CHICANA



EDUCATIONAL CONFERENCE

FEBRUARY 23, 1974 ST. EDWARD'S UNIVERSITY

AUSTIN, TEXAS

After weeks of preparation on the part of Olga De Leon of the Center for Public School Ethnic Studies at the University of Texas at Austin, Pauline Martinez of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission of San Antonio and other Chicanas, their efforts paid off in the form of the first Statewide Chicana Conference held on Saturday, February 23, 1974, on the St. Edward's University Campus. This conference began with the idea that Chicanas from around the state needed to come together, meet others and exchange ideas on issues relating to the Chicana. More specifically, the Chicana issues of concern centered around the topics of employment, bilingual bicultural education, day care centers, social issues and education for the Chicana. The women that came together represented a heterogeneous segment of the population drawn from different professional fields.

Due to non-existent monetary resources, this conference came about only because the Chicanas involved were concerned enough and dedicated enough to finance their own expenses. It was totally due to the voluntary efforts on the parts of all individuals involved that the Chicana Educational Conference met with such success.

Several workshops were held throughout the conference and were chaired by these concerned and dedicated Chicanas:

The Employment Workshop was chaired by Annabelle Valle, of Austin; and Mary Castillo of Houston. Issues discussed in the Employment Workshop were discrimination, qualifications, training programs, the family and the working mother.

The Bilingual Bicultural Workshop was chaired by Hermelinda Rodriquez of Austin; Elisa Gutierrez of Austin; Estela Salinas of Edinburg and Tina Reyes of Houston. Legislative issues and the schools, learning and the self-concept of the students, parental involvement and the support of bilingual bicultural projects were the issues discussed.

The Day Care Centers Workshop was chaired by Marie Oser of Houston and Mamie Moore of Washington, D. C., who represented the Day Care and Child Development Council of America, Inc. The cultural and bilingual curricula for the day care centers were some of the items with which this workshop was concerned.

The Social Issues Workshop was chaired by Sylvia Garcia of Austin; Sylvia Garcia of Houston and Rosa Gonzales of Austin. The workshop had discussions on issues such as welfare, revenue sharing, rape, family planning and drugs. Also discussed as concerns were laws, agencies and programs assisting women.

The Education for the Chicana Workshop was chaired by Julie Marquez, San Antonio; Olga Soliz, Houston and Sister Brigida Smiley, San Antonio. Topics of discussion revolved around educational scholarships and grants, national testing, counseling services available to undergraduate and graduate Chicano students and the limited publicity of resources available to those students applying for financial assistance.

The climax of the conference came when the general assembly commenced to share their more salient ideas and to present summaries of the individual workshops. The results of these ideas were resolutions which will be acted upon by the Chicanas in their respective communities.

Preliminary plans are to develop a set of strategies designed to obtain assistance and positive action from individuals as well as local, state and national agencies; hopefully, this assistance and action will help alleviate the conditions which are plaguing the Chicanas of today.

OLGA DE LEON



Olga De Leon is presently a Social Science Research Associate at the University of Texas at Austin with the Center for Public School Ethnic Studies. Ms. De Leon was born in Ruth, Michigan, the daughter of migrant workers. Her interest in the problems of the oppressed stems from her early childhood experiences in the fields as a migrant worker. Ms. De Leon holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Spanish and Physical Education and a Masters in Education in Guidance and Counseling from Texas Technological University in Lubbock, Texas. All of the above education was obtained after being widowed with two small children. She has taught in the public schools in Lubbock, Texas, and in Los Angeles, California. She has also worked in the Headstart program in Lubbock and has been on the CPSES staff since August, 1972. In addition, Ms. De Leon has a wide variety of job experiences. Since receiving her education, she has spent a great deal of time and effort in working with the Chicano community in various settings. Ms. De Leon has traveled extensively, is fluent in Spanish and English, and has a knowledge of French, Italian, and Portuguese. She has also visited some of the countries where these languages are spoken. She believes that travel and the knowledge of other languages are two of the best ways to develop an appreciation for the contributions of different cultural groups to the society in which we live. Mother of two children, a thirteen year old daughter and a twelve year old son, Ms. De Leon is a firm believer in the possibilities of combining motherhood with a career helping others. She looks forward to the day when more Mexican American women will be active in the world outside the home.

