



ALFREDO GUTIERREZ
1945-

Honored as 2019 Historymaker
Arizona State Senate, Majority and Minority Leader
President, Maricopa County Community College Board



The following is an oral history interview with Historymaker Alfredo Gutierrez (**AG**) conducted by Zona Davis Lorig (**ZDL**) for Historical League, Inc. and video-graphed by John Blake on September 18, 2018 at the Arizona Heritage Center in the Arizona Historical Society Museum.

Original tapes are in the collection of the Arizona Historical Society Museum Library at Papago Park, Tempe, Arizona.

ZDL This oral history interview is being conducted with Alfredo Gutierrez on September 18, 2018, at the Arizona Heritage Center in Arizona Historical Society Museum. Alfredo was selected 2019 Historymaker by the Historical League. The interviewer is Zona Davis Lorig. First of all, Alfredo, congratulations on your selection as a 2019 Historymaker.

AG Thank you.

ZDL It's a pleasure to get to interview you today. Would you please state your full name and then share when and where you were born?

AG My name is Alfredo Garcia Gutierrez and I was born in Miami, Arizona in 1945.

ZDL For natives, you say a short "a" on Miami, which...

AG Yeah, it's, "Miami" in Florida, "Miama" in Arizona. I don't know why that came about, but it's always been so.

ZDL Yeah, and they're very firm about it.

AG That's right, that's right.

ZDL You were raised in the copper mining town and your family was involved in that. Your dad was

in the mines.

AG That's correct.

ZDL And would you talk about your family there?

AG Well, I was born in the United States. I was born in Miami. I'm the only one of the family who was. The family was deported and my father - my father is a U.S. citizen. Everyone in the family was a U.S. citizen, but nonetheless in the late '30s, my father was deported. And the war began and in the course of the war, by the early '40s there weren't enough miners and copper was absolutely necessary to the war effort. So, they sent recruiters into Mexico to find the people they deported because they would be able to go underground. They would - most of them spoke English. They were the ideal workers and that's how my father came back.

ZDL Why was he deported in the first place?

AG Because he was Mexican.

ZDL ...born at home and didn't have a birth certificate?

AG Oh no, no. No, no, he had a birth certificate. He was - the family's been - his side of the family, mother's side of the family came with my father after the deportation, but my father's side of the family we trace back to about 1850. No, it was no question he was a citizen, but in the deportations of '38, the so-called Hoover deportations...

ZDL Who?

AG They were initiated under President Hoover and the formal name was the repatriation. That was the formal name. In those deportations, much has been written - there's a great deal of history on it. The niceties of asking for papers didn't take place. If you looked like, you know, you were - you were a goner. I mean, people were rounded up, military like forces rounded up whole communities. There are very famous communities that were surrounded, and everyone taken away to the railroad. So that's what happened with us. I mean, they were rounded up and taken away.

ZDL And so they went to Sinaloa.

AG That's right.

ZDL To Culiacan?

AG No, not to Culiacan to - to a rural area near El Fuertes.

ZDL So after your dad's stepfather died down there, your grandmother decided to return to Miami?

AG That's right.

ZDL And your dad decided to stay down there?

AG That's right.

ZDL And then he met and married your mother?

AG No, that was the reason he stayed there. I mean, it was because of my mother. My - look, and this is relatively simple. My grandmother and the family were very devout Catholics, very, you know, very devout Catholics. My father married a Protestant woman who was said to be Jewish and was divorced and had two kids. And so that...

ZDL Your grandmother didn't think much of that?

AG Well, no one in the larger family did. My mother - my mother's exiled, if you will, from the family for many, many years. And when we came back to Miami when I was born, etc., it was a cold distance between the families.

ZDL Did it ever get better?

AG Yeah, I mean, it got civil. It got civil.

ZDL Well, wasn't there some idea that she might have been Jewish?

AG Absolutely, yeah. That had always been the case that she was said to be Jewish. She would reject that greatly, but...

ZDL Oh really?

AG Yeah, yeah. But I think it was true. I mean, we - we know it's true.

ZDL Interesting. Well it's kind of fascinating how all of that has transpired.

AG That right. That is true.

ZDL And so, do you know when the Jewish side came to Mexico?

AG Well, I don't know specifically when her family came or when her former husband came, but the major Jewish migration into Mexico happened shortly after the conquest. I mean, remember the Jews were being persecuted in Europe and Spain, in particular, Portugal. And so, they came to the New World.

ZDL And they've been there a long time.

AG Yes, yes. And have been sort of part of the fabric of Mexico ever since.

ZDL But you have written that your dad wouldn't talk about this deportation.

AG It's interesting. My dad found it very difficult to talk about the deportation because he would talk about sort of the political part of about it, the legal part of it. He would talk about the logistics of it, but he never wanted to talk about the personal side of it because it was very - that's right because it was - it was very painful, the entire episode for him. By that I mean, not only the episode of being deported, but then being in effect exiled from the family, for being with my mother - he just found all of that difficult to talk about.

ZDL Since your family was part Catholic and part Protestant, and your grandmother was different - very strict, do you think that's part of what helped you look at things from various sides, you know, very early in life that there was more than one side to a story?

AG I like to say that I gained a healthy disrespect for both sides. So, yeah, I think so. I mean, I was to witness my father going to see his mother without the rest of the family. I mean, I was just to witness that, to be a part of that, to attend Catholic services one Sunday and Protestant the other, and to realize it. I mean, these people really didn't like each other, but they lived together in this small town. They worked together. They went underground together. They were in danger together, and Operation Wetback came about in 1954. They went off and hid together, you know? But nonetheless, this - this distance, if not outright enmity, was always present.

ZDL Always there.

AG Yes.

