

DOLORES HUERTA

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BASIC BIOGRAPHY

Dolores Huerta (1930–) began her career as a community organizer while attending the University of Pacific's Delta College in Stockton, California, where she served in a leadership position for the Stockton Community Service Organization (CSO). In 1959, Huerta co-founded the Agricultural Workers Association (AWA), comprised mostly of Filipino, Chicano, and Black workers. This group became instrumental during the 1965 grape strike in California. One year later, Huerta and César Chávez joined forces to organize the United Farm Workers (UFW). This group secured the Agricultural Labor Relations Act of 1975, which provided farm workers in California the right to collectively organize and bargain for better working conditions and higher wages. Huerta continued her work as the founder and president of the Dolores Huerta Foundation fighting for issues gender equality and social justice. In 2012, President Barack Obama awarded her the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the highest civilian award in the United States.

KEY EVENTS

Agricultural Workers Association (1959),
Delano Grape Strike (1965), United Farm Workers (1966),
Agricultural Labor Relations Act (1975)

KEY PEOPLE

Cesar Chavez, Robert Kennedy, Gloria Steinem

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

After the success of the 1965 Delano Grape Strike in California, Dolores Huerta and the United Farm Workers coordinated their efforts for other impoverished areas of the west coast. In 1969, the Active Mexicanos Economic Development Center was established in Seattle, Washington, to provide job placement and legal assistance. In January 1969, the organization began picketing the Husky Union Building at the University of Washington to persuade the university to stop selling non-union grapes. One month later, the University of Washington became the first U.S. campus to eliminate grapes at their dining facilities. In November 1969, Huerta helped lead more than 3,000 protestors at the Moratorium March in downtown Seattle in an effort to further the cause.

FUN FACT

Before Barack Obama's 2008 "Yes We Can" slogan, Huerta originated the United Farm Workers' rallying cry of "Si se puede" in 1972. The union later trademarked the phrase. Learn more about the rise of the United Farm Workers union here: <http://ufw.org/the-rise-of-the-ufw/>.



Joseph Karpen, Dolores Huerta of the United Farm Workers speaking at a Moratorium March in downtown Seattle, November 1969, University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections (UWC288), <http://cdm16786.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/ref/collection/uwcampus/id/35159>

DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

- Project the photograph or make one copy for each student.
- Ask students to examine the photograph and individually respond to the prompt questions.
- Encourage students to share their responses when finished.

LEARNING ACTIVITY

- Divide students into pairs.
- Ask each pair to assume the role of a campaign manager for Dolores Huerta today.
- Distribute drawing or poster paper to students.
- Direct each pair to create a campaign slogan with a visual representation on a current issue that Dolores Huerta could help lead.



Gage Skidmore, Dolores Huerta speaking at an event in Phoenix, Arizona, March 20, 2016, Wikimedia Commons

LOCAL CONNECTION

Dolores Huerta and her family lived at 321 Austin Street in Delano, California from 1963 until 1970. Huerta duplicated leaflets from her home before the United Farm Workers' office was established at 102 Albany Street. To learn more, go to: <http://ufw.org/research/history/sampling-historical-sites-forty-acres-delano/>.

LEARN MORE

PRIMARY SOURCES

Farmworker Movement Documentation Project
University of California San Diego Library
<https://libraries.ucsd.edu/farmworkermovement/gallery/thumbnails.php?album=51>

SECONDARY SOURCES

Dolores Huerta
Archives of Women's Political Communication,
Iowa State University
<https://awpc.cattcenter.iastate.edu/directory/dolores-huerta/>

Dolores Huerta
National Women's History Museum
<https://www.womenshistory.org/education-resources/biographies/dolores-huerta>

United Farm Worker Research Guide
University of California Berkeley Library
<http://guides.lib.berkeley.edu/c.php?g=4470&p=15926>



Photograph, Joseph Karpen, Dolores Huerta of the United Farm Workers speaking at a Moratorium March in downtown Seattle, November 1969, University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections (UWC288), <http://cdm16786.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/ref/collection/uwcampus/id/35159>

1. Based on the photograph, what words would you use to describe Dolores Huerta?

2. Why do you think the photographer chose to focus on a close-up image of Huerta in the foreground of the photo?

3. What do you think the symbol on her scarf represents?

4. After examining the photo, list any modern issues that you think Dolores Huerta could potentially be a spokesperson for today and explain why she would support these causes.