

## **Interview Descriptions: Yolanda Nava Oral History, January 17, 1989**

### **Record Information**

<b>Collection</b>	The Virtual Oral/Aural History Archive
<b>Subcollection</b>	Women's History
<b>Series</b>	Chicana Feminists
<b>Interviewer</b>	Michelle Moravec
<b>Interviewee</b>	Yolanda Nava
<b>Date</b>	01/17/1989
<b>Collecting Institution</b>	California State University, Long Beach

### **Original Interview Description**

This single interview with Yolanda Nava was conducted in conjunction with an Honors thesis at UCLA.

### **Original Audio Segment Descriptions**

#### **File: Yolanda Nava Oral History (1/17/1989) - Part 1**

- (0:00-4:23) Yolanda Nava was an only child born in Los Angeles in 1944. Her family was interested in politics, and her father headed the Latin American Division of the Republican Party during the 1950s. Her parents were conservative and upheld traditional gender roles within the household, with her father working long hours. Nava's parents were divorced after eight years.
- (4:23-7:30) As a child, Nava did not know what she wanted in the future, other than never getting married. She was a good student, especially during high school, from 1960-62, where she participated in many extracurricular activities. Nava was not interested in politics until the Chicano student movement much later. Although she was never encouraged by school counselors, she enrolled herself in Advanced Placement classes and planned to go to college.
- (7:30-10:00) In 1962, Nava went to California State University, Los Angeles, and planned to get a teaching credential - one of the few acceptable career

choices for women. Although she did not consider herself a superior student, she decided to go to CSULA because she had a boyfriend in college. Her parents said they wanted her to go to college, but did not help her education in any direct way.

(10:00-15:17) At college, while majoring in History, Nava was also working and active in a sorority. She went on to CSU Northridge for her teaching credential. Becoming restless in school, she decided to drop out and move to New York in 1965. Later, she took a trip to Mexico City with her mother, which opened her eyes to the rich Mexican culture. Nava transferred to the UCLA , where she began to get involved in political activism.

End of tape.

### **File: Yolanda Nava Oral History (1/17/1989) - Part 2**

(0:00-3:52) Yolanda Nava discusses how social movements historically often prioritized other goals, such as labor rights, over women's issues. As a result, she was interested in creating a group for Chicanas that dealt with sexism and racism. Many Chicanas felt that White feminists did not address the specific problems facing their ethnic group.

(3:52-7:08) Nava participated in a meeting of Chicanas at the International Institute, where Comision Femenil Mexicana (CFM) was formed. There was also an Issues Conference that Nava did not attend. Some women wanted to focus on welfare, but many women who were not on welfare did not connect with the idea. Another suggestion was to create a job training center. In order to raise money for the center, a nonprofit organization was created. They were able to open the Chicana Service Action Center.

(7:08-11:14) Nava and the women involved in CFM focused on direct activism rather than consciousness-raising. In the early 1970s, Nava testified before the state commission on Chicana's issues. The CFM members realized that they had no representation on the commission board. They spoke with two assemblymen, and were able to get two Chicanas appointed to the board.

(11:14-16:37) The Chicana Service Action Center was successful, but the problem of childcare during working hours became obvious. Nava attended another local meeting to discuss childcare in the San Fernando Valley. With mostly men on the board, the CFM found little help and decided to raise money by writing a grant proposal. Due to a dedicated core group of five women, CFM was able to open Centro de Ninos. In 1973, the first CFM conference was held in Santa Barbara.

- (16:37-20:07) Although many activists Nava knew were highly successful, she felt they were weakened by disagreements and large egos. She did not like those who strictly followed a certain ideology, and instead worked for the community project-by-project. The CFM followed a procedural structure and had administrative positions, even with only a few members. There were many strong personalities involved in the CFM.
- (20:07-22:46) Nava worked for the United Way, first as a counselor and later as a director. She moved to the CSU Chancellor's Office and also had a television show. After nine months, she decided to go into television full-time. Nava never specifically wanted to become an activist, and after getting married in 1975 and having a baby, she stayed at home for two years.
- (22:46-27:14) Even within the Chicana women's movement, Nava observed many different viewpoints and goals. Some ideologues focused on theory and ideas, while others wanted to work for tangible community accomplishments. As opposed to the CFM, which focused on grassroots activism in poorer communities, the Hispanic Women's Council was more conservative, professional, and apolitical. The CFM gained chapters in- and out-of-state after the 1973 conference.
- (27:14-30:47) Nava and the Comision members would participate in demonstrations, but not organize their own rallies. She served as a link between the Comision and other organizations, but most women did not relate to the Chicana struggle. Many men felt that the Chicanas women were diverting attention from the greater movement. Aside from a few men, most were not very supportive of the women's activities.

End of tape.

### **File: Yolanda Nava Oral History (1/17/1989) - Part 3**

- (0:00-4:22) Yolanda Nava held many offices in activist organizations, including serving as President and Vice President of the national organization. She traveled around for the different meetings and was introduced to many new people and ideas. Nava did a lot of writing, including two major publications for National Hispanic University.
- (4:22-7:21) One of Nava's main goals was to expand her organizations. She worked on spreading information about the Chicana feminist movement and cooperated with the NOW. She and her peers were also involved in rallying support for the Equal Rights Amendment.

- (7:21-9:49) Nava was also involved with creating awareness and support groups for feminism and opening up discussion of the body. Women in San Francisco and the Bay Area in particular were very receptive to the progressive ideas. The Comision Femenil Mexicana started a rape hotline for women.
- (9:49-12:51) Although Nava felt she did not fit exactly into one particular ideological group, she identified both as a feminist and as a Chicana. She was equally interested in activities that focused on goals of both groups. Nava felt that one of the best achievements of the CFM was the establishment of the Centro de Ninos because it helped bridge a gap between Mexican Americans and the White women's movement.
- (12:51-18:24) Nava felt that even though women made great gains in terms of education and employment access over the course of two decades of Chicana feminism, they still faced limitations created by sexism. One problem of the success of the movement was that younger women who were unfamiliar with the past took their situation for granted. Nava felt that there were still many things that needed to be done for the movement.

End of tape.