ZDL You talk about the fact that in Miami, you have a lot of European immigrants and Mexican

immigrants, and they were treated differently.

AG Well, I mean, that was - that was the official rule. There was - you realize that an immigrant from Italy, an immigrant from Ireland, an immigrant from England, the Cornish miners, immigrants from the Serbian area, you know...

ZDL Yes, and lots of them came to Arizona.

AG A lot of them in the mining towns. All of them were paid one dollar a day more than a Mexican. I mean, that was - that was the ratio of pay. That changed, began to change during World War II. The legal fight by the companies to not pay it ended in the '60s, but I mean, that changed because of Mine Mill, which was considered the communist union. Mine Mill was threatening to strike if that differential wasn't changed. So finally, it was changed, but the mines, the companies, fought it bitterly. So yeah, I mean, that was just the way things were and that is what the - primarily through the union, primarily through Mine Mill, that was what defiance was about. That was what the fight back was about. And the schools were integrated in the '50s, '54 so the schools were integrated. One of the leaders of fighting integration was my mother. She didn't want to integrate the schools.

ZDL Oh really?

AG Yeah, yeah. She had a phrase, a lot of Mexicans had a phrase, the phrase was "gringos pata saladas," which literally translates into gringos with salty legs. What it means is, basically, you know, for instance, the gringos were dirty. They weren't clean people and she didn't want her children going to school with dirty people.

ZDL Well now you were in Bullion Plaza when it was integrated for three years and then - I mean, when it was segregated.

AG Segregated, for two years and then...

ZDL Two, just two years?

AG Just two years and then...

ZDL And then it opened up?

AG Well, it changed. I was transferred to what's called Inspiration or was called Inspiration Addition School and it was the integrated school.

Alfredo Gutierrez Historymakers Oral History Transcript

ZDL And how far away was that?

AG Oh not far. I mean, they were all a mile or two walks.

ZDL And what did you think when you went to the integrated school?

AG Well, I think we all - the integrated school, we all went there, you know, sort of a tribal mentality. You know? I mean, everyone. I mean, the whites had their tribe and the browns had their tribe and the five or six Native Americans who were in that school had their tribe and it was like that. There were probably two African Americans in the whole town. So, it was - it took, you know, kids are kids. It didn't take very long before it all kinda worked out. It started out as very defensive, you know, sort of all the Mexicans walking into school together. That kind of thing.

ZDL Well, we also had segregation for the public swimming pool.

AG Yeah, the segregation for the swimming pool lasted probably a little longer.

ZDL Longer than the school?

AG Than - than the school, yeah. Yeah it was...

ZDL Because this wasn't dictated by law?

AG That's right. It was - it was the YMCA. I mean, it was dictated by Protestant Christians. And so that was - that was maintained much longer. I shouldn't say much longer, perhaps a year or two longer.

ZDL You attended Miami High School and graduated from high school in 1963?

AG That's right.

ZDL And you were - Ed Pastor who's a U.S. Congressman...grew up with you and called you mischievous when you were in high school.

AG That was a very nice way of describing me.

ZDL He was kind?

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Alfredo Gutierrez Historymakers Oral History Transcript

AG He was very gentle.

ZDL How would you describe yourself?

AG I was, you know, I was a very difficult guy. I mean, I was not - I was - it's interesting, yeah, I was thrown out of school a lot, but I - what's interesting is, of course, I spent my time at the library, the public library.

ZDL Oh, when they threw you out of school, you went to the library?

AG I went to the library. Because I mean, hanging out with the guys, you know, who were thrown out of school or had quit school...

ZDL Did you lead them?

AG Hm?

ZDL Did you lead those guys, so you all got thrown out? Or not?

AG Kind of. People got thrown out. Standing around on street corners, being cool is very, very boring. And so, that's why I spent my time in the library, you know?

ZDL What were you reading in those days?

AG Well there was a great librarian, which the town will never forget. Her name was Mrs. Cheves, Ms. Emily Cheves. And she would talk to me and say, "You gotta try reading this." Or, "You gotta try reading that." And so, I was reading, you know, some really great stuff when I was ...

ZDL Interesting.

AG I was reading Moby Dick was I was 14 years old, 15 years old I was reading Charles Dickens. I was, she - she, in retrospect, at the time I didn't realize it, but in retrospect, she sort of shared all the classics with me, you know? Would pull out classics that she thought I might enjoy and, you know, and I'd spend a few hours there every day.

ZDL So she was kind of maybe your best educator at that point?

AG I think so. I don't think that students who went to the high school ever read Moby Dick. I mean, I don't think they ever read Jane Austen. I mean, I just - those things didn't happen, but if you

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Alfredo Gutierrez Historymakers Oral History Transcript

went to see Mrs. Cheves and she talked to you, and she said, "You might enjoy this."

ZDL Can you spell her last name?

AG C-H-E-V-E-S.

ZDL Oh, that's what I thought. Okay, so you graduated from high school and you were kind of _____ and I read somewhere that you broke into a mostly closed house of ill repute and stole some beer or something and you obviously got picked up for that and your dad encouraged you to join the Army.

AG Well, and Judge McGee sort of gave me an ultimatum as well, that's how, I would have gone anyway, I mean, everyone in the family had gone. So, it wasn't a huge jump.

ZDL So how many older brothers do you have?

AG Two, two. And so, I would have gone anyway, but what happened was that I was given a short period of time to go do it and, literally, two hours. And the Marine recruiter was out to lunch and, you know, I was running up against the time I had to show up in Judge McGee's courtroom so that's why I joined the Army instead of the Marines.

ZDL And so where did you go first?

AG In the Army?

ZDL Yeah.

