

## BIO CARMEN YULIN CRUZ SOTO

Carmen Yulín Cruz Soto was elected as the mayor of San Juan, Puerto Rico from 2013 to 2020. During her tenure, Ms. Cruz's worked tirelessly to help her city recover from hurricanes Irma and María. Beyond the hurricanes, the island faced financial bankruptcy, had two coastal storms, two earthquakes in the southwestern part of the island, and also dealt with political unrest leading to the resignation of the governor of Puerto Rico; add to that the battle against new diseases such as Zika, Chikungunya and the Covid 19 pandemic; all while she was the mayor of Puerto Rico's capital city.

Mayor Cruz made national headlines when she went toe-to-toe with former President Trump regarding the lack of timely and adequate distribution of FEMA aid to Puerto Rico. Prior to becoming Mayor, Ms. Cruz spent four years in the Puerto Rico House of Representatives as a Representative at Large.

Carmen Yulín is an active advocate for equality, fighting for the LGBTQIA+ community, the deaf community, and children with functional diversity as well as those who have struggled with gender-based violence. She is also a champion for the rights of immigrants and women. Her vision of public service is one of governing not for the people, but with the people. She believes a better society is built by having strong student organizations, labor unions, and by implementing programs such as Community-Governmental Collaboration Agreements and Participatory Budgeting, wherein the people in each community decide how to best develop sustainable and permanent solutions for their recurring problems.

Yulín, as she prefers to be called, has received numerous recognitions and awards, including the Puerto Rico Arts Alliance Felisa Rincón Legacy Public Service Award (2013), the AIDS Healthcare Foundation Humanitarian Award (2017), the Martin Luther King Centre for Justice, Peace and Freedom Award and Humanitarian Leadership Award (2018), the Antonio Villaraigosa Leadership Award (2018). She was also nominated by People en Español as one of the 50 most Powerful Women in 2017, and TIME Magazine chose her as candidate for Person of the Year recognition in 2017 and 2018. In 2018, she was selected to be on TIME Magazine's list of the 100 most Influential People in the World for her leadership in the aftermath of Hurricane Maria. That same year she was named to ESSENCE Magazine's Woke 100 Women list. In 2018 she also received the prestigious Ridenhour Truth-Telling Award, as well as Casa de Esperanza's Award for Inspirational leadership, the Hank Aaron Champion of Justice Award, and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference's Award for Economic Justice.

Prior to her time in elected office, Yulín worked in human resources in both the public and private sectors. She studied political science and graduated Cum Laude from Boston University with a Bachelor of Arts. She received a full scholarship from the Sloan Foundation to complete her Master's degree in Public Policy at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

After leaving Office, Yulín was appointed as the first Distinguished Fellow in Leadership at the Weissman Center at Mount Holyoke College in Massachusetts. In 2022 she was named a Center for Public Leadership as a Hauser Leader as well as a Leader-in-Practice for the Women and Public Policy Program at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government. During that same year, Yulín was appointed a Pritzker Fellow at the University of Chicago's Institute of Politics. From January 2021 to February 2024 Yulín was a member of the Board of Directors of Annie's List, a Texas based organization that works to get progressive women elected up and down the ballot.

Yulín is a consultant as well as frequent speaker at colleges, universities, private and non-governmental organizations on the topics of climate change, crisis management, female leadership and empowerment as well as community engagement and resilient planning for organizations whether they be in the private, public or NGO sectors.

Author of EL PODER ESTÁ EN LA CALLE (“The Power is in the Streets”), a book which speaks as to how alliances can change the political landscape and produce the kind of results citizens are looking for, Yulín is currently working on a memoir reflecting on her time in office. She has recorded the first season of a Podcast called SHEROICS which features women who change the world one community at a time.

On December 22, 2023, Yulín began a Foundation called EN PUERTO RICO SE PUEDE (IN PUERTO RICO WE CAN). This Foundation will help communities organize, lead and manage innovative solutions to problems in various key areas: crisis management, establishment of green energy solutions, resilient housing, development of youth and women leadership and sustainable agriculture and food sovereignty.

Of all her titles and accomplishments, the one she is proudest of, is being a mother to her 33-year-old daughter Marina Paul Cruz. ###

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