

Citizen

Doreen Alhadeff

First U.S. Ambassador to Red de Juderias of Spain

"When it became possible to regain Spanish citizenship, I remember getting up at four o'clock in the morning to see the news, to see if the legislation passed. The gesture was important, to recognize that a wrong had been done. It was something that had been taken away from my family, and although clearly I have no idea who that family was or where they were exactly, I wanted it back. I felt that it was important to take it back for all of them."

The granddaughter of the first Sephardic woman in Seattle, Doreen Alhadeff, like her grandmother, is a pioneer. A Seattle native, Doreen grew up in the city's vibrant Sephardic community, which inspired an interest in Spanish culture that led her to study Spanish language and literature at the University of Washington. After graduation, she married, raised a family, and co-founded with partners a successful real estate company, which she owned for fifteen years. When the Spanish legislature passed a statute in 2014 to give Sephardic Jews the right to regain the citizenship their ancestors lost in 1492, Doreen became one of the first people to take advantage of the new law, becoming a Spanish citizen in 2017. The co-founder and first president of the Seattle Sephardic Network, Doreen was recently named the U.S. Ambassador to the Red de Juderias, a network of Spanish cities with historic Jewish roots. She has also served on the boards of Jewish Family Service, Hillel at the University of Washington, and the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation, and is a current board member of the Washington State Jewish Historical Society.



Doreen signing Spanish citizenship papers in Malaga, Spain; her wedding, with husband Joseph and her parents; with Joseph and their sons, Loren and Mitchell.

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