AG I did basic training in Ft. Ord. It doesn't exist anymore, in Northern California, and I did advanced infantry near there, a place called Hunter Liggett; I think that's still there. It's advanced infantry training and then went to Ft. Benning, etc. I mean, I went through basic infantry training and then after that I was sent to San Antonio because I was gonna go into a special unit. And I had to learn psychiatric, psychological lingo. So, they sent me to a seminar for a period of time and then off I went.

ZDL And where did you go then?

AG Well, I went first to Korea. It was, then to Korea, Vietnam, Thailand, I was in the - I was in a special unit. I was not assigned to a major division. It was in a - they called at that time a STRAC KO unit. I don't - today they're elite units. I was in one of those units and they - I went

From Alfredo Gutierrez 2018 Video Interview

wherever, I guess, we were needed. And I remember, I was a private and a corporal much of that time. And so, nobody consulted me about whether it was a good idea to go there or not. I just simply got orders and went with the crew. So very often I was - I didn't know where I was. I mean, to paraphrase Spiro Agnew, you know, if you're in the middle of one jungle, it looks just like the other jungle. That was how I spent much of that period of time.

ZDL Do you feel you learned lessons from that experience?

AG I do. I do. I - I think that - let me be truthful here. I never had the inclination to make the Army my career. I mean, I was there, and I was gonna do my time and do it honorably. But nonetheless, I mean, I think the whole notion of discipline and leadership, all of those things are - began to really develop the notion of working in concert and unity. Those were important lessons that, um, that at the time I may not even have been conscious that they were driven into me, but over a period of time, it became evident that that's where they came from.

ZDL Mm-hm. So, you were discharged in 1966.

AG That's right.

ZDL You were 20.

AG That's right.

ZDL And you went back to Miami and went to work in the mine.

AG That's right.

ZDL And then - which company did you work for?

AG I worked for Inspiration. Well actually worked for both. I worked for the Sleeping Beauty and then Inspiration. I worked for both. The two mines were there. Well, I was a puncher in the smelter and at Sleeping Beauty I was a mucker. A mucker is - it's the worst job. It's a pick and shovel. A puncher is a - it's a very uncomfortable thing to do, but you know, it paid well.

ZDL So what does a puncher do?

AG The furnaces that turn the ore into liquid lava, these furnaces at that time were these huge cauldrons. They would overheat. They had - so there was a - standing away from them about 10 feet, was a rail where you would stand and when you were told to, you would hit the valves with

a long metal pole. The valve would open up and the lava would come directly at you. You'd wear all kinds of leather stuff and everything to protect yourself, but it would come directly at me, but that would relieve the pressure. Now, it's all done electronically, but in those days they - they hired guys to just stand there and do that.

ZDL It seems like a very hard job.

AG Well it was - it was interesting because some days the furnaces were just fine. So, you just sort of sat around for 8 hours or whatever the time was and other days, the furnaces, you know, you had to hit it, you know, constantly because they were - the temperature was going up.

ZDL So a very scary incident occurred then while you were doing this because a friend who had seen combat in Vietnam probably suffered from PTSD. Would you share that story?

AG Yeah, we were - we were - we'd both been - he later than I - I was in Nam in the very early era. When it was just beginning to grow. He went later when the war was raging. And, yeah, he came back - look, in those days, we now call it PTSD and there's services for veterans, VA. In those days, they didn't recognize PTSD. It wasn't - there were no services. You just sort of came back and you...

ZDL You were on your own.

AG ...you were on your own. But on weekends, in a certain shift, a shift that ended about midnight, it ended about 11:30, a little earlier, we'd all jump in this car, all the young guys who worked at Sleeping Beauty, we'd all jump in one of our cars, head down the hill to the bottom of the hill. The bottom of the property was a liquor store. And we'd get a few cases of beer and we'd head to a creek there in town, for the creek. And, you know, others would do the same thing and so there'd be five or six cars and maybe 20 people drinking beer. That's what was happening when my friend's father came and was very angry at him, etc. and ordered him to go home. And he did. He lived not far from the creek, so he walked away, stormed away, very angry. But he went home and got hunting rifles and came back and started shooting at all of us and one of the guys was - was murdered. He died. He was killed. His own father lost a limb. Others were - were shot. I wasn't. I literally crawled away through the creek, I mean, I literally crawled away. He was shooting at me, but it was the middle of the night. It was dark and, and I was able to get away.

ZDL That must've been a terrifying experience.

AG Well, it was. It was. It was just - the hours following, the day following, you know, he was taken to jail, but the realization that Cruz, he was the guy who was killed, was killed, Cruz had a beautiful wife, two young kids, young kids, little kids. She spoke real English. I mean, it was just

Alfredo Gutierrez Historymakers Oral History Transcript

- it was just a terrible situation. His father, others in the hospital, it was - it was - it was a difficult time.

ZDL I think your dad encouraged you to...

AG Get out-a town. Yeah.

ZDL ...get out of town.

AG Get out of town, go to school.

ZDL So you enrolled at ASU?

AG That's right. That's right.

ZDL And then you met Cesar Chavez?

AG That's right. Well I mean, we - I had heard about him for - for a number of years. Um, you know, amongst young Mexicans, he was a legend. And so yeah, I went to meet him. And became involved in organizing.

ZDL He'd already started the United Farm Worker's?

AG Oh yeah. Oh yeah. He was - he was very active in California. They were active in Southeastern Arizona, the Yuma area and in Texas. So yeah, he was...

ZDL The whole Southwest?

AG And it was a time that the union was growing. It, you know, it had its demise but at that point it was - it was a powerful union and a powerful moral force. You know? And - and for the Mexican community, Cesar played a heroic role, similar to Martin Luther King for the African American community.

ZDL And Dolores Huerta was also very involved.

