

After over four decades of tireless and heroic advocacy on behalf of America's migrant farmworkers, Raul G. Barrera retired from his job as a paralegal on March 17, 2006.

Raul is a true legend among farmworker advocates. Raul worked as a migrant laborer himself early in his life, harvesting crops in Florida and other states. The injustices and inequities he saw spurred Raul to devote the remainder of his career to improving the lot of migrant workers. He was one of the first workers hired through the former Office of Economic Opportunity in the late 1960's to provide services to migrant workers in Indiana. As state director of the Associated Migrant Opportunity Services, Raul led the fight in Indiana to see that migrant workers were able to obtain food stamps and unemployment compensation benefits.

In the early 1970's, Raul began his paralegal career with Texas Rural Legal Aid. Working first in Hereford, and later in Laredo, Raul played key roles in many of the major farmworker legal victories over the next two decades. Along with his long-time compadre Roman Ramos, Raul represented hundreds of Mexican H-2 workers who were admitted in the late 1970's to harvest crops in Texas' Presidio Valley only to be denied almost all of the protections of the federal regulations. The Presidio Valley litigation lasted for over a decade, including two trials and several trips to the Fifth Circuit, but ultimately resulted in important victories for the H-2 workers. Raul also was an integral part of the TRLA legal team that won the appellate victories that helped establish current-day joint employment principles in agriculture. Later, in the 1980's, Raul assumed a leadership role in TRLA's advocacy on behalf of residents of the "colonias" surrounding many towns near the Mexico/U.S. border, working with organizations of local homeowners to see that basic utility and other municipal services were extended to these communities.

In the mid-1990's, Raul moved to Florida, where he has worked for the past decade as a paralegal for the Migrant Farmworker Justice Project. Raul's efforts again proved critical in numerous legal victories, including cases of nationwide importance such as *Arriaga v. Florida-Pacific Farms*. In 1999, in recognition of their efforts on behalf of a successful unionization effort at Quincy Farms mushroom plant in northern Florida, Raul and two other MFJP advocates shared the first annual Steven M. Goldstein award from the Florida Bar for outstanding legal work on behalf of indigents in Florida. In 2001, the Florida Bar Foundation honored Raul for his lifetime of service with its Medal of Honor, awarded annually to a single non-attorney for exemplary work on behalf of low income Floridians.

Please join with us in celebrating Raul's remarkable career and wishing him the best in his well-deserved retirement to a small town in his native Texas.