

CHÁVEZ-THOMPSON, LINDA (1944–)

Linda Chávez-Thompson was born into a cotton sharecropping family in Lubbock, Texas. Because it was necessary for the children to help support the family, schooling became sporadic, dependent on the crops and economic and agricultural cycles. In 1963, at the age of twenty, Chávez-Thompson married and embarked on her first “adult” job, cleaning other people’s houses. Chávez-Thompson joined the Laborers’ International Union in 1967 and became secretary for the Lubbock local. Four years later Chávez-Thompson was employed at the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME). In 1995 Chávez-Thompson’s bid for elective office within the union proved successful. She became the first Latina executive vice president of the AFL-CIO, a position she holds today. She sits on the board of governors of the United Way and is a vice-chairperson of the Democratic National Committee, a member of the executive committee of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute, and a member of the board of trustees for the Labor Heritage Foundation.