AG That's right, very - that's right. She was one of the key peoples - persons in the union.

ZDL She was working towards adequate wages and healthy living conditions.

From Alfredo Gutierrez 2018 Video Interview

AG That's right. That's right.

ZDL So you started volunteering with Cesar...

AG Right.

ZDL ...and going into the fields to...

AG Right.

ZDL ...get the workers to join the union?

AG That's right.

ZDL And, I would like for you to tell the story about Cesar - you were outside the fence and the workers are in there and he's saying we need a fast runner to go in there and...

AG That's a famous story in the east.

ZDL Yeah.

AG The farmers - this is in - near the Yuma area, the farmers had gone to court and gotten a court order that said that the union, the organizers and everyone had to keep a certain distance from the workers in the field. And the challenge was trying to communicate with them where the meetings were going to be and you - you couldn't do it. You couldn't get over there because the sheriff's office had placed strategically sheriffs, and so we had these leaflets that - that said, you know, the meeting's gonna be at a certain church. So, I was standing there, and Cesar was talking to other people, not to me. But he was describing that he ... Oh remember, I used to run every morning, I mean, I'd run through these fields every morning and through the dirt roads, etc., before we'd get going. So, at 5:00 in the morning, I was out there and so he said, "So if a young guy," he said, "were to run over there and jump over the fence. They could give that, give the leaflets out before the sheriffs could get to him." And then he walked away. I said, "Yeah, I can do that." So, I grabbed the leaflets, I ran down, literally hurdled over the fence and just started giving these things out. The sheriffs were running after me, but you know, these were...

ZDL Middle aged deputies?

AG ...middle aged, outa shape and the only thing I was worried about is they were gonna shoot me, but other than that, I wasn't worried that they were gonna catch me. So, you know, running

Alfredo Gutierrez Historymakers Oral History Transcript

through the field and everyone was - they were laughing, the workers were all laughing and cheering and all that and I ran right back out. And I did that a couple of times. Um, but I guess by the third time, they were ready. You know, they were waiting for me and - and so they, they got me, and I ended up in jail.

ZDL Oh really?

AG Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

ZDL Overnight or?

AG Overnight and I think I was there for, yeah, overnight.

ZDL So did you drop out of ASU, somewhere in here?

AG I didn't drop out. I was forced out.

ZDL But then you went back to school?

AG That's right. I went back to school.

ZDL So your dad said, "You've gotta get back into school."

AG That's - that's right.

ZDL So you did, but you weren't about to just sit in a corner and be passive?

AG That's right. That's right.

ZDL So, you were upset because the local labor union was paying the Mexican women a dollar fifteen per hour and the minimum wage was a dollar sixty per hour in 1968.

AG And there was just these stories of terrible mistreatment at - at this laundry. It wasn't the union that was paying them, it was the union who was fighting to try and get them paid. It was the laundry...

ZDL Phoenix Linen and Towel Service...

AG That's right. And - and it was all these terrible stories about maltreatment, mistreatment. Um,

From Alfredo Gutierrez 2018 Video Interview

and so we first did a great deal of research, then we asked politely that the university reconsider its contract or set conditions for treatment of the workers. And those were widely ignored, I mean, you know, nobody cared what students said. So, we took over the president's office and the administration building, etc. and...

ZDL And it was President Durham at the time?

AG That's right. That's Homer Durham. And, you know, we did that for a couple, three days and, it was - it was outrage in the State over that. Outrage in the Legislature, outrage in the Governor's office. They sent DPS out there. But Durham, President Homer Durham, recognized that this was getting ugly and so he finally reached an agreement with us. But he did that really not to - not because of us, I mean, he - you know, they could've run the university from another building. I mean, he did it because he was beginning to really worry about - about, the DPS showing up, the police force are beginning, the threats that they were calling out the National Guard. He just began to feel that the - that the Legislature and the Governor were going to escalate this a point that people were gonna get hurt. So, we reached an agreement. But somebody had to pay for that. I mean, I was the public face.

ZDL Mm-hm.

AG And so it was - it was within a year that they forced me out.

ZDL And you were in your senior year?

AG That's right, that's right.

ZDL So because ASU had a new code of conduct...

AG Well they adopted it right after this because under the old code of conduct, they couldn't throw me out and so they adopted a new code of conduct, excepted my conduct that they found so reprehensible, it happened under the old code. So that's why I say they forced me out. They would pull me out of class, constant hearings, etc. And then they charged me again. There was an anti-war demonstration at the old main building. I was present. I wasn't organizing it. I wasn't leading it, etc., but I was present and so they then hauled me in and said I was responsible for taking over the building. So, within a year they forced me out.

ZDL But then, to go back to when you were trying to get the workers to join the union, they wouldn't sign the union card?

AG Yeah, you understand, we didn't want - we weren't working for the union. There was at least

two - these two motions sort of conflated. One was - there was a group of people, the laborers union who were trying to sign up laundries across the state. And then there was us who were really concerned that the university had this contract that was abusive. We were trying to break this contract or force the university to set conditions and inspections so that those wouldn't happen. And so that portion of it was very, very successful. The union effort in that laundry was not successful. It had been successful in others. Part of that problem is that these places paid minimum wage, if that, and so they had huge turnover. And, you know, trying to - to organize was virtually impossible.

ZDL So after you got kicked out in '68, you went to California the week that Bobby Kennedy was there.

AG That's right, that's right.

ZDL Or his campaign was there.

AG That's right.

ZDL And Cesar and Dolores were there, and you were celebrating in an overflow ballroom when disaster happened.