PAULINE MARTINEZ



Pauline C. Martinez was born in San Antonio, Texas. She is one of ten children born to Antonia and Herman Cortez, of Laredo, Texas. Ms. Martinez was educated in the public schools of San Antonio. She is married and the mother of five children: a twelve year old daughter and four sons, ranging in ages from 3 to 10. Ms. Martinez is presently employed as an Investigator-Conciliator—Equal Employment Specialist for the U. S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission in the San Antonio District Office. She is responsible for bringing about voluntary compliance with Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. (It is her responsibility to settle cases after a decision has been rendered by the Commission based on investigative evidence submitted on cases, by negotiating a satisfactory workable agreement between the parties, whereby those practices found to be discriminatory are eliminated and specific remedies for the claimant are achieved.)

Ms. Martinez's employment experiences began while she was a student in high school. She participated in many educational programs which permitted her to work half a day and attend classes the other half. Ms. Martinez has since continued to work and attend college level courses. She was employed by the Department of Defense from 1955 to 1964, and by the U. S. Civil Rights Commission from 1968 to 1972.

In 1970, Ms. Martinez organized a group called **WORKING WOMEN** employed in federal, state and local government and, in private industry. The primary aim of this group was to seek equal opportunity in employment. The group was successful in creating a coalition of several women's organizations to support the primary goal and to lobby for appointments for women to the city of San Antonio's boards and commissions.

In 1971, she was a charter member and helped organize a group called **FEDERALLY EMPLOYED WOMEN, INC.** (FEW) in San Antonio. This group is affiliated with a national organization and is concerned with the problems of women in federal employment and upward mobility for women that are in dead-end jobs.

In 1972, she was one of the charter members that founded the **MEXICAN AMERICAN BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONAL WOMEN'S CLUB** in San Antonio. This organization is also affiliated with the national and state Federation of BPW clubs. The goal of this group is to elevate the status of women, primarily Mexican American women.

In 1973, she was elected Vice-Chairperson for Legislation for the Texas Women's Political Caucus. She is currently on detail from the U. S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission to the U. S. Commission on Civil Rights to assist with a national hearing on women in poverty. Ms. Martinez has been asked to work as a consultant at this hearing. She will be assisting the Commission in preparing the outline for the hearing and will be responsible for interviewing potential Spanish-surnamed witnesses and supplying the hearing with input from the Spanish-speaking women.

TERESA ESCOBEDO
EVALUATION DESIGNER



Teresa Herrera Escobedo was born and reared on a small farm in Stonewall County in West Texas. She graduated valedictorian of her high school graduating class. Her formal education was discontinued for ten years during which time she married, gave birth to two daughters, and worked as a beautician. She returned to college to fulfill a life time dream of becoming a teacher. She completed a B. S. degree in three years at Angelo State University where she was awarded Academic Excellence Awards at the end of her junior and senior years, and selected to Who's Who Among Students In American Universities and Colleges.

She was later employed by the San Angelo Public Schools where she worked in the bilingual program and obtained Kindergarten Certification from Texas A&M. She was chosen to receive an E.P.D.A.-P.P.S.Mexican American Counselor Education Grant to Texas Tech University. She obtained her Master of Education degree in 1972 and continued gradute study at Tech where she was employed as a part-time instructor in the Early Childhood Education Department.

She is presently an August candidate for a Doctor of Education degree and has accepted a position with the University of Texas at Austin Early Childhood Center. Her dissertation research topic is "The Effect of a Cultural Awareness Model on the Attitudes of Prospective Teachers Toward Mexican Americans."

The Participant Letter of Invitation

February 3, 1974

Dear Friend,

You are invited to a Chicana Educational Conference to be held at St. Edward's University, Austin, Texas, February 23, 1974. The conference is being sponsored by the Texas Women's Political Caucus (TWPC) and Dr. Leonard Mestas of the Juarez-Lincoln Center.

The TWPC is dedicated to bringing women of all ethnic backgrounds into all political areas, especially at the decision-making levels. It is a multi-partisan coalition which seeks to make women effective as voters, campaign workers, lobbyists, and particularly as candidates. Within the TWPC we have ethnic caucuses and it is the Chicana Caucus that has organized this conference. The Chicana Caucus is an organized group of Mexican American, Spanish-speaking women who are trying to reach out to as many "mujeres" across the state as possible to discuss educational issues of primary importance to our women. The time has come for us to unite and help each other. The objective of the conference is to make information available on educational grants, bilingual education, employment, social issues (welfare, revenue sharing, Texas Constitution Revision) and day care centers.

