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Iowa LULAC expresses sympathy over death of former State Director

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DES MOINES – The League of United Latin American Citizens of Iowa has expressed its sympathy over the death of former State Director Gilbert “GG” Sierra Sr.

Sierra, who was 66, died recently after a battle with cancer. He was the first Hispanic elected to the Davenport City Council and was immediate past state director of LULAC of Iowa. He led the state council for 13 years and served on the national LULAC board.

“We are extremely saddened by the loss of a man who was truly kind-hearted and always put others above himself,” said Joe Enriquez Henry, the state director of LULAC of Iowa. “GG will be missed by many in our community.”

Sierra served one term on the City Council, but stayed active in the Latino community and on issues that included civil rights, the environment and workers’ rights.

According to media reports, while he served on the council, he fasted for a week to draw attention to the Cesar Chavez-led boycott of California table grapes. Chavez was protesting use of pesticides. Sierra lost 20 pounds.

Michael Reyes, deputy state director for LULAC of Iowa and president of Council 10 in Davenport, said Sierra wasn’t afraid to stand up for his beliefs. He opposed state legislation in 2002 that made English the official language of Iowa.

“He was a very special and unique person to our organization,” Reyes said. “He was a good friend and supporter of LULAC. He will be missed.”

Founded in 1929, the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) is the nation’s largest and oldest civil rights, volunteer-based organization that empowers Hispanic-Americans and builds strong Latino communities. Its headquarters are in Washington, D.C., and there are 1,000 councils across the United States and Puerto Rico. LULAC’s programs, services and advocacy efforts address the most important issues for Latinos, and meet the critical needs of today and the future.

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