AG Yeah, it was at the old Ambassador Hotel and we'd been working, you know, going door to door and doing all of those things that we do, and there was Kennedy's celebration and it was upstairs in the big ballroom. And that's where all the muckety-mucks went, the important people went there. Cesar didn't attend. Uh, he was tired. He stayed, but Dolores was there, and Cesar's brother was there, and you know, many of the key leaders were upstairs. And it was absolutely jam packed. The overflow, those of us who weren't important people were downstairs, watching it on the large TVs of the time, which were tiny. You know, they had a number of them laid out. And, they had open bar and we were just there and that's - that's when it happened. That's when we saw it on television what was going on upstairs. And moments later, people began to run into this ballroom and moments later the - the police stopped anyone from leaving and, it was - it was a very tragic evening.

ZDL It had to be traumatic for you.

AG It was for everyone, I think. It was, I think it was traumatic for the United States. I mean, I don't think there's anybody around who's politically involved when that happened who wasn't moved by it. You know? It reached the heart of this country. And damaged...

AG Yes.

ZDL So at this point, you're out of ASU and you weren't receiving any funds from the GI bill, but something very positive happened to you. You were the recipient of the Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Fellowship.

AG Yeah, that was a year after that, the Kennedy family started the Robert F. Kennedy Foundation. As part of that, there was a memorial fellowship and there was about 25 or so selected across the country to be part of the memorial fellowship and I was one of those - one of those folks.

ZDL Did you apply for it or?

AG No, no. I - I just got a phone call one day and they said this guy wants to come and see you and this guy came to see me. He literally flew in and, you know, told me all about it, what the fellowship was about, etc. and so I accepted. I mean, you know. And so, I was in the...

ZDL And then where were you going - you had planned to go to graduate school or finish off your degree and then?

AG It was a very interesting thing that happened. I had - there was a professor at ASU, by the name of Robert Serbus. He had come to ASU from Amherst and he had written a number of papers and he was - he felt that I should go into educational philosophy. He was a strong advocate for that, and he had strong relationships with Amherst and with the University of Maine, where I guess he also taught at. And he worked out an agreement whereby if I accepted, I could go to Maine for one semester and then transfer to Amherst and get...

ZDL So finish up your degree in Maine?

AG That's right and get a Ford fellowship.

ZDL Okay.

AG And so I would get a Ford fellowship, full fellowship to go to a masters/Ph.D. program in educational philosophy.

ZDL While you were at ASU, you were studying a lot of Greek and Roman philosophy and...

AG Yeah, look, I was the most undisciplined student ever. I took whatever I was interested in at the time. I was never interested in what they now call the STEM fields. I was never interested in

science and technology, etc., engineering. But I was, you know, interested in linguistics and philosophy and history.

ZDL So then, you got involved with Joe Eddie Lopez and in his wife, Rosie, and the three of you started Chicanos Por La Causa.

AG That's right.

ZDL And this is '69.

AG Well, it was - it was about the time I got the fellowship. That freed me up to go do it. And Joe Eddie was at that time working full time. He was - we wanted to do this. We were working closely with the national council of La Raza which was in the Southwest Council of La Raza. We were working closely with them. We were trying to put that together and it made sense to start this organization.

ZDL And it is strong today.

AG Yeah, it's, you know, it's grown into a monstrosity. It's everywhere. But at that time, it was conceived as an advocacy organization, not a social service organization. It evolved into a social service organization.

ZDL When it began to be active, um, barrio residents got involved with it and they got restitution for families that were forced to move from Golden Gate.

AG That's right.

ZDL The city's oldest barrio. Would you - where was that, just specifically for the interview. Where was Golden Gate barrio located?

AG 16th Street, the - Buckeye north, that whole - it is now an industrial park, but that whole industrial park was a neighborhood that went all the way to 24th Street and...

ZDL 16th to 24th?

AG Yep. And then there was neighborhood south of Buckeye, much smaller neighborhood, it was considered part of Golden Gate, but still was a large community.

ZDL Where did those people move?

AG Almost all of them went to Maryvale and the West Side. The city moved, you know, each individual got the right to make a choice, but they had limited funds, so that became the place of choice for most of them and so almost an entire community moved there. Some moved to the South Side, but most ended up in the Maryvale area, Maryvale and west.

ZDL But they did get some help to do that.

AG Yes, they got - they had enough money to buy a house, a modest house, but enough money to buy a house and they - the amount of money for the move itself. I don't remember the amounts any longer, but they - we considered it a victory. From zero it was a victory.

ZDL Then next you organized a two-week walk out of Phoenix Union High School.

AG Well, I was part of it, yeah, absolutely. I was the principal of the school. Let me explain. We organized the walkout, but we didn't - we thought it was irresponsible to just put these kids in the street. So, we went to Immaculate Heart, the parish.

ZDL Which is on Washington.

AG That's right. Had just closed the school. It had closed its parochial school, but the facility was still there, the classrooms, etc. And so, we organized volunteer teachers, organized volunteer activities for young people, etc. and so the walkout went to - so these kids were never in the street. They had math teachers and English teachers and whatever they were in. There were music classes, and there were performances, and there was a - we tried to organize a theater program. We didn't have enough time to do it, but we got a little bit.

ZDL But you need to explain why you were having this walkout.

AG Well, the reason for the walkout was Phoenix Union had deteriorated to the point where there was random violence in the school. Parents were very concerned about that. On top of that, we were very concerned about the quality of education. I mean, it - Phoenix Union - from being the pride of the high school system in Phoenix had deteriorated into being the embarrassment of it. It had become a completely minority school and there was very little interest in it. There was very little investment in it, even in the physical plant.