We need your help. We are enclosing a questionnaire which we must have returned to us with your thoughts and ideas. We hope you will be able to attend, but even if it is impossible for you, the returned questionnaire is vital to the success of the conference. It will be from these answers we receive that we will be in a better position to adequately plan the conference.

There will be no registration fee for the conference; however, donations will be accepted to defer the expense of postage and printing of mailouts. Please return the questionnaire as soon as possible. We look forward to seeing you on February 23.

Sincerely,

Olga De Leon
Chicana Caucus Representative

Jane Hickie
Chairperson, TWPC

A Letter to Consultants

The participant questionnaire also helped us establish who was interested in becoming a consultant and her area of expertise. These women were then asked to make a commitment.

Once they agreed to assist with the conference, a letter of confirmation was sent to them. This letter let the person (consultant/facilitator) know that she was committed and that her assistance was of great importance.

Dear Friend,

The Chicana Caucus is pleased to know that you have accepted our invitation to participate as a resoure person in the _____ Workshop during the Chicana Education Conference to be held at Moody Hall, St. Edward's University, Austin, Texas, February 23, 1974. Enclosed is an agenda, a sketch of the sessions being covered and a list of the resource persons that will be assisting us.

There will be a meeting at the Quality Inn, 2200 S. Interregional 35, Austin, Texas, for all the resource persons, Friday, February 22, 1974 at 6:00 p.m. followed by a reception at 8:00 p.m. for all attending the conference. During the meeting, we will discuss the conference overview plus consultant responsibilities. At that time, you will have the opportunity to talk to other consultants who will be working in your workshop. The purpose of which will be to set up better presentation coordination. Bring all materials concerning your workshop with you to this meeting.

Please let me know if you need hotel reservations. Call me at (512) 471-3625 (office) 453-1126 (residence) in Austin.

Sincerely,

Olga De Leon
Chicana Caucus Representative

PROGRAM

CHICANA EDUCATIONAL CONFERENCE

PROGRAM

A Conference Sponsored by:

Texas Women's Political Caucus
Chicana Caucus
Dr. Leonard Mestas, Juarez-Lincoln Center
St. Edward's University
Moody Hall - 3001 S. Congress
Austin, Texas

Saturday,
February 23, 1974
9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

AGENDA

9:00 - 9:30	Registration
9:30 - 9:50	Introduction to Conference-Ms. Olga De Leon, Chicana Caucus Chairperson
9:50 - 10:00	Brief Summary of TWPC-Ms. Jane Hickie, Chairperson TWPC
10:00 - 10:10	Introduction of Keynote Speaker by Ms. Pauline Martinez, Vice Chairperson of Legislation
10:10 - 1040	Ms. Vilma S. Martinez, General Counsel & President, Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc., San Francisco, California "An Analysis of the Mexican American Woman Today and the Need for Educational Awareness of Our Responsibility in a Changing Society."
10:40 - 11:00	Break
11:00 - 11:30	Brief Summary of the Texas Constitutional Revision Convention Dr. Cleotilde Garcia
11:30 - 12:30	Lunch

WORKSHOPS

12:30 - 1:30

I. **Employment**-Discrimination, qualifications, training programs, the family and the working mother

II. **Bilingual Education**-Legislative issues within the schools, learning and the self-concept of the students, parental involvement, support for bilingual projects

III. **Social Issues**-Welfare, revenue sharing, rape, family planning, drugs. Laws agencies and programs assisting women

IV. **Education for the Chicana**-Scholarships, grants

V. **Day Care Centers**-Cultural, bilingual curriculum and staff.

1:35 - 2:35 REPEAT OF ALL FIVE WORKSHOPS

2:40 - 3:40 REPEAT OF ALL FIVE WORKSHOPS

4:00 - 5:00 Ms. Olga De Leon
Large Group Reporting on each of the five Workshops

Concluding Remarks Ms. Olga De Leon

Those interested in a Continuing Task Force to make plans for future workshops and/or organizations for Mexican American women, please make plans to meet after the workshop and perhaps stay overnight.

