Ada Nivia Lopez

Ada is well respected for her work as an educator, policy maker, and community leader. To benefit school communities in Chicago, she has created dozens of public-private partnerships. These include partnerships with the University of Puerto Rico, *El Colegio de Michoacán,* Mexico, and *Istituto Regionale di Ricerca Educativa,* Milan, Italy,

As an educator she has been recognized for creating learning environments that give students an active, central role and opportunities to discern, make choices, and act independently. Driven by a strong sense of community Ada has worked tirelessly to address inequalities and bring about social. She was in the forefront of bilingual educational reform and founder of the Segundo Ruiz Belvis Cultural Center.

She became the first Latina to win a statewide election in Illinois becoming a member of the Board of Trustees of the University of Illinois multi campus system and served to 1999. Among many, the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) presented for her outstanding work.

Prior to serving as a trustee, Ada appointed to the Chicago Board of Education, by the late Mayor Harold Washington where she co-chaired the Education Reform Committee which established the Local School Councils. She spearheads the building of seven schools to relieve overcrowding and the acclaimed Hyatt Culinary Arts Program at Clemente Community Academy in Chicago.

She was a founding member and commissioner of the Mayor’s Advisory Commission on Latino Affairs, the precursor to the Chicago Commission on Human Relations.

Ada is editor and producer of the book titled: *Así Somos| Who We Are,* an uplifting photographic essay representing the cultural richness and diversity of the Puerto Rican people on the island, the US mainland and Hawaii. The book has received excellent reviews from the prestigious American Library Association and was selected among the best top ten books in 2014 by El Nuevo Dia. She curated an exhibit of the life-sized photographs, at the *Museo de las Americas* in Old San Juan viewed by 30,000 visitors. Today the Asi Somos | Who We Are project is an official partner of the Fundación Puertorriqueña de las Humanidades (FPH). [www.asisomoswhoweare.org](http://www.asisomoswhoweare.org)

Working with an advisory committee of twenty African American leaders, Ada is presently working to produce a photographic essay and exhibit project titled Black Culture in Chicago. [www.blackcultureinchicago.org](http://www.blackcultureinchicago.org)

She is an active board member of the American Civil Liberties Union of Illinois; the Chicago Chapter of the National Conference of Puerto Rican Women and serves as the co-chair of the Education Committee of the Puerto Rican Agenda of Chicago.

Ada received a Bachelor s Degree in Education with a concentration in Bilingual Education and a master’s degree in Early Childhood with a concentration in Educational Leadership from the University in University of Illinois at Chicago.

 concentration in Early Educational and is a lifetime member of the Alumni Association.

Ada was born in Arecibo, Puerto Rico and arrived in Chicago with her parents as a young girl.