

## WOMEN OF WINSLOW



### Vada F. Carlson Rodriguez

(born 1897, died 1996)

*“Time marches on. There is a lesson is this: Don’t give up. Keep on giving out. Sooner or later you’ll make it!” – Vada Carlson Rodriguez*

**Vada Carlson was a prolific writer who preserved some of Winslow’s beloved history in *A Town is Born* (1981) and *Snapshots* (1990).**

Vada Rose was born in Cody, Nebraska, on February 27, 1897, one of twelve children. Her family lived on a ranch in a harsh environment, which Vada escaped as best she could though writing.

The family eventually moved to Wyoming, where fifteen-year-old Vada worked as a typesetter and soon began writing articles for the *Riverton Chronicle*. Though the 1917 marriage to Bert Carlson did not last, they did have a son, Wayne, and a daughter, Lois.

After years of newspaper work in Wyoming and California, Vada moved to Winslow in 1950. She worked as the news editor for the *Winslow Mail* and wrote for the *Arizona Daily Sun*, *Williams News*, and the *Arizona Republic*.

In addition to newspaper work, Vada published over a dozen titles of poetry, fiction, and history. Her work also appeared in the *Saturday Evening Post*, *Arizona Highways*, *Desert Magazine*, and *Guideposts*, as well as in children’s magazines under the pen name “Florella Rose.”

Vada was a charter member and president of the Arizona Press Women. She won fifty-eight Arizona and National Press Women awards for her features and news articles, and she was named their “Woman of Achievement” in 1965, her fiftieth year in journalism.

Vada was also a member of the Order of the Eastern Star, Soroptimist International, Winslow Writer’s Club, and the Winslow Business and Professional Women’s Club, which named her Woman of the Year in 1965.

Vada collaborated with artist Joe Cruz Rodriguez on a book of poetry, *High Country Canvas*, and the successful partnership resulted in their 1972 marriage. Both she and Joe cared deeply about preserving Winslow’s history and also collaborated on *A Town Is Born*, a history of the city’s first fifty years.

In 1976, Vada and Joe opened the “Winslow Museum” at 320 Warren Street. The small building housed local and regional artifacts and acted as the Winslow branch of the Navajo County Historical Society. After it closed, their collection became the foundation for the Old Trails Museum, where Vada donated several of Joe’s paintings after his death in 1985.

Vada served on the board of the Navajo County Historical Society and as director of the Winslow branch. In 1979, she was the first Winslow resident to be named to the board of the Arizona Historical Society. In 1990, she published *Snapshots*, a collection of individual histories of notable Winslow residents.

Vada died on November 23, 1996, in Winslow, at age 99.

Middle: Vada, right, and Billie Yost Williams of Flagstaff receiving awards from the National Press Women at the Grand Canyon in 1956

Bottom: Vada with her husband, Joe Rodriguez, and one of his paintings

