

Pauline Gasca Valenciano

Identifying Problems and Improving the Census



Pauline during a 2015 interview.

Enriquez, Sandra; Robles, David & Krochmal, Max. Oral History Interview with Pauline Gasca-Valenciano, June 10, 2015, video; University of North Texas Libraries, The Portal to Texas History, texashistory.unt.edu; crediting TCU Mary Coats Burnett Library.

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 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 the Caribbean, Central and South America expanded the need for Spanish-speaking employees both in the field and at headquarters. These changes, as with many significant changes to the census, encountered difficulties and debate, however thanks to the diversity of the Census Bureau workforce, some of the greatest

impetus for improvement came from within our own ranks.

Pauline Gasca was born on December 19, 1936, in Fort Worth, Texas. Pauline and her family lived in a *barrio* next to the Texas Steel Company where her father, Jose, worked, while her mother, Nicolasa, raised Pauline and her eight siblings. Pauline credits her parents as role models for their activism in the community, including helping to organize their local Catholic Church. Although Pauline encountered segregation at school and never continued beyond elementary school, she remembered a 5th grade trip to see President Harry S. Truman that inspired her love of politics. Pauline said she had seen every president that visited Fort Worth since that trip, including shaking John F. Kennedy's

A scan of a 1940 U.S. Census form, specifically the 'POPULATION SCHEDULE' for household number 100. The form is filled with handwritten entries for Pauline Gasca Valenciano and her family. The text on the form reads: 'Historic census records are maintained and released by the National Archives and Records Administration, not the U.S. Census Bureau. Visit <http://www.archives.gov> for more information about publicly available records like the one shown here.'

Pauline and her family's 1940 Census.

hand just hours before his assassination in 1963. Pauline joined the *Viva Kennedy* campaign in one of her first forays into volunteering and community service, and she also participated in the War on Poverty's Community Action Agencies (CAA), the GI Forum, and the Red Cross.

In December of 1953, Pauline married Joe Angel Franco Valenciano, and they had four daughters. Joe joined the U.S. Army in 1962, and shared Pauline's passion for activism. Together they helped found the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) branch in Marlin, TX. Unfortunately, Joe was wounded in Vietnam in 1968 and passed away from his injuries on July 14, 1970.



Pauline proudly displaying a picture of her with Cesar Chavez from 1969.

Nuestra Voz de North Texas, June/July 2018, Volume 4, Issue 54.



Pauline addressed Census Bureau Director Louis Kincannon at a LULAC conference in 1989. She brought up her own experiences and suggestions to improve outreach and surveying for Hispanics. C-SPAN, 1990 Census: Future of Hispanic America (July 8, 1989).

After her husband's death, Pauline delved even deeper into her activism. She continued working as a social worker for the CAA, picketed grocery stores for farm workers' rights, and volunteered with her local church. Pauline worked intensively to register voters, which involved going door to door collecting information. This gave her the perfect skill set to work for the Census Bureau.

Pauline worked in different capacities on several censuses, mostly as a community supporter. However, her most famous census experience came in 1989, when she worked in the Fort Worth District of the Dallas Regional Office as a field representative on preparations for the 1990 Census. Pauline noticed that due, in part, to

a lack of language ability, many census employees had a hard time counting the local Hispanic population. Although Pauline brought up those concerns to her immediate supervisor and pushed hard for reforms, her position was eliminated and she was unable to effect the changes. During the annual LULAC conference in July 1990, she had a chance to bring the same issues directly to the attention of Census Bureau Deputy Director and temporary Acting Director C. Louis Kincannon on live television. Kincannon immediately assigned someone from the field division to work with Pauline to address these issues. When Kincannon served as director during development of the 2010 Census, he focused on hiring census employees with diverse ethnic, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds. He specifically focused on avoiding undercounts and controversies in impoverished urban neighborhoods by hiring compatible census takers, even when this required waiving predetermined qualifications, and successfully avoided problems that had weakened previous census counts.



Pauline with former Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives, Jim Wright. Star-Telegram (Ft. Worth, TX), June 13, 2018.

Later, Pauline proudly stated that she never saw the jobs from which she was fired as setbacks, but rather as opportunities to move on to bigger and better things. She continued working on a broad range of issues confronting her community and served as a local official in positions like precinct chair, election judge, and on the neighborhood advisory committee. Pauline also celebrated her culture and heritage, something she attributed to her childhood experiences and trips to Mexico with her father. She helped organize and volunteered for celebrations of Hispanic and Chicano culture like remembrances of Cesar Chavez and the 16 de Septiembre Mexican Independence Day Parade.

Councilmember Espino and City staff then identified potential CCC members based on their knowledge, involvement and influence in the Fort Worth community. The final CCC membership included community volunteers and representatives from business associations, faith-based associations, educational organizations and governmental organizations.

Jesse Aguilera	Mayor's Advisory Commission on Homelessness
Louise Appleman	Tarrant County College
Jeff Baker	Keller ISD
Patricia Bostic	U.S. Congressman Michael C. Burgess
Hector Carrillo	LULAC, District XXI
Cindy Crain	Tarrant County Homeless Coalition
Dorie Cranshaw	Tarrant County League of Women Voters
Reverend Nehemiah Davis	NAACP
Senator Wendy Davis	Texas State Senator Wendy Davis
Joseph DeLeon	Texas Health Fort Worth (Emily Amps)
David Dubois	Fort Worth Convention and Visitors Bureau
Dorothy Dubose	Como Neighborhood Advisory Council
Councilmember Sal Espino, Chair	Fort Worth City Council
Abby Gamboa	Near Northside Partners Council
Freddie Garcia	El Informador Hispano
Pauline Gasca-Valencianno	Las Mujeres De LULAC (Council 4827)

In 2010, Pauline served on Fort Worth's Complete Count Committee to help ensure community awareness of the importance of the census. More completed censuses meant more funding and representation, which Pauline realized meant better opportunities. Throughout her life, Pauline received several awards and recognitions, including from the Texas Legislature, the National Association of Human Rights, the Tarrant County Democratic Woman's Club, and LULAC. A fighter and activist until the very end, Pauline passed away on June 5, 2018. The Census Bureau is thankful for Pauline's contributions, and of the contributions of all the members of our diverse workforce throughout the years.

Pauline (last) listed on the 2010 Fort Worth Complete Count Committee as a representative for LULAC.

Fisseler, Dale, Ft. Worth City Manager, *Informal Report to City Council Members No. 9282: Fort Worth Complete Count Committee*, July 27, 2010.