

GRACIELA OLIVAREZ, CARTER APPOINTEE, DIES AT AGE 59

October 1, 1987

Graciela (Grace) Olivarez, 59, a director of the old Community Services Administration under President Jimmy Carter, died of cancer Sept. 19 at St. Joseph's Hospital in Albuquerque.

Mrs. Olivarez headed the CSA, the successor agency to the Office of Economic Opportunity, from 1977 until 1979, when she returned to Albuquerque. She then established Channel 41, the first Spanish-language television station in the country.

A native of Phoenix, she was active in the civil rights movement in Arizona, and through this she met Rev. Theodore Hesburgh, president of the University of Notre Dame. Although she had not completed high school, much less attended college, Father Hesburgh arranged for her to attend law school at Notre Dame. In 1970 she became the school's first female graduate.

For the next two years she worked for the OEO in Phoenix. In 1972 Mrs. Olivarez became director of the Institute for Social Research and Development at the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque. From 1975 to 1977, she was secretary for planning in New Mexico under Gov. Jerry Apodaca.

Her marriage to Alfred Olivarez ended in divorce.

Survivors include a son, Navy Lt. Victor Olivarez of San Diego; her parents, Damian Gil of Phoenix and Eloise Gil of Albuquerque; three sisters, Theresa Gil of La Mesa, Calif., Anita Pettygrove of Glendale, Ariz., and Paula Maldonado of Sacramento, Calif., and a brother, Danny Gil of Phoenix.