And so, Joe Eddie had been the lead, negotiating with the school board and with the superintendent, for major changes at Phoenix Union. And they simply balked at everything. And so, I spent a little bit of time looking at their budget and realized how it worked. And this is important. How it works is, the amount of state aid they were going to get was based upon the

average daily attendance which was counted at certain points. On the 40th day, for example, that day was very important and so, the goal was to force them economically to make some of these changes. And so, the walkout was to bring the aid, the average daily attendance down to where it would impact the district and to threaten to do that periodically...

ZDL And on the days that they counted for the aid.

AG That's right. That's right. To threaten to do that. It was effective. It caused an uproar in the Legislature and they changed the law to say that you - if there was - I'm not sure how they worded it, but the impact of the law was that you couldn't organize to get the kids out to lower the state aid.

ZDL But did they - but did they change it, so it wasn't those particular days?

AG Yes. Yeah, and it didn't impact us. I mean, they changed it for the future. We were able to - to force some of the changes that we were looking for.

ZDL Good. What about Southwest Council of La Raza?

AG Well, excuse me, Southwest was started by a group of what would have been considered at that time radical Latino leaders. Principle among them was when Mine Mill and Steelworkers finally merged, the head of the union in the southwest became a major, major figure in the Latino community, in the Mexican community, his name was Maclovio Barraza. Maclovio had been hauled before the various committees in Washington and accused of being a communist, etc. I mean, he was quite an activist. He was the force in forming Southwest, but he brought together, you know, union radicals from the United Auto Workers. He brought some of the best-known Latino leaders to form it - it was as activist and as radical as we - as the Latino community, as the Mexican community had ever formed any organization.

And he duplicated it. That is, he formed chapters in Los Angeles, in San Antonio, in Albuquerque. So, he duplicated throughout the Southwest. It became a powerful force, so powerful that the Nixon administration wanted it shut down and succeeded, succeeded in shutting it down. That's what formed - that was what - what happened then is a transition from this radical organization to the sort of friendly social service national council. One of the major funders for Southwest had been the Ford Foundation.

And the Ford Foundation, under pressure from the Nixon administration, laid down the rules. The board had to change, and they had to find an executive director that was acceptable to them. And so, they brought in a guy named Raul Yzaguirre who was its leader, the National Council's (of La Raza) leader for the next 15, 20 years. But it also was the period of time where they, you

know, became nice and, you know, all of the radicalism of the founders was all gone.

ZDL Those rough edges were down.

AG Yeah, it was - and it became primarily a social service agency.

ZDL Well, then you founded or helped in organizing Valle del Sol.

AG That's right. That's right.

ZDL That's also still active.

AG That's very active still and has so - really remained true to its mission.

ZDL And that's more in the social...

AG Well, it - remember it was - things come back. Things go in circles. At that time, heroin was a growing problem in our community and heroin addicts were treated as criminals, not as sick people the way opioid people are today. These were - so it was a very serious problem. And it was growing at an epidemic level. So, part of what Valle del Sol did was to form the largest methadone program in the State. We're the largest in the country. So with that, counseling, group therapy, etc., so that we attacked that problem head on. How it was impacting the Mexican community. That was part of its major - the other part of its major issue was leadership. We perceived that there are a lot of kids in high school who had a heck of a lot of talent. We had a lot of young people in college with a heck of a lot of talent. The real problem here was - I shouldn't use the word ambition, but I should say that people felt constrained, Mexican students felt constrained. They felt they couldn't ever be the president of the bank. They could work there. They felt they couldn't ever run for governor. They could go somewhere, you know, they could fit some - but they felt constrained from being able to fully participate. So, part of that was leadership, was trying to form ways of trying to bring young people together. And that has evolved over time, but the Hispanic leadership to Valle del Sol is still in place and has produced some - just some extraordinary people, you know, who are part of the institute's ongoing - it's much easier today than it was then because then it was pretty hard to find really powerful, successful Latinos. But now it's not. Now it's not, but these people meet with young people to talk about how they did it, what you have to do, what it takes to get through college, what it takes, and so it has had a great impact. So that's still there and it has evolved. You know, they're very involved with the undocumented today. That wasn't the case years ago. So, it's evolved. It's still there and still doing - and it's growing. It just opened up offices in New Mexico.

ZDL Okay, and in '64, Lyndon Johnson was President, and he started the war on poverty. And you

believed that you and he had - or maybe his program had, different opinions. You think poverty could be resolved with jobs and there was a trend among social scientists at the time that poverty was caused by lack of character.

AG That's right.

ZDL Which is a huge difference.

AG Well, and they tried to compromise it, the issue of character was best and most famously defined by Daniel Patrick Moynihan in a major research and study paper he did on behalf of the administration, which focused on the breakdown of the family. He focused on African Americans and not on Mexican Americans or poor white people. He focused on African Americans, which I think was, in retrospect, sort of racially motivated. I mean, to this day, the majority of people on food stamps, for example, are white. Not even half black, you know. To this day. So then it was even - that's skewed even more so, but nonetheless, he focused on - and he defined, and he generalized from that to larger society, but he defined the breakdown of the African American family as the cause of poverty and so what you had to do was focus in a sense on the kind of social services and not try to intervene or help people. He defined it as - he called it benign neglect. That was what had to happen was benign neglect.

There was a whole different way of thinking that was being pushed at the time by Robert Kennedy and another set of social scientists who didn't completely reject Daniel Patrick Moynihan's point of view but felt strongly that it was insufficient. That, you know this was, just wasn't enough. This wasn't the way to do things. But at the time, and I used that figure then and I use it now, at the time, before the Internet, you know, the Post Office was powerful. It was a huge employer. It was powerful. And if you just added a mail delivery five days a week, one in the afternoon, that would be 50,000 jobs and it would be a lot cheaper than the war on poverty and everybody else. 50,000 jobs just doing that.

ZDL Could you ever get traction with that?

