

WCNR Untold Stories| Josefa Cuevas de Sansores: The first woman to graduate as a Geological Engineer in Mexico

On October 7, 1950, Josefa Cuevas De Sansores became the first Mexican woman to graduate as a Geological Engineer and was the 15th woman to graduate from the School of Engineering at National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM).

In 1900, there were 250 male engineering students in the country and 50 years had passed before Sansores graduated in engineering.

Sansores was an outstanding student who took first place in the first University Merit Medal for School Distinction in 1947. Her outstanding work led her to become a specialist in planktonic and benthic foraminifera of the Tertiary period.

In 1969, Sansores joined the Mexican Petroleum Institute (IMP) as head of the Tertiary Micropaleontology Department. There she analyzed all the country's sedimentary samples to learn more about the microfauna and stratigraphy of Mexico. This contributed to the interpretation of paleogeographic studies (the geological study of soil conditions) and its relationship with the presence of hydrocarbons in Mexico.

For 23 years Josefa worked in different regions of the country to work in the exploration areas of the state oil company until in 1969 she was transferred to Mexico City to the IMP (Instituto Mexicano del Petróleo).

She worked until 1978 when she retired and moved to Cuernavaca with her husband. In 1990 the Mexican Geological Society recognized her for her contribution to the science. Sansores passed away in 2010 leaving behind a vast legacy to the science.