



# Josie Fernandez

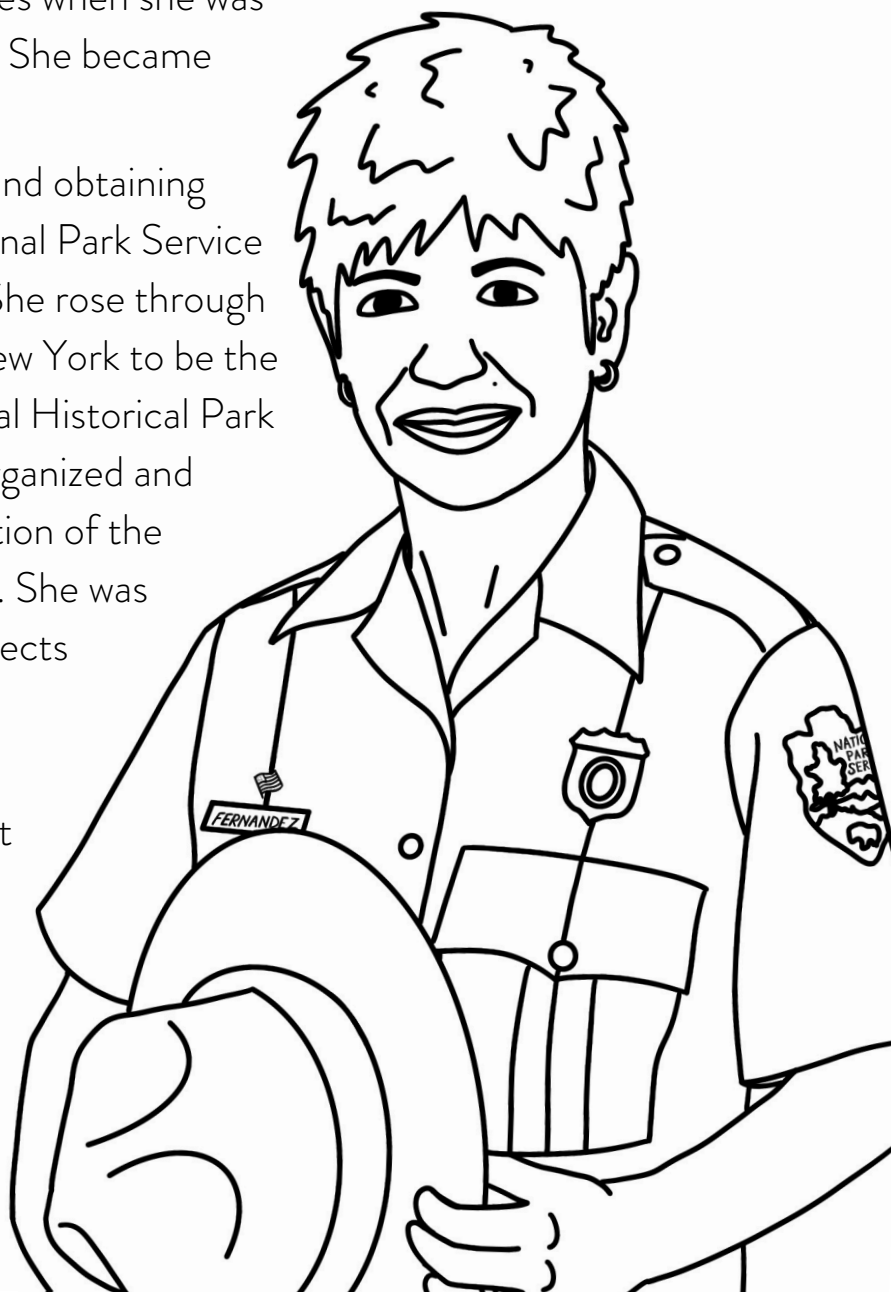
(1956-)

Josie Fernandez was superintendent of Hot Springs National Park from 2004 to 2018—the first woman to lead the park. Fernandez served a total of twenty-five years in the National Park Service, with fourteen being spent in Hot Springs. Under Fernandez’s leadership, Hot Springs National Park rehabilitated its historic bathhouses and founded community engagement programs.

Fernandez was born in Cuba in September 1956. Her family eventually fled Cuba for political reasons and immigrated to the United States when she was twelve, settling in Hialeah, Florida, in 1969. She became an American citizen on July 4, 1976.

After spending time in the U.S. Air Force and obtaining her bachelor’s degree, she joined the National Park Service in 1993 as a regional public affairs officer. She rose through the ranks and, five years later, moved to New York to be the superintendent of Women’s Rights National Historical Park in Seneca Falls and Waterloo, where she organized and presided over the sesquicentennial celebration of the First Women’s Rights Convention of 1848. She was instrumental in two major preservation projects to protect the sites associated with the suffrage movement in America.

In 2004, Fernandez was appointed the first female superintendent of Hot Springs National Park. In that same year, she established an Artist in Residence program in Hot Springs. In 2016, the National Park Service Traffic Safety Coalition named her Superintendent of the Year. She retired in 2018.