AG No. No, no, no. The social scientists won out; you know. They perceived poverty as a malady of the person, as a character flaw, and as a cultural character flaw. That is, all the people in this group share this culture character flaw and so they can't overcome it without, you know, social work.

ZDL Do you think anything that President Johnson did while he was in office assisted Mexican Americans?

AG Oh hell yeah. I mean, just - I mean, Medicare, you know? Medicare, I mean, Medicare has

changed the life of every- I mean, people get old and now they get old and know they can - they have access to health care. Prior to Medicare, you got old and you died. I mean, how you gonna do it? If you were low income? And even if you are middle income, you were going to be poor soon because you get sick as you get older, so it was - it's just Medicare alone made such an incredibly and huge difference. Johnson signed and pushed what is known as the 1965 Immigration Act, also known as the Hart-Celler Immigration Act. That immigration act got rid of the quota system that favored Northern Europe. I mean, it got rid of it and set up a system that has changed the face of this country. Now some people, like Trump and like Miller, his assistant and like, you know, the KKK and everybody else, attribute that moment to the demise of America. Because at that moment, you set up a situation where people from Asia, which had been banned, the Chinese Exclusion Act had been in place for 50 years. Today we walk outside, and we see Asians everywhere, Asian restaurants everywhere, that came about since 1965. But it's also true that's when people from India started coming. It's also true that's when people from Latin America started coming legally and the numbers of legal immigrants to this country from Latin America, Mexicans alone is somewhere around 30 million, started to take place. It changed the face of this country. And some people will argue because it made it darker, if you will, that's terrible. But the people who - I mean, you can just go down the list, the people behind Apple were immigrants. The people behind Google were immigrants. The people - I mean, immigrants have changed this country for the better economically, but you'll never convince David Duke, Donald Trump and a few other people of that. Russell Pearce, you'll never convince them of that. They believe that that was the demise of this country and I believe that was the flowering, the blossoming, the great expansion economically of this country was because of Lyndon Johnson.

ZDL But you are all about inclusiveness.

AG Well, I'm all about inclusiveness in the sense that even the word kind of offends me because inclusiveness is just that - that somehow, I have to take an affirmative act to like you because you're white. And I don't think I have to take an affirmative act to like you. If you're a nice person, I like you. And if you're - if you're a jerk, I don't.

ZDL I didn't mean to offend you.

AG No, but the term inclusiveness, has inherent in it that notion that I am going to include you. I'm doing you a goddamn favor by including you. What the - that's sort of - people don't recognize sometimes that the language that they use is sometimes coded to, you know, sort of hide motivations. Inclusiveness is one of those terms. You know, we believe in inclusiveness. Well why not? I mean, what the hell? What's the matter with you that you have to say I believe in inclusiveness? That you can't say I believe that if you can do the job, let's do the job. If we can, you know?

ZDL Well, okay. President Nixon took office in '69 and the Office of Economic Opportunity was repealed. And that caused some difficulties, didn't it? Because community organizing...

AG No. No.

ZDL No?

AG I don't think so. The Office of Economic Opportunity was in large part the sort of outreach effort of Moynihan's philosophy. We're gonna go out there and we're gonna give you economic opportunity. We're not gonna give you a job, we're gonna give you economic opportunity. We're going to meet with you and try and counsel you and that sort of stuff. Now, I don't - I think that was a blip, in terms of...

ZDL The effect of what happened?

AG Yeah.

ZDL The Arizona State Legislature passed a bill prohibiting strikes during the harvest season and boycotts of agricultural products.

AG Yeah.

ZDL And so Jack Williams signed the bill shortly after it was passed and so that's when Cesar decided he would begin fasting.

AG That's right.

ZDL And that impacted you.

AG Well, first the impact is that, damn Cesar, took my office. He decided that he was going to fast in my office. And Father _____, because my office was part of the Sacred Heart parish, Father _____ let him do it without talking to me. But that, yeah, I mean, starting the movement to recall Jack Williams became very popular amongst activists, but a lot of us thought it was just a mistake. I mean, remember there was two-year terms for Governor. Jack wasn't running again. What was the point of going through that if we were going to, you know, have somebody run? I mean, it just - it was...

ZDL Pointless?

AG Well, and an act of anger, an act - emotional act. Yeah, but it was pointless and not enough thoughtfulness involved. The anger overcame Cesar and the Union, Dolores. And the reason for the anger - we all knew the bill was gonna pass. I mean, there was nothing mysterious about that. The bill was gonna pass. And we all believed Jack - Jack Williams was going to sign it. There was nothing new about that. But the union and specifically Cesar had asked for a meeting with Jack Williams before he signed it. The bill passed, everyone thought that Cesar was going to go up to see Jack. Jack Williams signed it, about 30 or 40 minutes after it passed. So, when the news of it came, people were outraged that he'd signed it so quickly without this - this understanding. Now I wasn't involved in the understanding. So, I don't know whether there was a promise made for a meeting or not. But there was - there seemed to be an understanding amongst union leadership that he was supposed to meet with Jack. So, Jack - I don't know if you ever met Jack Williams, he's a...

ZDL I didn't.

AG Just a pleasant, decent guy, who obviously had a different political point of view than mine, but just a charming old guy. But Jack instantly became the devil, you know? So, it was, and he got the term one-eyed Jack. He had a shaded eye or a shaded spectacle over his eye. But it never came about. The attorney general successfully banned and blocked it from coming about, the recall. The attorney general was then named a judge. He had gratitude I guess, but that's about the time the law changed. We had to elect judges and anyone who was in office had to run on a yes/no, you know, do we keep him or not. And so, the effort was made to get Gary Nelson, the attorney general, and he was thrown out of office. So, he's the guy who paid the price because there wasn't a recall.

