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Secretary of the Interior Stewart L. Udall today expressed gratification over the selection of Mrs. Clara B. Gonzales, a school principal on the Zuni Indian Reservation in New Mexico, as one of the recipients of Seventh Annual Career Service Awards which are being presented by the National Civil Service League at a Washington banquet ceremony on March 21.

Mrs. Gonzales, Secretary Udall pointed out, is the first woman employee of the Department of the Interior, and the first person from the ranks of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, to receive this award over the seven-year period of its history.

A native of Paulina, Louisiana, Mrs. Gonzales has served in the school system on the Zuni Reservation for more than 37 years. Starting as a teacher at a salary of $760 a year, she was given steadily broadening responsibilities over the years until 1955, when she was appointed top administrator of the Indian Bureau's school program on the reservation. For the past year the Bureau has had no direct school operations at Zuni, and Mrs. Gonzales has been serving in a liaison role with the public school authorities.

During her long period of service, Secretary Udall said, Mrs. Gonzales has made outstanding contributions to help Indian adults as well as students broaden their horizons and adjust to the changing world around them. When she came to Zuni in 1923 only a small percentage of the Indian children were enrolled in school. In recent years the rate of enrollment has been generally higher than in nearby non-Indian communities, and is now virtually 100 percent.

Mrs. Gonzales is traveling to Washington with her husband for the award ceremony. Secretary Udall is a member of the Washington sponsorship committee for the awards banquet.