Opening Statements of the Conference

Ms. Olga De Leon's Opening Statement to the General Assembly of the Chicana Educational Conference

To Chicanas, to us all, time is precious for we always have reasons which hinder our getting together. Some of these reasons are the care of our children, husbands, transportation, money and now, the gas shortage. For these very reasons, we have decided on a one day conference; hopefully, something will develop from here.

"As I traveled around the state of Texas and other states, I saw many groups getting together to discuss that which most concerned them. As I moved around, I totally, realistically and truthfully could not specifically identify with any of these groups. I felt a group that I could most identify with would be a Chicana group. As I approached other Chicana women, I discovered that many Chicanas wanted to meet with other Chicanas to discuss their concerns. So I thought a Chicana Conference where Mejicanas could get together for the benefit of all women would be the beginning. I pursued the idea, but if it had not been for such an open-minded, hard-working, concerned, young woman as Pauline Martinez, this conference would not have taken place as soon as it did. It also happened that this summer Pauline and I got involved with Texas Women's Political Caucus, an organization that has helped with issues concerning all women. With their support, we proceeded. When Dr. Leonard Mestas from Juarez-Lincoln volunteered the university facilities for the conference we knew we had it made, and so here we are.

The objectives of this conference are:

1. to get acquainted with other Chicanas
2. to identify Chicanas with expertise and the willingness to sponsor workshops around the state
3. to discuss five (5) of the issues that most concerned Chicanas: bilingual bicultural education, day care, education, employment and social issues
4. to share and exchange ideas between interested Chicanas
5. to make information available on the above five (5) issues.

The content of the conference will be five (5) workshops:

1. Bilingual Bicultural Education
2. Day Care and Day Care Centers
3. Education for the Chicana
4. Employment
5. Social Issues

Participants will rotate in order that each individual attend at least three workshop sessions of their choice. During these sessions, it is very important that participants stay with their chosen workshop in order to have good and balanced discussions.

Hopefully, the follow-up to this conference will be:

1. To have women in their own areas start conferences such as the Chicana Educational Conference
2. To have communication established between Chicanas around the state
3. To get more Chicanas involved in local and state organizations that affect Mejicanos
4. To inform our young ones, particularly Chicanas, that we want to do something to better our way of life.

Hopefully, this conference will be the beginning of many other happenings for Chicana's involvement in the struggle.

Con todo carino,

Olga



Survey

The following survey was composed to meet three purposes:

1. provide an indication of the congruancy of ideas among the women attending the conference,
2. to provide consultants with conversation stimuli in their individual workshops by discussing the responses obtained,and
3. to assess the feelings of the women attending the conference on the issues to be discussed.

The questions were compiled utilizing a group process i.e., A group of community Chicanas was convened and prompted into formulating the specific questions, thus assuring that the questions would be relevant to the Chicana conference participants.

The process involved in using the survey at the conference was as follows:

1. the survey was passed out to participants as they registered,
2. the participants were given about 15 minutes to fill out the questionnaire and hand it back in, and
3. once the questionnaire was collected, the responses were tabulated and results given to the consultants, or workshop group leaders, for use in their respective workshop sessions.

This description will provide you with procedures which could be used by you when you hold a conference in your area or locale.

I. EMPLOYMENT

			Percent
1. Do you feel there is discrimination against you as a woman in employment?	YES	51	77
	NO	8	12
	N/A	7	11
2. Do you feel there is discrimination against you as a Chicana in employment?	YES	42	65
	NO	8	12
	N/A	15	23
3. Do you feel that a Chicana needs higher qualifications than her Anglo counterpart in getting similar jobs?	YES	40	62
	NO	22	34
	N/A	4	6
4. Do you feel that employment experience in Anglo organizations or agencies is given more importance than employment experience in Chicano-oriented organizations or agencies?	YES	47	72
	NO	5	8
	N/A	13	20
5. Do you feel that career training programs are geared more for men than for women?	YES	51	78
	NO	6	9
	N/A	8	12
6. Do you feel that career training programs tend to exclude Chicanas?	YES	41	63
	NO	10	15
	N/A	14	22
7. Do you feel employment policies are prejudiced against Chicanas or women with pre-school age children?	YES	50	77
	NO	6	9
	N/A	9	14