# Lidia Gertrudis Sogandares

(1908-1971)

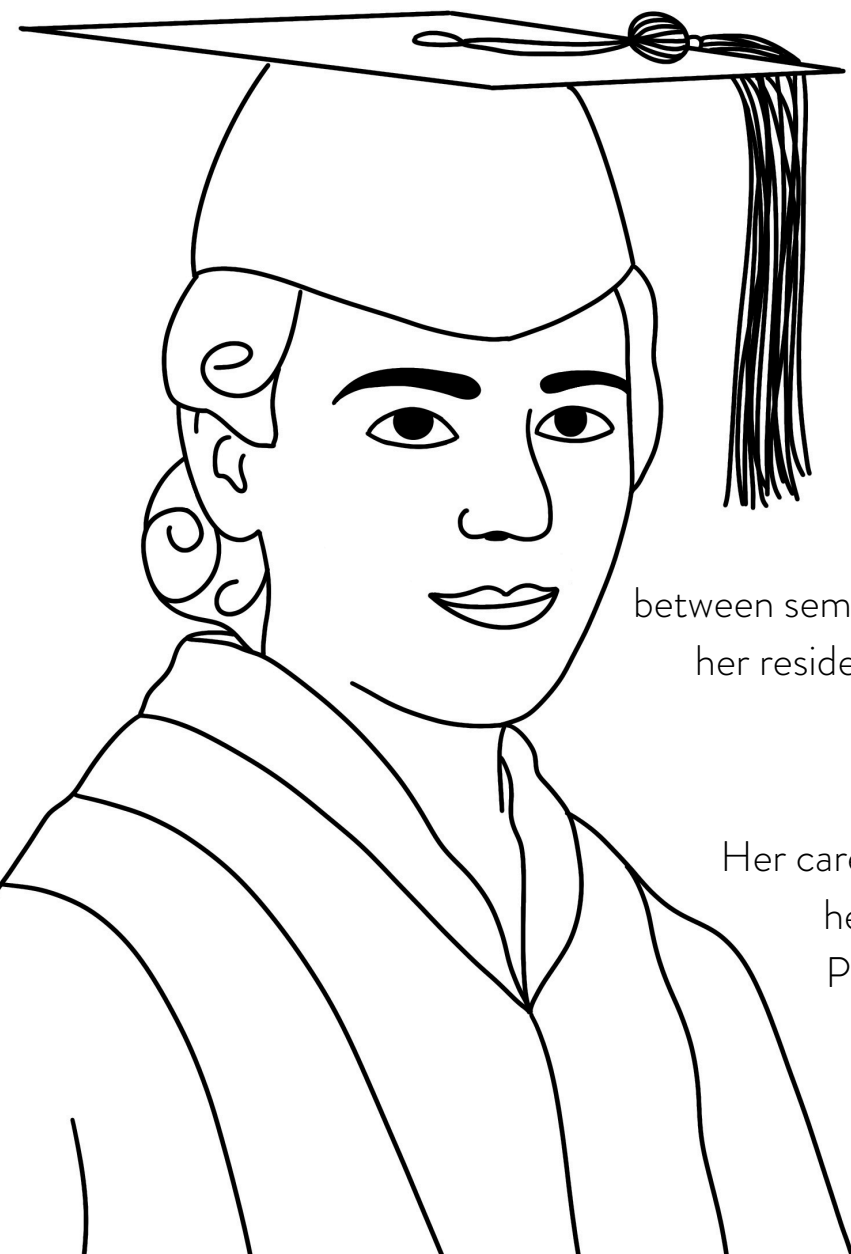
Lidia Gertrudis Sogandares was the first Latin American woman to be accepted into the University of Arkansas School of Medicine (now the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences—UAMS). A pioneer in medicine, she was the first woman to become a physician in Panama and one of the first female doctors in Central America. Sogandares became renowned in the medical fields of obstetrics and gynecology.

Sogandares was born on October 17, 1908, on the island of Taboga in the Gulf of Panama. She grew up in a large family with four brothers and a younger sister. Her father's career led the family to Panama City where she thrived.

She entered the National Institute of Panama in 1920 and garnered wide public acclaim by graduating first in her class in 1926. She exhibited exceptional aptitude for the sciences and was awarded a scholarship in 1928 to complete her pre-med studies.

Sogandares started at UAMS in 1930 and volunteered with several medical institutions between semesters. She graduated in 1934 and completed her residency at the Women's Hospital of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, where she decided to specialize in obstetrics and gynecology.

Her career advanced quickly and she became head of her department at the Santo Tomas Hospital in Panama. She also co-founded the Panamanian Academy of Medicine and Surgery and the Panamanian Society of Obstetrics and Gynecology. She died on March 21, 1971.





# Dionicio Rodriguez

(1891-1955)

Recognized as one of America's foremost faux bois sculptors, Dionicio Rodriguez created works that resembled wood, though made of concrete, with its peeling bark, wormholes, and signs of decay. Arkansas was a major beneficiary of his work, which was an outgrowth of a Mexican folk tradition known as *el trabajo rustico* (rustic work). His Arkansas work was collectively listed on the National Register of Historic Places on December 4, 1986.

He was born in Toluca, Mexico. With little formal education, he began, at the age of fifteen, to work for a foundry in Mexico, and his earliest work can be seen at Chapultepec Castle and the President's Palace in Mexico City. Rodriguez moved to Laredo, Texas, in about 1910 and later moved to San Antonio, Texas, where he worked for a cement company through the late 1920s.

Rodriguez was commissioned to create artworks for three parks in North Little Rock, Arkansas: Lakewood, Crestwood, and the T. R. Pugh Memorial Park. The latter gained notoriety when filmgoers around the world saw the park during the opening screen credits of the 1939 movie *Gone with the Wind*.

He worked at various locations across the U.S. for more than thirty years, spending the last part of his life in San Antonio and dying there on December 16, 1955.

