born in Mexico in 1916, Raul Castro grew up in Tucson. He obtained a law degree from the University of Arizona in 1949, and was elected Pima County Attorney in 1954. He also served as judge of the Pima County Superior Court from 1959 to 1964. He worked as United States Ambassador to El Salvador in 1964 and to Bolivia in 1968. Castro served as Governor



Governor Raul Castro, c. 1975  
Photo from *Arizona Governors, 1912-1990*

until 1977 and then moved on to become the U.S. Ambassador to Argentina.<sup>346</sup>

---

<sup>345</sup> Luckingham, *Minorities In Phoenix*, 59-60; "Personal Data Sheet: Alfredo Gutierrez," (CB Bio Gutierrez), Chicano Research Collection, University Libraries, Arizona State University. The former state senator for some years worked in public affairs with Jamieson and Gutierrez in Phoenix. Gutierrez ran unsuccessfully for the governorship in the Democratic Party primary election of 2003. Gutierrez remains active in public issues, particularly immigration reform. Another well-known contemporary politician, U.S. Congressman Ed Pastor, traces his activism to his mining town roots and involvement in social work in Guadalupe, Arizona in the early 1970s after receiving his law degree from the University of Arizona, although he did not hold a political position until 1977 when he was elected to the Maricopa County Board of Supervisors.

<sup>346</sup> Chanin, Abe., with Mildred Chanin, *This Land, These Voices*, Flagstaff: Northland Press, 1977.