

Judge Richard C. Vara grew up in Houston's East End neighborhoods of Magnolia and Denver Harbor. His parents, Rudy & Alicia Vara were very active in LULAC, politics, the VFW, Boys Scouts, PTA, ROTC high school programs and the Houston Rodeo, together with several others, they were founding members of the REATA Committee, now known as the Go Tejano Committee.

Judge Vara's first encounter with politics was through his parents. As a boy he often accompanied his Mom, Alicia to register voters and collect poll tax. Through their participation with LULAC and other political and civic functions he fostered a deep sense of civic duty. Highlights as a young boy were meeting Senator Lyndon Johnson, Congressman Henry Gonzalez, helping his dad Rudy deliver campaign material for the VIVA Kennedy Club on his bicycle. As a student he attended John F. Kennedy's address at Rice Stadium and was active in the Boy Scouts of America, and the CYO/CYA programs at Resurrection Church.

He attended Pugh Elementary, McReynolds Jr. High School, Austin High School, The University of Houston and South Texas College of Law. Throughout school he was active in P.A.S.O., Young Democrats, drama and debate.

In 1972, he served as assistant treasurer for the Harris County Democratic Party and was coordinator for the Willie Velasquez Southwest Voter Registration Project targeting Houston, In 1973, he served as the Hispanic area coordinator in the mayoral race of Fred Hofheinz. Judge Vara has been a sponsor of many innovative programs such as Teen Courts and literacy programs. He mentored for elementary, middle and high schools, and has been a longtime supporter of retired and senior citizen volunteer programs.

Judge Vara was first elected as Justice of The Peace, Pct. 6, Pos 1 in June of 1974. Judge Vara was the youngest person at the time to ever be elected to the position. He was re-elected many times and served for over four and half decades, retiring with a 46 1/2-year tenure and an unmatched record of experience.

He was a founding member of the following organizations: Chicano Family Center, Denver Harbor senior Citizens, SFA Alumni Organization, and the Felix & Angela Morales Foundation.

Judge Vara has volunteered, served on boards for and continues to support The Boy Scouts of America, The Mexican American Bar Association, Fifth Ward Redevelopment Corporation, The Cossaboom YMCA, Harris County Juvenile Board, Resurrection Credit Union, Wesley House, Hester House, Ripley House, Houston Legal Foundation, Harrisburg Rotary, the East End Association, The Houston East End Chamber of Commerce and LULAC and The First Tee of Greater Houston Golf Program.

Judge Vara has three brother's Rudy Jr, Lonnie, Joe and two sister's Kandy Hernandez and Cindy Vara-Leija. He is the proud father of daughters, Ericka Gonzalez, Lenzy Chapa and son Anthony Vara. He has two son-in-laws Abel Gonzalez and Albert Chapa. Judge Vara's niece Marie Arcos continues the tradition of family service through her many civic endeavors.

Judge Vara goes by many names: Judge, Richard, brother, Uncle, Dad, Friend but his favorite is Papa Judge, as he is the proud grandfather of 8. Granddaughters Eva & Harper Gonzalez, Mia, Lena, Sofie & Zoe Chapa and 2 grandsons Abel Gonzalez III & Ezra Chapa.

Judge Vara was recognized for his dedication to the Hispanic community as a 2019 Comcast Hispanic Hero Award Recipient. Upon his retirement in January of 2020 he continues to reside in the East End and enjoys theater, dancing, the Astros, and is an avid Golfer. He continues to stay very connected, dedicated and committed to the constituents he served for over four and a half decades.