



CÉSAR CHÁVEZ (1927-1993)

Mexican-American farm worker, labor leader and civil rights activist César Chávez brought about better conditions for agricultural workers by his actions. Born on his family's farm near Yuma, Arizona, Chávez witnessed the harsh conditions farm laborers endured. Workers were routinely exploited by their employers, often unpaid, living in shacks in exchange for their labor, and with no medical or other basic facilities. Without a united voice, they had no means to improve their position. Chávez changed that when he dedicated his life to winning recognition of the rights of agricultural workers, inspiring and organizing them into the National Farm Workers Association which later became the United Farm Workers. Through marches, strikes and boycotts, Chávez forced employers to pay adequate wages and provide other benefits and was responsible for legislation enacting the first Bill of Rights for agricultural workers. For his commitment to social justice and his lifelong dedication to bettering the lives of his fellow men and women, Chávez was posthumously recognized with the highest civilian honor, the Presidential Medal of Freedom.



“Once social change begins, it cannot be reversed. You cannot uneducate the person who has learned to read. You cannot humiliate the person who feels pride. You cannot oppress the people who are not afraid anymore.”

CÉSAR CHÁVEZ