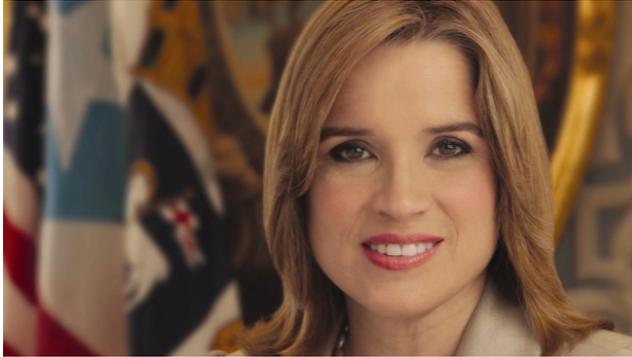


## Weissman Center for Leadership 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary



**The Honorable Carmen Yulín Cruz Soto**, Mayor of San Juan Puerto Rico, has a vision of public service. It is one of governing not *for the people*, but *with the people*. A true believer in alliances and working partnerships, Yulín, as she likes to be called, sees these coalitions and collaborations as the keys to

finding common ground and to successfully achieving better and greater objectives for the common good. She is an active advocate for the Puerto Rican people and for equality in all forms, fighting for the LGBTQ 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. She believes a better society is built by having strong student organizations, labor unions, and by implementing programs wherein the people in each community decide how to best develop sustainable plans for themselves.

Born in San Juan on February 25, 1963, Yulín attended the University of Puerto Rico High School. She attended the University of Boston, Massachusetts, graduating Cum Laude in Political Science. Afterwards, 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. At Carnegie Mellon, she was the first student to receive the Spirit Award, now known as the Barbara Jenkins Award, an honor bestowed upon the student who elicited a positive impact on the quality of life of other students, in and out of the classroom.

After graduating from Carnegie Mellon, Carmen Yulín was hired by Westinghouse to be part of their highly selective program for the development of Managers in Human Resources. She subsequently worked as Human Resources Director for the Office of Thrift Supervision in the Department of Treasury of the United States of America. In 1992, after living in the United States for 12 years, she moved back to Puerto Rico and served as Manager and Director of Human Resources for various companies in the private sector, such as Colgate-Palmolive, Banco Popular de Puerto Rico, Cellular One (now AT&T), and Scotiabank.

However, her true passion called her, and she decided to return to the Public Sector. First, she became an advisor to then Mayor of San Juan, Sila María Calderón, then went on to advise the Speaker of the Puerto Rico House of Representatives. She became involved in the Popular Democratic Party in 2003, and was elected president of its women's organization. Yulín finally decided to run for office. In 2008 she was elected Representative At-Large for the Puerto Rico House of Representatives. Ms. Cruz was poised to return for another term as Representative, having received the most votes for re-election in the Primary of March 2012. However, at the end of March 2012, she accepted the nomination to run for Mayor of San Juan, an aspiration she had held since childhood. And on November 2012, after a historic seven month long campaign, she won the election and became Mayor, defeating a three-term incumbent by relying on a coalition of students, unions, feminists, immigrants, and LGBT voters. In November 2016, she was reelected by an even wider margin. With Yulín as Mayor, San Juan has become the first and only municipality in Puerto Rico where employees have the right to collective bargaining, and it has taken steps toward a municipal version of universal health care. Under her administration, San Juan is now the only municipality with a transgender health clinic and also with an aquatic therapy clinic. Yulín firmly believes that community empowerment strengthens the democratic process, and that embracing difference can enrich our lives.

On September 20, 2017, Hurricane María completely devastated Puerto Rico. Mayor Cruz's became a strong advocate for getting much needed help and dignified care for the people of Puerto Rico. As a result of her relentless efforts, numerous non-governmental organizations and private companies supported the recovery efforts for San Juan and the rest of the Island. "This is not about politics, this is about saving lives," she continues to repeat incessantly.

As a result of her tireless commitment to the people of San Juan and Puerto Rico in this humanitarian crisis, Mayor Cruz has received various recognitions and awards, including the Martin Luther King Centre Humanitarian Leadership Award in 2018, the Antonio Villaraigosa Leadership Award in 2018, the AIDS Healthcare Foundation Humanitarian Award 2017, and the Ridenhour Prize for Truth-Telling. She was also nominated by People *en Español* as one of the 50 most Powerful Women in 2017. TIME Magazine chose her as candidate for Person of the Year recognition in 2017, and was named in the TIME's list of '100 Most Influential People in the World' for 2018.