

# HISPANIC-LATINO HERITAGE MONTH 2011

## LINDA CHAVEZ-THOMPSON

**“A LEADER IS A DEALER IN HOPE.” — NAPOLEON BONAPARTE**

Born to sharecropper parents in Lubbock, Texas, Chavez-Thompson by age 10 was already at work in the cotton fields during the summer months to help support her family. By age 16, she had to drop out of school completely to continue that support. But she didn't let her family's circumstances prevent her from pursuing her goals. In fact, it was these early events in her life that formed her passion for working to improve the lives of others.



<http://bit.ly/qzSQVQ>

By the age of 23, she had become a staff secretary of the Construction Laborer's Local, and when a tornado struck Lubbock later that year, she volunteered to coordinate the state's AFL-CIO relief efforts. This work led to her becoming a staff organizer for the North Texas Laborers District Council. After her first organizing efforts helping Lubbock city workers for a union, she realized she could make the most difference working in the public sector. From there, she became an international representative for the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees, a job that ultimately led her back to the AFL-CIO.

Chavez-Thompson became the first Hispanic woman elected to the AFL-CIO's executive council in 1993. Much of her time was spent on the road acting as the public face of the organization. She participated in their electoral efforts in 1996 federal elections, and helped with the federation's 1996 push for America Needs a Raise, a call to increase the minimum wage.

Throughout those years, she has served in several non-labor positions, as well: a San Antonio, Texas, delegate pledged to 1988 Democratic presidential candidate Michael Dukakis; a Democratic delegate pledged to Bill Clinton; a vice-chair of the Democratic National Committee; a member of the Advisory Board to President Clinton's One America Initiative; and a vice-chair of the 52nd Presidential Inaugural Committee. She retired from the AFL-CIO in 2007.



<http://bit.ly/cz9OUC>

**“MANAGEMENT IS DOING THINGS RIGHT; LEADERSHIP IS DOING THE RIGHT THINGS.”**

**— PETER F. DRUCKER**