

Carmina Fernandez Young

Statistician and Workplace Innovator



Counterparts, 7 April 1972

The U.S. Census Bureau continually strives to ensure an accurate count of the people of the United States. For this reason, it has always embraced the hiring of a diverse workforce that is representative of the local communities. In the middle of the 19th century, the United States expanded west into areas formerly governed by Spain and Mexico. Since many of the citizens and local officials only spoke Spanish, the Census Office quickly realized that it needed to employ workers fluent in the language. The establishment of a permanent Census Bureau in 1903 and increased immigration from Cuba and Central and South America expanded the need for Spanish-speaking employees both in the field and at headquarters.

Carmina Fernandez was born on January 2, 1928, in San Juan, Puerto Rico. Carmina's father, Marcelino, worked as a grocer and merchant, while her mother, Maria Cruz, looked after Carmina and her two older sisters. Carmina graduated high school early and then attended the University of Puerto Rico in Rio Piedras where she received her bachelor's degree in 1947. Carmina taught in the University of Puerto Rico system before moving to Ann Arbor, Michigan, where she attended the University of Michigan. After graduating in 1950 with a master's degree in mathematics, Carmina returned to Puerto Rico where she found a job as a statistician in the Puerto Rican Department of Agriculture.



FORMA 100-S DEPARTAMENTO DE COMERCIO DE LOS ESTADOS UNIDOS
PB-MC NEGOCIADO DEL CENSO

CENSO DE MANUFACTURAS—1954
PUERTO RICO

PARA USO DE LA OFICINA

Plant number	Municipality	City or rural	Industry	T. E.	V. A.	3/0	4/0	T. S.
a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i

1954 Puerto Rican Census of Manufacturers survey

In 1953, Carmina transferred to the Puerto Rican Planning Board, Bureau of Economics and Statistics, where she served as chief of Machine Tabulation Systems. In this role, Carmina participated in the 1954 Economic Census of Puerto Rico, during which she collaborated with the U.S. Census Bureau for the first time. That collaboration expanded in 1958 during the preparations for the 1960 Census, when Carmina received an assignment to the Housing Division of the Census Bureau. In support of the 1960 Census, Carmina worked with the Field, Population, and Housing Divisions, as well as the Puerto Rico

Planning Board, to help develop the translation, training, tabulation and testing of census materials, techniques, and people.



Donald and Carmina Young, June 8, 1960
(photo courtesy of the Young Family)

As part of her preparation for the 1960 Census, Carmina attended training in New York where she met her future husband, fellow census employee Donald E. Young. The couple married on June 8, 1960. Soon after, the Census Bureau assigned Donald to the Philippines, where the couple stayed for almost two years. While in the Philippines, Donald assisted with the 1961 Philippine Economic Census. Also during this time, Carmina stepped away from her career in order to raise their two children.

In 1968, Carmina returned to the Census Bureau as a survey statistician and worked in several divisions and offices throughout the remainder of her career—including the Decennial and Housing Divisions, the Director’s Office, and the International Statistics Program (ISP) Center. For the 1980 Census, Carmina served as chief of the Outlying Areas Branch, which included territories such as American Samoa and Guam. In 1985, Carmina received the Department of Commerce’s Bronze Medal Award for superior service.

Carmina contributed more than her statistical acumen to the Census Bureau. She was able to use her language skills by spearheading the Spanish translation of reports at the ISP. With the support of the Census Bureau, she also leveraged her interests to found the Spanish Club in 1971. The club enabled employees to have informal Spanish conversations in a welcoming environment. These meetings were open to both native and second-language Spanish speakers. The Spanish Club promoted cultural activities such as meals and dances to help spread their appreciation of Hispanic culture, while also providing entertainment.



CELEBRATE SPANISH STYLE—The Census Bureau Spanish Club, and other interested SESAITes, are invited to a gala Latin American Dance on April 21. The gettogether, \$4 per person, is sponsored by one of the major Spanish clubs of the greater Washington area. If you'd like to go, please contact Richard Washington (FTD), ext. 35150, before April 15. Photo above shows the Census Spanish Club at a recent luncheon meeting in the FOB 3 cafeteria.

From l.: Ernesto Monti (ISPC), Carmina Young (ISPC), Ellie Boyer (BUS), Lupe Saldana (PERS), Ellen Jamison (ISPC), Bill O'Leary (ISPC), Bill Duncan (ISPC), Richard Washington, Instructor (FTD), Laura Hernandez (POP), Jeanne Griffith (ISPC), Eddie Wilner (ISPC), Isa Saez (POP), Emma Moreno (DIRS), Angel Landron (DCS), Hector Villa (AGR), Jesse Rodriguez (NOAA).

In addition to the Spanish Club, Carmina helped create a Census Bureau child care facility. Whereas Carmina had to take years away from her career to raise her young children, the development of a child care facility would enable women to take less time away from work when raising young children. She joined the child care board of directors in 1986. By 1988, the board had opened the Census Bureau Child Care Center in an old elementary school just a few blocks from the Census Bureau headquarters.



Members of the child care Board of Directors have been working diligently on plans for the Census day care facility. Seated left to right: Vicki Huggins, Jamie Rosenson, Flo R. Alexander and Nelsa Downs Brown. Standing left to right, are Jose M. Talavera-Toso III, John Keane, Census director, Carmina Young and Elizabeth Ann Vacca.

Carmina (back row, second from left) with the child care board of directors

Counterparts, July 1986

In 1992, after over three decades of service, Carmina retired from the Census Bureau. In addition to her work at the Census Bureau, Carmina devoted her time to community activities such as the Girl Scouts of America and her local church. She was also a member of the American Statistical Association, the Puerto Rican Association of Economy, and the International Association of Survey Statisticians. Carmina passed away on December 19, 2016 in Temple Hills, Maryland. The Census Bureau is thankful for Carmina’s many contributions not only to the mission, but also to her efforts to improve the work environment for all employees.