

## Bertha Del Avellano de Cardenas

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Bertha del Avellano is a person who was born for public service, and has dedicated most of her life to helping many causes and the people in her community.

Since a very young age, she showed signs of being a strong and charismatic leader. At age 19, she married Enrique Cárdenas González, who had political aspirations and accomplished his goals when in 1975 he became Governor of his native state of Tamaulipas, Mexico. As the wife of a head of State, Mrs. Cardenas did her part by leading several public service projects entirely focused in helping the less fortunate economically.

During her husband's six year term as Governor, she was in charge of the DIF (Desarrollo Integral de la Familia), a state organized social services unit primarily focused in helping mothers and children of lower income families. She implemented various health and educational programs specifically designed to improve the lives of women primarily in rural areas. Beforehand, while her husband was mayor of Ciudad Victoria, the state capital, she was head of the same organization on a municipal level.

At every level of her husband's political career, she was not only by his side, but also taking charge of the social aspect of political life, as well as public service while he was a State Senator and then Secretary of Hacienda (Mexico's Internal Revenue Service). She participated in many public service programs, volunteering her time and touching the lives of the people she came in contact with.

With the support of her husband, Mrs. Cardenas founded several organizations and spearheaded community social programs, such as basic medical training to women in rural areas, support groups for the elderly as well as for abused wives and children, provided farming and gardening training for rural women, and built schools, daycare centers and funeral homes throughout her state that would benefit people in lower income communities.

For six years, Bertha also headed the volunteer organization of the Red Cross in the state of Tamaulipas, and then continued to do so at the municipal level. She is currently Honorary President of the Red Cross at the state level and actively participates in fund raising programs.

She is currently President of the Comitee of the Foundation of our Capital City of the State of Tamaulipas, council member of the "Apostolado de la Cruz", President of Friends of the Museum Association and an active member of the local council of the Red Cross.

Mrs. Cardenas is respected and admired throughout the state of Tamaulipas, but more importantly, she is recognized for her extensive accomplishments in public service and countless efforts to always improve the life of others.

Some of the programs implemented by Mrs. Bertha del Avellano during her years in public service included:

- ❖ **VOLUNTEER PROGRAM:** Promoted and spearheaded a group of volunteers formed by wives of elected officials as well as women from different community backgrounds. This group was a key factor in the successful implementation of several social, charitable and humanitarian programs under her direction.
- ❖ **PROCTORSHIP OF MINORS AND FAMILIES:** This program included the opening of a juvenile rehabilitation center, providing troubled teens and their families with counseling and a comprehensive education and skill development programs that facilitated their process of reintegration with society.
- ❖ **ORPHANAGE (Casa Hogar):** Supported by a group of catholic nuns, it provided shelter and schooling to abused or abandoned children as well as children of imprisoned women.
- ❖ **FARMING EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS:** Providing rural low income families with the essential skills and resources that helped them achieve self sustainability.
- ❖ **ANNUAL HEALTH CAMPAIGNS:** With the support of small clinics and local hospitals, as well as the help from a group of volunteer doctors, nurses, and nutritionists, these campaigns were carried throughout the state of Tamaulipas primarily in rural areas, and provided much needed medical attention, vaccinations, medicine, minor surgeries, dental services, lab tests and basic hygiene and family planning education to low income families.
- ❖ **NURSING HOME:** Completely remodeled and improved the local nursing home and implemented programs that provided counseling, basic medical care, and promoted social and cultural activities that improved the quality of life of elders.
- ❖ **FUNERAL HOMES:** During her administration, several funeral homes were built in different cities and areas allowing low income families the possibility to provide proper funeral and burial services to family members.
- ❖ **MEXICAN RED CROSS:** In 1975, Mrs. Cardenas was named Honorary President of the State Delegation of the Red Cross, and for several years coordinated and organized annual fund raising drives at the state level, involving not only citizens of Tamaulipas but the public sector as well. She continues to be an active member of the Local Red Cross Council.
- ❖ **DIF WAREHOUSES:** Mrs. Cardenas spearheaded donation drives, managed the warehouses that distributed canned food, supplies and clothing to victims of natural disasters and was personally involved, in coordination with the Mexican Army, in the distribution of emergency food and supplies to flood victims in Tamaulipas.

