



| | | | |
|---|-----------|------------|-------------------------|
| Changing <i>the face</i> of Medicine | HOME | VISIT | PHYSICIANS |
| | RESOURCES | ACTIVITIES | SHARE <i>your</i> STORY |

* BIOGRAPHY [Return](#)

Dr. Katherine A. Flores

YEAR OF BIRTH / DEATH

b. 1953

MEDICAL SCHOOL

University of California, Davis, School of Medicine

GEOGRAPHY

| | |
|----------|------------|
| LOCATION | California |
|----------|------------|

CAREER PATH

General medicine: Family

Administration



BIOGRAPHY

Katherine A. Flores established two programs to encourage disadvantaged students to pursue careers in medicine: the Sunnyside High School Doctor's Academy and the middle school Junior Doctor's Academy. These programs provide academic support and health science enrichment to young people who might not otherwise be successful in their educational experiences—or be thinking about medical careers.

Katherine Flores was born into a family of migrant farm workers in Fresno, California. Her mother died when she was an infant, and she was raised by her grandparents, who had immigrated from Mexico. She recalls working in the fields and orchards as a 4-year-old, picking plums with her family. Because of the inequities she observed as a child, Katherine Flores made an early decision to try to make a difference.

While at Stanford University she began working with national and state Hispanic organizations with the goal of increasing the role of Hispanics in the health professions. Through their leadership and guidance she realized she could become a physician. But leaving home, she says, was an "extreme stress." During her first few months at college, she would come home every weekend. The Latino culture and sense of *familia* is "always a blessing," she says, "but it was something that makes it difficult to go away."

Flores says that, when she was a child, her grandmother told her that although her mother was gone, she would always intercede for her through the Virgin. They hung a picture of the Virgin of Guadalupe in their home, and it went with them wherever they traveled to do farm work. "As a young person, I always felt comfort kneeling and praying in front of this picture," says Flores. "I could feel God. . . . guiding me in a way that was always soothing and reassuring."

After graduating from the University of California, Davis, School of Medicine, young Dr. Flores returned to Fresno and her family to do her residency. Following a fellowship in family practice, she entered medical practice in Southeast Fresno and began teaching at the University Medical Center Family Practice Program.

Though she had not planned on an administrative role as a physician, she gradually became involved with community programs, such as the California Area Health Education Center and Border Health Education Center, was invited to sit on the Community Hospital Board of Directors, and learned more about the complexities of hospital policy and finance.

Dr. Flores is currently a faculty member of the University of California San Francisco-Fresno Medical Education Program. She serves as the project director of the California Health Education Training Center (HETC) and the Latino Center for Medical Education and Research (LaCMER) in Fresno. LaCMER addresses the persistent shortage and under-representation of Latino (particularly Mexican-American) physicians in the practice community and in the medical school faculty.

Of more than 300,000 Latinos in Fresno County in a population of over 775,000, and some 1,500 physicians, only about 120 physicians are Latino. The Mexican-American population of California is more than 30 percent—even higher in the Fresno area—fewer than one percent of UCSF medical school faculty are Mexican-American.

The medical academy programs Dr. Flores established for middle and high school students in Fresno County provide academic support and health science enrichment to young people who might not otherwise be successful in their educational experiences—or even considering medical careers. Promising students are enrolled in a four-year program of intensive math, science, and English preparation. They are assisted by faculty and pre-medical student mentors from California State University, Fresno, and participate in research at area schools and hospitals. And two graduating seniors who satisfy academic requirements will be offered early admission to UCSF's medical school.

Today Dr. Flores continues to practice family medicine with three other bilingual women physicians. They are extremely supportive of her "other lives" with the university and her family, and provide bilingual and bicultural backup for her patients. She is married to Juan Flores, an educator, and they have two children. Dr. Flores observes that she has been blessed with a wonderful family and extended family, who have been extremely supportive of her endeavors.

PHOTO GALLERY



[Launch Photo Gallery \(5 images\)](#) 



[Copyright](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Accessibility](#) | [Feedback](#) | [Site Map](#) | [Credits](#)