8. Do you feel that getting laid-off from employment due to pregnancy is:

		Percent
to benefit the health of the mother	4	6
benefit the employer in terms of wages	7	11
to benefit the employer in terms of productivity of work	10	15
all the above	7	11
other reasons	16	25
Don't know	21	32

II. BILINGUAL BICULTURAL EDUCATION

			Percent
1. Do you feel there is a need for bilingual bicultural education in Texas?	YES	65	100
	NO	0	0
	N/A	0	0
2. Do you feel present legislation is adequate to meet the needs of bilingualism in Texas?	YES	10	15
	N/A	4	6
3. Do you feel a bicultural teacher is essential in order to impart a positive self-concept and positive learning experience to Chicano students?	YES	62	95
	NO	2	3
	N/A	1	2
4. Do you feel our present Anglo-oriented school system is insensitive and not responsive to promoting Chicano parent involvement in our schools?	YES	57	88
	NO	1	2
	N/A	7	11
5. Do you feel there is adequate economic support for bilingual bicultural programs?	YES	4	6
	NO	57	88
	N/A	4	6
6. Do you feel there are adequate training programs for personnel who staff bilingual bicultural programs?	YES	5	8
	NO	49	75
	N/A	11	17

III. SOCIAL ISSUES

1. Do you feel Chicana recipients of welfare services can be adequately served if there are no Chicanas in the policy-making positions?	YES	3	5
	NO	60	92
	N/A	2	3
2. Do you feel that Chicanas are currently receiving their "fair share" in revenue sharing funds?	YES	0	0
	NO	53	82
	N/A	12	18
3. Do you feel that "rape" is a significant problem for the Chicana?	YES	39	60
	NO	11	17
	N/A	15	23
4. Do you feel that Chicanas are getting adequate counseling on family planning and abortion?	YES	10	15
	NO	43	66
	N/A	12	18
5. Do you feel there is more prevalent use of drugs (thereby creating problems) among Chicanas than other segments of the population?	YES	11	17
	NO	43	66
	N/A	11	17

6. Do you feel Texas laws adequately protect Chicanas?	YES	4	6
	NO	49	75
	N/A	12	18
7. Do you feel Chicanas have sufficient agencies and programs that adequately assist them?	YES	4	6
	NO	48	74
	N/A	13	20

IV. EDUCATION

1. Do you feel that institutions of higher education (colleges and universities) tend to systematically exclude Chicanas?	YES	49	75
	NO	8	12
	N/A	8	12
2. Do you feel that policies in institutions of higher education tend to discourage Chicanas from entering certain programs of study?	YES	53	82
	NO	6	9
	N/A	6	9

V. DAY CARE

1. Do you feel Chicanas have an adequate voice in directing day care center programs and associations affecting their children?	YES	10	15
	NO	46	71
	N/A	9	14

JANE HICKIE'S REMARKS

Ms. Jane Hickie is the State Chairperson for the Texas Women's Political Caucus and was a representative of one of the sponsoring organizations of the Conference.

"As a representative of one of the sponsoring organizations of the Conference, welcome.

There is more talent, commitment, expertise, seriousness and quality in this room this morning than in the entire House of Representatives. Instead of coming together to confer, the people here should be coming together to make policy for the State of Texas.

All individuals in the Texas Women's Political Caucus (TWPC) bring different sets of commitments and different backgrounds to the organization; the caucus is multi-partisan.There are blue brochures outside about the Caucus but there is a major error on them as La Raza Unida Party has withdrawn from TWPC. It is my understanding that one of the reasons for the Partido's withdrawal is that there was some feeling that the Caucus was only a front organization for Sissy Farenthold's candidacy for Governor and that this endorsement (which would happen at our policy council meeting in April) would not help their efforts in trying to build La Raza Unida Party around the State. Although, I would deny that the Caucus is only a front for Sissy, if I were a betting person, I would lay money on her endorsement by the Policy Council at the April meeting.

