

Gustavo Villageliu

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Gustavo Villageliu was appointed to the Board of Immigration Appeals (BIA) as a Board Member in July of 1995. The BIA is the highest administrative body for interpreting and applying immigration laws. Mr. Villageliu came to the United States from Cuba as a refugee in 1962 when he was thirteen years old. He and his family lived in Miami for twelve years, then moved to Iowa, where his parents taught as University professors.

Mr. Villageliu attended law school at the University of Iowa, graduating cum laude in 1977. After serving as Johnson County Attorney Prosecutor Intern in Iowa City, Iowa, he joined the Board of Immigration Appeals as a staff attorney in January, 1978. He received numerous achievement awards for his work specializing in war criminals, investors, and criminal alien cases. In September of 1989 he moved to Miami as an Immigration Judge, where he handled cases of detained Cubans at the Krome detention center. As a BIA Board Member, Mr. Villageliu dissented in the landmark case, Matter of N-J-B. In that February 1997 decision, the BIA held that the service of an Order to Show Cause under prior law terminated the period of physical presence for purposes of applying for suspension of deportation, even though the Order was served before the 1996 Act's effective date. This ruling would have resulted in the deportation of tens of thousands of persons who may have qualified for suspension of deportation under previous law. On July 10, 1997, the Attorney General vacated the Board's decision in that case essentially adopting Mr. Villageliu's opinion. Mr. Villageliu and his wife Carmen live in Falls Church with their three children.

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