

LUCAS, MARÍA ELENA (1941–)

A life of poverty, abuse and neglect prepared Lucas for the fighter she would become in later life. A founder of the first United Farm Workers' center in the mid-west, Lucas facilitated social services, day-care centers, health clinics and immigration counseling. She was an organizer in 1985 with the Farm Labor Organizing Committee and presided over a full union election and contract. Her oral history, *Forged Under the Sun/Forjada Bajo el Sol* edited by Fran Leeper Buss underscored the oppression and abuse women faced in the fields and in the union halls. Her poems, plays, and essays focus on social justice issues.