It is essential for you to commit yourselves as citizens and women to your political responsibilities if we are ever to improve the quality of Texas government. Once while waiting to testify at the Constitutional Revision Committee hearings, Pauline Martinez and I watched the Representatives laughing, giggling, goosing one another, talking about cotton allotments, who had a hang nail and what the the price of beans was——all of this was going on while a person was testifying. Ms. Martinez turned to me and said, "My God! This is a circus. These people are fools!" Well, yes. If you ever believe you are not qualified for an office, go down there and see who is serving in the office. It is generally unbelievable. "It is unbelievable also that we have so avoided our responsibility as citizens through fear, through allowing people to tell us as women— 'Oh, you couldn't possibly serve in the Texas House' and to believe that to the point that the majority of people who are serving are unqualified. I hope that the next time this kind of meeting takes place that it will be held on the floor of the Legislature, with everyone of you as its members."

VILMA MARTINEZ

Ms. Vilma Martinez, Keynote Speaker was introduced by Ms. Pauline Martinez, Chairperson on Legislation for TWPC.

The text of this speech was presented by Vilma S. Martinez, General Counsel of the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund, before the Chicana Caucus of The Texas Women's Political Caucus, Juarez-Lincoln Center, Austin, Texas. February 23, 1974.

To be asked to speak before the Chicana Educational Conference sponsored by the Chicana Caucus of The Texas Women's Political Caucus and Dr. Mestas of the Juarez-Lincoln Center is a great privilege. I believe in all sincerity that you represent the single most important force--political and otherwise -- in the country today and I will be watching with great interest what you will undoubtedly accomplish for one much beleagured state and society in the years to come.

It is particularly gratifying to come before you as the first Chicana to be General Counsel of MALDEF. Nothing would be more satisfying than to come here and speak of the advances made by and for Chicanas in the areas of employment, education, health - any and all areas that affect us as Chicanas and as women. However, as the situation presently stands, there are few, if any advances to speak of. We here in this room constitute one of the most oppressed groups in the United States today. One has only to look at the unemployment rate, educational level, and occupational categories for (Spanish-speaking) women to realize that something is very wrong, that there is a problem that is going unnoticed and unsolved by existing social agencies and organizations.

I am looking at all of you today and I am feeling very emotional because these are my roots--I grew up here. I was educated a stone's throw from here, and much as I would like to see and speak of your beauty, all I can see is that the median school years completed nationally (for Anglo men and women) is 12.1 years. For Chicanas in Texas, the median years of schooling is 7.0 years.

Thus, it is not surprising, when one turns to see where the Chicana is employed that the largest percentage - a whopping 27% - are clerical workers. Twenty-two precent are service - this means domestic workers outside the home and 18% are operatives. (work in industry)

Although Chicanas were only 13% of all employed women in Texas, we were 31% of all women farm workers, 25% of women operatives and 21% of women nonfarm laborers. We were only 7% of women professional and technical workers and 9% of women non-farm managers and administrators.

The unemployment rate for adult Chicanas is 6.8%, for teenage minority girls, 38.6%. Contrast this with a 3.4% unemployment rate for adult Anglo males and 14.2% for teenage Anglo males!

We have the highest unemployment rate, the least education, the lowest income....What do these figures prove?....They prove that one Chicana General Counsel is not enough. They prove that the few Chicanas in professional schools, politics, business and management are not enough. The few of us that have been able to

overcome the obstacles imposed on us are too few .... there must be more. More Chicanas choosing for themselves and their community to become an intergral, active part of that community. And that is not to say that making such a choice and following it through is going to be easy. On the contrary there are pressures not to make such a choice. There are expectations that you will fail and surprised faces when you don't. There are the barriers of discrimination—because you are a Chicana, because of your age, because of your background, and yes, also because you are a woman. And sometimes it is a pure philosophical struggle deciding which factor is more of a detriment: being a Chicano or being a woman.

(Believe me) I know these pressures all too well. "What, a woman do the job?" "We've never had a Chee c̄ā nō here before." They see Chicanas behind the typewriters, in the fields, in the factories - and not a murmur of disapproval - but to see Chicanas taking an active part in making the policy that effects their own lives - then the foundations begin to shake, when we hear about 'women's place', then all the racism and sexism starts to show itself. The barriers form and block your way - and you are one woman against it all ....but no more. Look at us here. We are no longer simply an individual up against the monolith. We are coming together and becoming organized--to create alternate structures, alternate policy - so a young Chicana need no longer be expected only to marry and have ten (10) children - as I am certain most of us here have at some time been expected to do. No, because now she, we, have a choice. This is not to say there is no struggle. But at least now a Chicana can choose as I did to become a lawyer, and receive support from other Chicanas. A Chicana can say I am going to choose what I want to do - and I am going to succeed, and that choice will help not only herself and other Chicanas, but her community as well. There is an enormous need to be filled and it is you here in this room, not simply individual women - but a collective force. A collective force that can, through public action and political awareness, be instrumental in dealing with the problems that beset Chicanas and Chicanos alike.

