

In 1963, Cotulla teenager Gloria Perez moved to Laredo to marry and start her family. In Laredo, she raised two sons and worked at Hachar's Department store downtown and then as a para-professional at Farias Elementary, Tarver and Tomas Sanchez schools. In 1988, she was introduced to a young attorney named Joe Rubio who was launching his first campaign for District Attorney. Gloria found him to be so charismatic that she immediately signed on as a volunteer campaign worker. Thus began her career in the District Attorney's Office from where she retired in August of 2009.

At the District Attorney's Office, Gloria was a jack of all trades with a positive attitude and contagious smile. Initially, she was part of a small staff that knew the inner workings of every department and could manage everything from a purchase order to a protective order. "It was a lot of work but it was fun. Everyone had a great sense of humor. We were a family in every sense of the word, so much so that we could sense when one of us was down. If that happened, we'd all make an effort to cheer each other up. At the District Attorney's Office, we were always treated equally and with respect, from the attorneys to the clerks. Just like a family, we stuck together. Birthdays, illnesses and life events were the best example of how we would unite and support each other, and it was real. It was genuine."

With refreshing enthusiasm, Gloria expresses her love of her coworkers and love for her job. "The friendships I made and all that I learned at the office meant the world to me. Every day at the DA's office, I was in the center of things...learning something new every day and meeting people. I loved the excitement and energy of multi-tasking and interacting with the public."

When asked of the new administration under District Attorney Isidro "Chilo" Alaniz', Gloria stated, "He has a fresh perspective and is making so many positive changes to improve efficiency and customer service." She describes Alaniz as a leader who encourages his team to be effective through his good organizational skills. She goes on to describe him as a facilitator and innovator with a bright political future. "He's doing all the right things. He's got a great attitude and he's willing to learn and I think he's going to have his twenty years."

Perhaps those twenty years will include Gloria's return to the District Attorney's Office. Her friends cannot imagine her staying away for long. They look forward to many lunch and movie dates and know that she will surely be travelling, as she often did with her longtime partner Smokey Hernandez, or reading or volunteering for organizations she supports like Habitat for Humanity and Pink to Do. Wherever her plans take her, Gloria's friends say she will surely be in the center of things and wearing her contagious smile.