

PROFILES OF SUCCESS HONORS
MRS. HILDA ORTEGA-ROSALES

HON. ED PASTOR

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 6, 1999

Mr. PASTOR. I rise before you and my colleagues today to ask you to join me in paying tribute to a woman who is described by friends as "La Super Chicana," Mrs. Hilda Ortega-Rosales.

Hilda recently received an Exemplary Leadership Award at Valley del Sol's Annual Profiles of Success Leadership Awards in Phoenix. Valley's award ceremony is the premiere Latino recognition event in Arizona each year that acknowledges Arizona's leaders and their contributions.

Raised in a south Phoenix barrio, Hilda was the third child of eight children. As she grew up, Hilda cared for her brothers and sister, put in long days to attend school, helped with household chores and worked in a vegetable packing house to earn money. Even today, she has not shortened those long days and always finds a way to fit in numerous volunteer hours in addition to her job as Customer Service Director for American Express Merchant Services.

Currently, Hilda sits on the city of Glendale Planning and Zoning Commission. Other volunteer posts have included Commissioner for Glendale Parks and Recreation Department, District Chair for the Arizona State University (ASU) Legislative Network Committee and Board Chair for Chicanos Por La Causa, Inc., in Phoenix.

From presidential to school board elections, Hilda has tirelessly given countless hours of her personal time to political campaigns. Other organizations which have benefitted from her community involvement include Los Diablos, the Hispanic Alumni Association for ASU; Mujer, Inc.; United Way; Arizona Hispanic Chamber of Commerce; and ASU's Hispanic Mother/Daughter Program.

Taught by her parents to give back to her community, Hilda's volunteerism and dedication also is compelled by her desire to promote social justice, political power and economic development for Latinos. She is an exemplary role model for our country and someone who has personally made a significant impact on the Latino community.

As you can see, Mr. Speaker, Hilda's community service has been immense. She has instilled the importance of community responsibility in family members and many individuals who look up to her. Therefore, I am pleased to pay tribute to Hilda Ortega-Rosales and I know my colleagues will join me in thanking her and wishing her continued success.

A TRIBUTE TO THE MOST REV.
BISHOP ALFRED L. ABRAMOWICZ

HON. WILLIAM O. LIPINSKI

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 6, 1999

Mr. LIPINSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay my respects to a distinguished Bishop in

my district, the most Rev. Alfred L. Abramowicz Auxiliary Bishop Emeritus of the Archdiocese of Chicago and Pastor Emeritus of the Five Holy Martyrs Parish, who recently passed away.

Born on January 19, 1919, he completed his secondary education at Quigley Preparatory Seminary and college at St. Mary of the Lake Seminary of Mundelein. Graduate studies were completed at Gregorian University, Rome, 1949-51 with a Licentiate of Canon Law Degree. He served with the Archdiocese Metropolitan Tribunal for twenty years and for two years as a judicial vicar. Bishop Abramowicz's first appointment was associate pastor of Immaculate Conception Parish in South Chicago from June 19th, 1943 to July 7th, 1948. He was named Auxiliary Bishop on May 2nd, 1968 and appointed pastor of Five Holy Martyrs Parish on July 14, 1968 and served until January of 1990.

Bishop Abramowicz's involvement in the community was far-reaching. In 1969 he served as national chairman for the U.S. visit of His Eminence Karol Cardinal Wojtyla of Krakow, Poland and was fundamental in planning the second visit of that same friend, Pope John Paul II to Chicago in 1979.

Mr. Speaker, Bishop Abramowicz's strong dedication to the Catholic church and to his community as a whole will be sorely missed. I am certain that his legacy will live on in the community for many years to come.

TRIBUTE TO JOSE AGUIAR

HON. JOSÉ E. SERRANO

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 6, 1999

Mr. SERRANO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a young and successful entrepreneur from my congressional district, Mr. Jose Aguiar. Through his dedication, discipline, and success in small business, Mr. Aguiar can serve as a role model for millions of youngsters in the United States who dream of succeeding, like him, in the world of business.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in paying tribute and wishing continued success to Mr. Jose Aguiar.

The following article, which appeared in the October 4, New York Daily News, describes Mr. Aguiar's career in more detail.

DRY CLEANER'S KEEN TO EXPAND

Dry cleaning is Jose Aguiar's business, but cleaning up is his goal.

The 37-year-old president of Kleener King, a chain of dry cleaning stores in the metro area, is poised to expand by opening a central facility that will handle all the cleaning from his growing number of stores.

"I'm at the cusp," the Bronx businessman said, adding that he will use a \$6.1 million loan from the Upper Manhattan Empowerment Zone, the Bronx Overall Economic Development Corp., and the Empire State Development Corp. to help spur his company's growth.

Growing from a small outfit to a chain of 20 in his native Bronx and in upper Manhattan didn't happen overnight.

In 1982, Aguiar dropped out after two years at Columbia University—where he was ma-

joring in economics—to run his parents' business with his mother, Carmen, after his father, Jose Sr., became ill.

He held on to his parents' original location, Joe's Cleaners on Creston Avenue in the South Bronx, but soon sold the branch on University Avenue about a mile away.

"I didn't know how to manage one store, let alone two," he recalled.

After several years of working as a spotter—the person who pretreats all the stains—he started getting scared about his career prospects.

"I felt I had no future," he said, especially since some of his former Columbia classmates were moving on to plum positions in the business world.

A turning point came in the mid-1980s, when Aguiar went to an industry trade show.

"It opened his eyes and created a big appetite," said David Lewin, the owner of Ipso of New York, a dry cleaning equipment company. Over time, Lewin became a mentor as well as an investor in Aguiar's business.

"It all starts with one store," Aguiar recalled thinking.

He prepared a business plan and set about securing loans to fund an expansion, but scores of sources turned him down.

"They said, 'Grow it to a \$10 million company first' or 'Dry cleaning is not interesting,'" he said. "But I don't give up that easily."

After rounds of talks, he secured millions in a combined loan from several economic development groups in Manhattan and the Bronx for the centerpiece of his strategy—a \$2.5 million centralized cleaning plant, which he persuaded the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey and city economic development agencies to jointly sponsor because he promised to create jobs.

The plant, in the Bathgate Industrial Park, will employ more than 100 Kleener King workers at peak operation.

As his company grows, Aguiar credits his parents for his perseverance. The couple moved to New York from Puerto Rico in the early 1950s, and opened Joe's Cleaners in 1956 with \$5,000 in seed money.

His father insisted he work every Saturday starting at 6 a.m. and after school, except when he played for softball and football teams.

Aguiar said some of his earliest memories were in the store. "I was a dry cleaning baby," he said, recalling photos of him sitting on a dryer or atop a clothes bin.

Thirty-five years after his parents' start, Aguiar was crafting his plans for Kleener King.

In the early days, the company was pulling in about \$250,000 in revenues. This year, that jumped to about \$2 million, and he hopes it could grow to about \$10 million in four years.

Working seven days a week at the business has been his routine since his mother died in 1993. Unmarried and without much family in New York, he works well into the evening before trekking home to Bayside, Queens.

"Kleener King is my life," said Aguiar, who for the past three years has been a guest speaker at Columbia University on entrepreneurship and who vows to attend business school one day.

In hopes of pursuing that dream, he's trying to get credit for his professional experiences to help achieve the equivalent of an undergraduate degree.

"I've learned a lot on my own," Aguiar said.