Within my own sphere, as a lawyer, the courts and laws have not yet been utilized to their fullest extent to benefit Chicanos and Chicanas.

The enormous battle for equal rights under our laws for the people of La Raza is not yet won. In fact, victory will come only after much time and much backbreaking effort. Effort by you, by me, by our guests;... ultimately by all Americans, but mostly by all Chicanos. In 1974 however, our tools are ourselves... particularly those of us who have taken that extra step as citizens and members of the community to grasp those elusive rights which are our birthright as Americans. This is no doubt, what the Chicana Caucus means to you. This is what MALDEF means to me now.

You know, one of the most striking things about MALDEF is its incredible breadth of purpose and function. Every one of us here has been involved with one or more aspects of improving the lives of Chicanos in this country, and we have worked individually and with various groups and I have been involved—deeply committed— to the idea of MALDEF from its formation. I worked on individual cases, helped prepare technical meetings and so forth. After I was elected to the board of directors, I spent a good deal more time on questions of policy and, most importantly, on fund raising. So I knew the organization, or thought that I did. But now, working in the office every day, I am constantly struck by the huge number

of different things that MALDEF is to different people. It is, to me—as a lawyer—of course, a law firm; it will develop, we hope, into as good a civil rights law firm as there is . But it's a law firm with six different offices spread around the country, so that any individual Chicana or Chicano group can walk in and say: "Here is a case where our people are getting short treatment; bring this case for all of us." Then, there is the part of MALDEF that is the educational arm, helping our law students and newly practicing attorneys. There is the part that works with many other community organizations on questions of political rights, employment rights and so forth. In short, there isn't really another group like this; and I think that only the Chicano could have developed and supported such an organization. For myself, I am grateful for being given the opportunity to lead MALDEF in 1974 and am fiercely proud of our people and the organization to which it has given birth.

There are so many things to say **today** and so many people who can say them better than I. But I would like just to say a few words as a sort of progress report and plan of action of MALDEF, to tell you directly what your organization is doing and what we hope to do in the near future.

If you look closely at the activity of MALDEF in its early years, you realize that MALDEF primarily reacted to the frustrations of our people—such as the school walkouts in 1968 in East Los Angeles and in the Rio Grande Valley in Texas. Perhaps this was necessary, considering the newness of the organization. Today, however, MALDEF's litigation program can no longer afford to be, and no longer is, simply a reaction to problems thrust on its doorstep by a combination of neglect by our government and frustration of our people. MALDEF must use its creative talents to initiate new litigation to achieve a true equal educational opportunity, which often means bilingual and bicultural education for our neglected children to achieve full access to and participation in our government at all levels, to insure equal employment opportunity, and to provide adequate health care.

What this means in practical terms is that because no statewide statute has ever formally segregated Mexican Americans in public schools, MALDEF has to spend many hard-earned dollars in the courts of this country to prove what we all knew: that Mexican American children throughout the Southwest have been segregated. The federal courts, including the Supreme Court, have now ruled that actions of school boards causing or continuing this segregation violate the United States Constitution. MALDEF is attempting to solidify these decisions, and to use them to break up the historic pattern of segregation of Chicano public school students, as well as the underemployment of Chicano teachers and administrators. Several of these cases have been tried and are being heard on appeal. You will be interested to know that three of them come from Texas - from Austin, Uvalde and New Braunsfels. In the area of employment rights for our people, MALDEF has also taken the initiative because Chicanos have been underemployed in virtually every industry, except service industries employing unskilled labor. MALDEF has been challenging discriminatory employment practices through lawsuits and complaints filed with government fair employment practice agencies. Recently MALDEF secured a federal court decision that the requirement of a high school diploma for employment, where it was not necessary for the job in question, discriminated unlawfully against Chicanos. In Modesto, California, MALDEF has sued virtually the entire California canning industry to force them to overhaul their hiring and promotion practices so as to secure for Chicanos their equal employment rights. Throughout the state of California, MALDEF has challenged the employment policies of the major banks.

