



Postal Pointers

Stamp Honors César Chávez, Fighter For Justice

(NAPSA)—César Chávez has been called one of the most important figures in American labor history. Robert Kennedy called the later Presidential Medal of Freedom recipient “one of the heroic figures of our time.” By the time of his death 10 years ago at age 66, Chávez had revolutionized the lives of migrant farm laborers in the Southwest.

Chávez was born March 31, 1927, on the small farm near Yuma, Arizona that his grandfather homesteaded during the 1880s. The Depression cost the family their farm when young César was 10 years old. These were bitterly poor years for the Chávez family. Together with thousands of other displaced families, they were forced to embark on a new life as migrant workers, travelling the Southwest, laboring in fields and vineyards. César left school after the eighth grade to help support his family.

In 1945, Chávez joined the U.S. Navy, serving two years in the western Pacific. After returning to civilian life, he married Helen Fabela, whom he met while working in Delano, Cal. vineyards, in 1948. The Chávez family settled in the East San Jose barrio of *Sal Si Puedes*, Spanish for “get out if you can.”

In 1952, Chávez, working in apricot orchards outside San Jose, met Fred Ross, an organizer for the Community Service Organization. Chávez became a full-time organizer for CSO, establishing new chapters in California and Arizona. In 1962, after failing to convince the CSO to commit itself to farm worker organizing, he left to found the National Farm Workers Association (NFWA).

In September 1965, Chávez’s NFWA struck against major Delano-area table and wine grape growers, the beginning of a long, difficult struggle to improve work-



The U.S. Postal Service is honoring a man who left his stamp on human rights, crusader César Chávez, with a new stamp.

ing conditions for farm laborers. By 1970 most growers had signed contracts with the union, by then called the United Farm Workers. It was the first of many victories for Chávez.

This year, the U.S. Postal Service is commemorating Chávez’s life with a stamp released on the tenth anniversary of his death, April 23, 2003, in the Los Angeles area. The stamp will be available at post offices nationwide on April 24.

Stamp collecting can be a life-long fun and educational hobby for all ages. It’s easy to start your own collection without a big investment. You’ll find the pulse of our great country living in the large collection of postal stamps.

You can learn more about César Chávez, at the bookstore or library. For more information on stamp collecting or the César Chávez commemorative issue, visit www.usps.gov.