

## ***Emma Sepulveda***

### ***Biography***

Emma Sepulveda was born in Argentina and raised in Chile. She attended the University of Chile in Santiago, the University of Nevada, Reno and the University of California, Davis. She received her PhD from the University of California, Davis. Dr. Sepulveda is an accomplished author and co-author of 25 books of narrative non-fiction, memoirs, short stories, poetry, critical essays and textbooks. She has received two of the highest honors given to writers in Nevada, the Silver Pen Award, and in 2007 she was inducted into the Nevada Writers Hall of Fame (the first Latina/o to be inducted). In 2005 she received the Nevada Governor's Excellence in the Arts Award. Nationally, she received the Mujer Award in 2009 given by the Latina Leadership Institute in Washington DC and the Willie Velasquez Award by the US Leadership Institute in 2010. Dr. Sepulveda also received the

Latina Women of the Year in Literature Award by the Spanish Television Network, GEMS, in Miami, Florida. The same network produced and aired an hour program on Emma Sepulveda's life as part a series on the women protagonists of Latin America and the USA. She was included in Edward Olmos's national project, *Americanos*.

In 1995 Emma Sepulveda founded a non-profit organization for to the empowerment of Latinos through voter registration, voter education and get out the vote programs: Latinos for Political Education (LAPE). Thanks to that initial effort, Nevada is recognized nationally for the number of Latinos who are voting in local, state wide and national elections. In 2004 she founded the Latino Research Center at the University of Nevada, Reno and has obtained more than \$1,000,000 in federal and local grants for its programs. The Center, the first of its kind in Nevada, serves as the main point for research and publications on issues affecting Latinos in Nevada and the rest of the nation. Sepulveda is the founder and co-editor of the Center's research journal *Border-Lines*.

Emma Sepulveda is also a civic leader who has worked for the rights of immigrants in the USA. She is often an invited keynote speaker for conferences at colleges and community organizations all over the USA. She is also considered an expert on Latino issues. She has offered her expertise on empowering immigrant communities, voter registrations programs, and organizing unrepresented groups, giving special lectures and leading group meetings with leaders of such countries as India, Japan, Malaysia, Kenya, Iran, Chile, Burma, Palestine, Ghana, and many others who have been invited by the U.S. Department of State through the UNR International Center. She has also traveled to give invited lectures about these topics, and participated in conferences, in Latin America, Europe, Africa, and the Middle East.

Dr. Sepulveda has been involved in many organizations such as:

- United Way of Northern Nevada (Board of Directors)
- Habitat for Humanities of Nevada (Board of Director)

- City of Reno 2000 Art Commission (Board of Directors and Chair of the Grant Commission)
- Latinos for Political Education – LAPE--(Founder and President of the Board of Directors)
- Gang Alternative Partnership of Nevada (Board of Directors)
- Nevada Hispanic Services (Board member and Chair of the Board)
- UNR Holocaust and Peace Studies Center (Board of Director)
- UNR Women's Center (Board of Directors)
- Nevada Museum of Art (Trustee)
- UNR Alumni Foundation (Trustee)
- Viva Arte Nevada (Co-Founder, Board of Directors)
- Girls Scouts of Northern Nevada (Advisory Board member)
- Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) of Nevada (Advisory Board member)
- Alliance of Latinas in Action and Solidarity—ALAS—(Co-founder, Board of Directors)
- Nevada Women's Lobby (Board of Director)
- KUNR (Board of Directors)
- KNPB Channel 5 ( Trustee)

In 2009 she was appointed to the National Commission for the creation of the American Latino Museum in Washington DC and served as a Commissioner for two years. The report was presented to President Obama and the Congress in May 2011.

In late 2010 Emma Sepulveda spent more than a month in a mining camp interviewing the families of the 33 miners trapped in a copper and gold mine in the north of Chile until the workers were rescued. Her research culminated in the writing and publication of a critically acclaimed book, *Setenta dias de noche* (33 mineros atrapados-historia oculta de un rescate) (Seventy Days of Night -33 Trapped Miners: Hidden Story of a Rescue). The book was published in Chile in 2011, and subsequently in Spain. In 2012 the book won the Latino Book Award in New York City.

At the present time Emma is a writer, a columnist, a Foundation Professor at the University of Nevada, Reno and serves as the Director of the Latino Research Center.