ZDL So about this time, you sort of made a U-turn. You're about to go off to school.

AG Yeah.

ZDL And you and Joe Eddie start talking about the political situation in Arizona.

AG Yeah, Joe Eddie had run for the school board and we lost. But we learned a lot. I think about voter registration, campaigns, getting out the vote. I mean, we became - it was a - almost a training campaign. So, Joe Eddie announced he was running for the Board of Supervisors, um, and I can't remember, but I believe there were three or four other candidates running and, uh, there was the potential for great division within the Hispanic community. My legislative district, or what was to become my legislative district, was wholly in Joe Eddie's supervisory district and in the most densely populated part. So, I ran for the State Senate, with the idea of applying all the things we've learned about going door to door, about voter registration, about how to get people to the polls, ...

ZDL Being a community organizer.

AG That's right. And the whole goal was to pull the road up and elect Joe Eddie. I was running against a ten-year incumbent, um...

ZDL Clovis Campbell.

AG Clovis Campbell. And it was - it was a plurality African American district. It wasn't a majority, but it was a great plurality. Um, so it was widely assumed I wasn't gonna win. Um, but we did. I mean, you know?

ZDL By 76 votes.

AG 76 votes. 76 votes, Clovis was declared the victor that night, and election night, and for the next couple of days, it was just assumed he had won. And when it finally did - the final count, that usually happens a week after, absentees and all, I had won by 76 votes.

ZDL So, you came into the State Legislature when things were really changing...

AG That's right.

ZDL ...because Arizona before the '60s - before '66 actually, the State had no finance department. It had - and lobbyists were expected to draft bills. That must've been very interesting but, it took a long time to get things straightened out. And when it did change from the rural control of the Legislature to the urban control, Maricopa County had 50% and Pima County had 20% of the representation in the Senate. So, it - it drastically changed what was happening.

AG It changed it literally, dramatically, overnight. It had been a very conservative rural legislature. Um, very powerful legislature. The executive branch was, uh, had little power - little authority. Example of that, was there was no health department, but there was a health commission so the Governor could name commissioners, but they had to be approved by the Senate, which was controlled by rurals, which meant it had to be majority rule. The Department of Transportation didn't exist, but you had the old Highway Department, so you had the highway commission and the same thing was true. And so, on it went. I mean, you didn't have a Department of Economic Security, but you had a Welfare Commission which was the Governor could appoint, but the Legislature controlled it, so they had to be rural. And on it went. And certainly, there was no - and there was a Board of Regents, same thing. They had to be rural. There was almost no investment in universities. There was almost - there was no equalization in education. All of that instantly changed. I mean, there - we got there, Democrats and Republicans, with - with a - there was just this pent-up energy to get this straightened out, which is...

ZDL And you were lucky because Burton Barr came in.

AG That's right. Burt had gotten elected in about '66, '68, I think. So, he'd been there and became Republican majority leader the term before I got there. And Burt and I sort of, in the first year, to the chagrin of the Republican majority, Burt would come over to the Senate and walk in and sit down in my office and we'd talk. And he'd - and you know, he wouldn't stop by the president's office or the majority leader's office, he'd come and see me. It would really irritate people. You know, it'd just really irritate people. But Burt and I became - we argued constantly. We didn't have the same political point of view, necessarily, but we had the same love of the State and the same vision for modernizing both State government and the State itself. We understood we had to do that and so we might argue about the degree to which, you know, we did X, Y or Z, but we did that. We had the shared vision.

ZDL And you went through several governors, but when you got to Babbitt, then the three of you...

AG That's right. Babbitt shared that vision and remember, we had been creating a powerful executive since 1972 and we continued to do so while Babbitt was Governor and so we succeeded in creating an executive branch, rather than a legislative branch that stole executive authority, which is what existed before. So, we succeeded in creating three branches of government. That didn't exist before. Um, but we also succeeded in taking on some of the major issues of the State, whether it was water, -water was a huge issue, the whole issue of social services for the poor, the incredible investment that was made in the three universities during that period of time so that they would become what they are today, nationally known, nationally competitive. U of A is considered one of the top ten public institutions in this country and ASU will soon get - arrive at that distinction. It began much later to move towards that, but it's moving at alarming speed towards that. All of that began during that era.

ZDL Well, I think we have to wrap this up...

AG Very good.

ZDL ...but you served for 14 years, then you left the State Senate, and you started a political consulting company with Bill Jameson?

AG That's right.

ZDL Who had been in the Department of Economic Security under Bruce Babbitt.

AG He was Babbitt's kind of fix it man. He was Department of Administration, Department of

Alfredo Gutierrez Historymakers Oral History Transcript

Economic Security, uh, the head of AHCCCS, anywhere there was great controversy and administrative scandal Bill was in to clean it up. Um, a brilliant guy, brilliant, brilliant guy and we - we were very successful, you know, very, very successful.

ZDL You were often referred to as the top political consulting firm in the State.

AG I think we were. I think we were, and we operated nationally. Yeah, I - I think there's little doubt that during the time that we were - we were moving, we were in place, uh, we had the outstanding - outstanding staff, outstanding people and, uh, and the kinds of clients that all our competitors wanted, you know, we - we had the major clients and we excluded other clients. I mean, we wouldn't represent some folks, APS for example. But we would represent, you know, those that we - we were very selective, and we had a rule, Bill and I, that we didn't have to explain to each other. If either of us said no, we're not taking that client, we didn't take that client and we didn't have to explain. I mean, there were - and we honored it. We honored it all those years.

ZDL Well I think we have to conclude and thank you very much.

AG Thank you. You know more about me than almost anybody in town.

End of Interview
/gmc