



Edelmira Lopez

(1922 - 2017)

Inducted: 2011 *Era: Contemporary* *Locale: Lansing* *Group: Hispanic*
Area(s) of Achievement: Community Service, Folk Life

Lopez creates venues for the Latino community to celebrate their heritage and to increase the awareness and appreciation of Hispanic culture for Michigan citizens. In 1961, after seeing a need for religious services in Spanish, Lopez helped found the Cristo Rey Church in Lansing. Later, Lopez worked as a founder of the Cristo Rey Community Center in Lansing to help see to the social needs of the community. She served as the chair of the Board of Directors for the Center for over 20 years. Through her work, thousands of Michigan citizens continue to receive direct assistance with housing, food, healthcare, senior services, legal services, job training, counseling, and more.

In addition, Lopez worked on the local team of the United Farm Workers, taking part in activities that supported the rights of farm workers in this state and country. She played an integral part in Cesar Chavez's visits to the Lansing area by arranging and promoting events for Chavez and his team.

As the first female president of the Lansing Mexican Patriotic Committee, and president of the Hispanic Cultural Center, she organized many cultural events. In 1973, Lopez became the first Latina on the City of Lansing Housing Commission. She served the Commission for 25 years, 16 of them as chairperson. Her community work has been recognized in newspaper and magazine articles, television programs, government proclamations and awards, including the YWCA Diana Award in 2003. Lopez's courage, tenacity and dedication overcame racism and sexism making her a voice for the underprivileged and a catalyst for the betterment of her community.