Today I am with the TWPC some of whom now sit in the state legislature. I am sure I need not recount to them the obstacles they so obviously had to overcome to get where they are. (No doubt you are aware that MALDEF intervened in a case called White V. Regester involving the enormous muti-member district in San Antonio, Texas.) The court upheld the charge that the multi-member district discriminated against Mexican Americans and ordered a single member district plan. As a result, three additional Chicanos and the first Black ever, where elected from San Antonio to the Texas House of Representatives. This landmark decision was affirmed by the Supreme Court of the United States and represents MALDEF'S first United States Supreme Court victory. MALDEF has already instituted new litigation to extend this very important principle to other areas: the City Councils, the County Commissioner Courts, etc. with multi-member districts.

MALDEF is presently developing a Chicana rights project. This project is specifically aimed at defining Chicana's legal needs and creating a litigation strategy, based on those needs, to further Chicanas position in obtaining equality in employment, education, health care, prisons, housing, etc. For too long the social and legal position of the Chicana has been one of neglect whether by the (existing) civil rights groups, feminist organizations, social interest groups, and even Chicano organizations. If MALDEF is to be truly representative of all Chicanos, then it is our responsibility, as Chicanos and attorneys, to create and initiate litigation certain to generate change in present discrimintory social policies and certain to benefit Chicanas.

The problems that we as Chicanas face are a direct result of being both Chicana and female in a racist and sexist society. It should not become a rhetorical debate on whether we are oppressed or not - and which factor is more oppressive, one's race or one's sex - for our reality, - our double oppression cannot be debated or denied. Rather our energy should be directed into ourselves, into organizing ourselves into a political and social force, - for no one is going to organize Chicanas but Chicanas themselves. No one is better suited to define and create the solutions for our collective problems, our collective oppression than we are.

PREFACE

The long and bitter struggle for equal rights and equal opportunity for everyone has finally made an impact on our nation and has radically changed the structure of our society. Never before, in the history of Mankind, has such a radical and extensive change taken place in such a short time. It has become apparent that we are in the middle of a vast revolutionary change that will undoubtedly touch all aspects of our cultural development. Conservative and traditional principles are being scrutinized and destroyed whenever these principles serve the forces of oppression.

The Mexican American woman has had to endure discriminatory practices for several generations. In her role as wife and mother she has contributed immensely to our modern society. However, this role has often hindered her development as a social being. Tradition has often been stronger than aspirations and many women have given up an education and interesting careers for domestic responsibilities. As long as this trend continues, Mexican American women will continue to be subservient and will succumb to male chauvinism and to racism.

The time has come for all Mexican American women to become involved in mind-stimulating activities and to take active roles in education, politics, religion, etc. In my opinion, our husbands cannot be completely emancipated unless we too are emancipated. We must endeavor to make people understand that sexism is a kind of racism and that man cannot win the struggle against oppressive forces unless we are set free and are allowed to play an active role in this important struggle.

NILDA GARCIA, DIRECTOR
BILINGUAL PROGRAM
ROBSTOWN INDEPENDENT
SCHOOL DISTRICT
ROBSTOWN, TEXAS

PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
CHICANA EDUCATIONAL CONFERENCE

Compiled By Olga DeLeon

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Preface	i
Acknowledgement	iii
Purpose of Booklet	1
Introduction	2
How to Plan and Organize a Conference	4
Organizers	6
Participant Questionnaire and Letter of Invitation	10
A Letter to Consultants	13
Program	14
Opening of Conference	16
Survey	18
Ms. Jane Hickie, State Chairperson for Texas Women's Political Caucus 1974	21
Ms. Vilma Martinez, General Counsel and President of the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund	22
Dra. Cleotide Garcia, 1974 Constitutional Revision Committee Representative	26
Consultant-Facilitators	28
Workshop Overview	29
Bilingual Bicultural Education	30
Day Care	35
Education for the Chicana	36
Employment	42
Social Issues	45
Conference Resolutions	53
Conference Evaluation	56
Conference Participants	63

ORGANIZERS

