

Hon. Lupe Ramos-Montigny

Lupe has come a long way since growing up in Weslaco, TX, ten miles from the Mexican border. She was the seventh out of nine children who were all part of a migrant worker family. Her dad was very involved in the community as a Democrat. She remembers at a young age attending meetings with him. Her older brother, a staunch Democrat, went on to become an immigration attorney and had access to Presidents' Kennedy and Johnson.

After attending nearby Pan American University, she went to DC for a meet-up of migrant farm workers and recruited bilingual teachers for a migrant program. With her degree in education, she landed her first job in Lake Odessa, MI and stayed for a year. Then she went to work for the Muskegon ISD and eventually taught in Grand Rapids Public Schools, retiring after 36 years of service.

Paul Mayhue recruited her to become a part of Democrats who were professionals. When asked what she wanted to do, she responded that she wanted to go to Democratic National Conventions. She was told she had to attend Kent Dem meetings in order to make that happen. Not long thereafter, she became the Kent County Democratic Party Chair and served for four years.

Lupe was very active on the state level and became the first Hispanic to be the Vice-Chair of the Michigan Democratic Party, along with the Chair of the Latino Caucus. She found that as a leader, she could help lots of people at all levels.

At age 69, she ran for the State Board of Education and won, serving for eight years. She said, "I got a lot of things done." She served as the Chair of the political arm of the Board and dealt with legislation pertinent to education bills. At the national level, she was the Regional Director for the National Board of Education.

She chaired the Committee to honor Cesar E. Chavez for 23 years, annually awarding scholarships to children of farm workers from various universities promoting the upward mobility of Hispanic/Latino students (including undocumented). In 2015, GVSU named the "Sie Se Puede" "Yes, I Can!" Legacy Scholarship after her. This past November, she was recognized as one of 16 engaged and inspiring individuals who were over 60 years of age at the 16 over 60 Gala.

Lupe believes, "We are the government for the people, by the people. We should be voting for candidates who will serve the people and work for the people. Attend meetings. Get involved. Understand how things work and meet key leaders. There are many opportunities to be a leader. We always have to move forward."

Lupe says, "I try to help in whatever ways are needed. I am an effective leader that works until there is a solution. If I believe in something, I will work hard. I never say I can't do something. Right now, I can."