

## Educational Reformer and Feminist Gracia Molina de Pick to be Honored at UC San Diego's César Chávez Celebration

*Molina de Pick will be recognized at the April 1 campus event for her \$125,000 challenge gift endowment to the UC San Diego Chicano/a~Latino/a Program*

March 20, 2008

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Gracia Molina Enriquez de Pick, an activist in the international feminist movement and lifelong proponent of educational reform-especially for Latinos and Chicanos-once said, "Your individual life only has meaning if you unselfishly engage as sisters and brothers in the fight for equality, justice and peace."

Molina de Pick, who sacrificed and struggled for social, economic and political justice throughout her life, will be honored at the UC San Diego Cesar Chavez celebration kickoff on April 1 from 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. at the International Center on campus. She will be recognized for her recent \$125,000 challenge gift that will endow *The Gracia Molina de Pick Endowed Fund for Chicano/a Studies* to support the Chicano/a~Latino/a Arts and Humanities minor program in the Division of Arts and Humanities at the University of California, San Diego.

The political, cultural and economic importance of Spanish-speaking communities in the United States continues to increase. In California alone, the Latino population is expected to grow to 50 percent of the total state by 2040. Given these trends, UC San Diego created the Chicano/a~Latino/a Arts and Humanities minor program in 2002 to complement all majors by permitting students to gain a wide knowledge of diverse Spanish-speaking and indigenous histories and cultures in a hemispheric and global context. Molina de Pick's gift will be used to enhance the program, such as bringing renowned scholars and artists to campus for public lectures, performances and exhibits, as well as generating interest and educational opportunities at UC San Diego for Chicano/a and Latino/a youth.

"With this generous gift-the first endowed fund for our program-Gracia Molina de Pick continues her life-long activism and unwavering support for Latinas and Latinos in higher education," said Jorge Mariscal, UC San Diego professor of Literature and director of the Chicano/a~Latino/a Arts and Humanities minor program. "Gracia's generosity should serve as inspiration to others throughout San Diego, motivating them to help students of all backgrounds learn about the history and culture of the fastest growing demographic group in California."

A longtime educator and mentor, Molina de Pick first taught at a National City junior high school, where 70 percent of her students were Hispanic and undereducated; as a faculty member at Mesa College, she founded and wrote the curricula for the first associate's degree in Chicano/a Studies that appeared in the Plan de Aztlan, the 1970 blueprint for higher education for Mexican Americans; at San Diego State University, she taught Peace Corps recruits and soon became an important voice in the Chicano Movement; and at UC San Diego, Molina de Pick was one of the founders and a faculty member for the university's Third College (now named Thurgood Marshall College).

"Martin Luther King said, 'An injustice to one is an injustice to all.' It is imperative that we learn to care for one another for our future is intertwined ... and Gracia is a human being who cares about people," said UC San Diego alumna Yareli Arizmendi, '87, '91 MFA, an actress, writer and producer whose work includes the feature films *A*

*Day Without a Mexican* and *Like Water for Chocolate*. "Thanks to her support, the campus can develop holistically rounded human beings with the tools to be empathetic and understanding in a diverse society."

Molina de Pick added, "I don't have a lot of money-but I'm rich in so many other ways. Everything I have, I give to the causes. I hope others will also help in raising the consciousness of the people of our community. The UC San Diego Chicano/a-Latino/a Arts and Humanities minor program is critically important, but it needs to be nourished and it needs resources."

Her gift of real property, which provides the seed money for *The Gracia Molina de Pick Endowed Fund for Chicano/a Studies*, launches a grassroots fundraising effort conducted by her friends, including former students, staff and those she has mentored over the years, who are seeking to raise \$125,000 in matching funds. This challenge will culminate March 2009 in a Women's History Week event that will feature Gloria Steinem as keynote speaker. For more information, please call the UC San Diego Arts and Humanities Office of Development at (858) 534-9097.

**About Gracia Molina Enriquez de Pick** For over 60 years, Gracia Molina Enriquez de Pick has been an educator, feminist, mentor of students and community activist for women's equality, indigenous communities, labor and immigrants' rights. She was born in Mexico City into a family of political activists, and moved to San Diego in 1957 after she married Richard A. Pick. She obtained a teaching credential and a master's degree through SDSU; she pursued doctoral studies at UC San Diego and USC. She is a founder of IMPACT, an early community grassroots organization fighting for the civil rights of Mexican-Americans in San Diego, and founder of the Comision Femenil Mexicana Nacional, the first national feminist Chicana Association. She served as the Chicana Caucus Chair of the National Women's Political Caucus and the National Council of La Raza, the first Civil Rights Advocate group for Mexican American Civil Rights. Molina de Pick was also the national organizer for Chicana participation at the U.N. World Conferences on Women. She is a published author-her latest book, "Mujeres en la Historia & Historias de Mujeres," highlights women in Mexican history, covering the indigenous period prior to 1492 through the first half of the 20th century. Designed for high school students and the general public in Mexico and the U.S., the book will be released in May 2008.

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