

## **Jessica G. Thorbourne, 58, Union Official, Dies**

By **THE ASSOCIATED PRESS**

Published: February 3, 2005

LOS ANGELES, Feb. 2 (AP) - Jessica Govea Thorbourne, an organizer for the United Farm Workers union who led major boycotts of table grapes in Canada , died on Jan. 23 in West Orange, N.J. She was 58.

The cause was breast cancer, family members said.

A native of Bakersfield, Calif., Ms. Thorbourne started working in the Kern County cotton fields when she was a child. By 19, she had become a full-time organizer with the farm workers union, in which she worked closely for 16 years with the union's co-founder, Cesar Chavez, said her husband, Kenneth Thorbourne Jr.

In 1968, when she was 21, she went to Canada to enlist consumers in boycotts of table grapes. She directed boycotts there that helped the union win one of its first contracts with a California grape grower, which eventually led to contracts with the entire industry.

Ms. Thorbourne went on to hold several positions in the farm workers union, including national director of organizing. More recently, she was a labor educator at Cornell University.

Besides her husband, she is survived by her mother, Margaret Govea of Bakersfield, and her siblings Catalina, John, Michael and Margaret Govea, all of California.