

ACOSTA VICE, CELIA M. (1919–1993)

“El desfile [Puertorriqueño] no era solamente para fiestar, era además una fuerza política.” (The [Puerto Rican Day] parade was not just festive, but a political force as well). Celia M. Acosta Vice. *Latinas in the United States: A Historical Encyclopedia*.

Born in Guayanilla, Puerto Rico, Acosta Vice was a businesswoman and community activist who left her mark on her birthplace and in New York City. She arrived in New York in 1926 and by the 1940s was already organizing the fifty-member Council of Brooklyn Organizations. Soon recognized as a community leader, Acosta Vice sat on the committees for the city's school decentralization and on the Brooklyn branch of The Urban League. The first Puerto Rican female real estate broker in the borough, she was also the first Latina grand marshal of the Puerto Rican Day Parade. Among the founders of the Fernando Sierra Vardecí Independent Democratic Club, Acosta Vice was named to the Commission on Human Rights in 1961. Acosta Vice was impressive for her community activism, but perhaps her greatest contribution to the Puerto Rican and Latino communities was her extensive library, which became part of El Museo del Barrio's foundation. She started the first library and bookstore solely on Puerto Rican topics in New York, and later on, when she returned to Puerto Rico in 1979, established the Kiosko Cultural in Plaza de Las Americas, Puerto Rico's most prominent commercial center.