

# Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with The Honorable Zulima Farber

PERSON

Farber, Zulima, 1944-

**Alternative Names:** The Honorable Zulima Farber;

**Life Dates:** September 21, 1944-

**Place of Birth:** El Caney, Cuba

**Residence:** North Bergen, NJ

**Occupations:** Lawyer

## Biographical Note

Lawyer Zulima Farber was born on September 21, 1944 in El Caney, Cuba to Lourdes Portes Feraud and Castulo Feraud. She left Cuba along with her oldest brother and sister and moved to St. Mary, Jamaica to attend boarding school in 1958. She returned to Cuba in 1960 and continued her education until 1961, when she and her siblings then moved to West New York, New Jersey where she graduated from Memorial High School. Farber received her B.A. degree in Spanish in 1968, and her M.A. degree in Spanish literature in 1970, both from Montclair State College. Farber then attended Rutgers School of Law-Newark where she earned her J.D. degree in 1974.

In 1974, Farber worked as a City of Newark Department of Health and Welfare legal specialist. In 1975, she was named Bergen County assistant prosecutor and served as grand jury section chief in 1976 and trial section assistant chief in 1977. The following year, Farber was appointed assistant counsel to Governor Brendan Byrne. In 1981, she joined the law firm of Lowenstein Sandler LLP; and, in 1986, became the first female to be made partner. In 1992, Farber served as the State of New Jersey public advocate/public defender. She returned to Lowenstein Sandler in 1994, serving on the firm's executive committee in 1995. Farber was appointed state attorney general in 2006 and became the first African American female and Hispanic in this role as well as the first Hispanic female to serve as acting governor of New Jersey. In 2011, Farber rejoined Lowenstein Sandler before retiring in 2012.

In 1983, Farber served as Hispanic Bar Association of New Jersey board member and president. In 1992, she was the New Jersey State Bar Association's nominating committee vice chair. She also served on boards of the New Jersey Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights from 1987 to 2006. Named an American Bar Foundation fellow, Farber joined the New Jersey Lawyer editorial board

in 1995. The next year, she was a member of the New Jersey Electoral College. In 2001, Farber served on the New Jersey Bipartisan Congressional Redistricting Commission, and was named member of the new executive committee for the Latinas United for Political Empowerment PAC.

In 1996, Farber received the Mary Philbrook Public Interest Award from Rutgers Law School-Camden's Women's Law Caucus, and in 1997, the Outstanding Achievement Award from National Association of Cuban-American Women and the Equal Justice Medal from Legal Services of New Jersey. In 1999, Farber received the Women's Political Caucus of New Jersey's Barbara Boggs Sigmund Award. In 2006, she received the Montclair State University honorary doctorate of laws. She was the recipient of the New Jersey State Bar Association Mel Narol Award, Hispanic Bar Association Public Service Award and Thurgood Marshall Scholarship Foundation Award of Excellence.

Zulima Farber was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on October 23, 2018.

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