

Chicago Latina Trailblazers

More Activists

Other activists students may want to know about:

Social Movements: Community, Labor, Civil Rights and Political activists; Education; AFL-CIO, LULAC; Which organizations and/or people were most active during her time?

Social Movements — Research & Analyze

Research the social movements, organizations, and activists that were most active during the Trailblazer's time. Consider community, labor, civil rights, political activism, education, and organizations such as the AFL-CIO and LULAC.

Which organizations and/or people were most active during her time? Use evidence from reliable sources to support your findings.

W.9-10.7; W.9-10.8; W.9-10.9; RI.9-10.1; RI.9-10.3;

Higher-order skills: Research, historical context, analysis, synthesis, source evaluation.

Some examples are:

- **Master Sergeant Raul Perez “Roy” Benavidez:** US Army soldier who was awarded the Medal of Honor for Valor in Combat. He had 37 separate gunshot wounds while saving fellow soldiers. Benavidez was the only Army Soldier to have a Navy ship, The USNS Benavidez, named for him. Hasbro released a 12-inch [G.I. Joe action figure](#) in 2001 honoring him.
- **General Richard E. Cavazos:** First Hispanic Four-Star General, who had a distinguished service cross upgraded to the Medal of Honor posthumously in 2025. General Cavazos instructed Generals in his war strategies at The US War College. Both General Schwarzkopf and General Powell considered Cavazos “A General’s General.” Fort Hood was redesignated as Fort Cavazos on 9 May 2023, although in 2025 the current administration restored the name Ft. Hood.
- **Lauro Cavazos, Ph D.:** Former U.S. Secretary of Education under two Presidents.
- **Cesar Chavez:** Long before the United Farm Workers, Chavez worked in California as a lead organizer for the Community Service Organization in the 1950s. He focused on voter registration, fighting police brutality, and securing civil rights for Mexican Americans in Los Angeles.
- **Sandra Cisneros:** Chicago Native, prolific author, selected by Mayor Daly for the first One Book Chicago, House on Mango Street.
- **Roberto Clemente:** Humanitarian and Pittsburgh Pirates Baseball player, who challenged racial discrimination. First Latino player elected to the National Baseball Hall of Fame.
- **France A. Cordova, Ph D.:** Renowned American astrophysicist and science administrator who made history as the first and youngest female NASA Chief Scientist, received the distinguished service medal, President of Purdue University, Indiana.
- **Bert Corona:** A prominent labor and civil rights leader in Southern California who organized Mexican American workers and fought for fair labor practices alongside groups like the CSO throughout the 1950s.

- **Ernesto Galarza:** A labor activist, scholar, and writer who fought fiercely for the rights of agricultural workers and documented the abuses of the Bracero Program in the 1950s.
- **Héctor P. García:** A physician and World War II veteran based in Corpus Christi, Texas. In 1948, he founded the American GI Forum, which became a prominent civil rights organization in the 1950s fighting against the segregation of Mexican American students and demanding equal healthcare and veterans' benefits.
- **Dolores Huerta:** A labor activist and civil rights leader who co-founded the United Farm Workers with César Chávez and organized farmworkers for better wages, working conditions, and labor protections.
- **Reies López Tijerina:** He was very active in the 1960s and 70s. Tijerina drew attention to land loss, treaty rights, discrimination, and the political marginalization of Mexican Americans, among other things.
- **Vilma Martínez:** A civil rights attorney who worked to protect the voting, education, and legal rights of Mexican Americans and other Latinos. As a leader of the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF), she helped advance major civil rights cases during the 1970s.
- **Mendez Family (Gonzalo and Felicitas):** While their landmark court case, *Mendez v. Westminster*, was decided in 1947, the Mendez family continued to be vocal advocates for school desegregation in California during the early 1950s, paving the way for the nationwide *Brown v. Board of Education* decision.
- **Ellen Ochoa, Ph D.:** Retired astronaut and engineer who became the first Latina in space in 1993, aboard the space shuttle Discovery. First Latina Director of the Johnson Space Center.
- **Graciela Olivárez:** A civil rights advocate, attorney, and public official who worked to expand educational, economic, and legal opportunities for Mexican Americans and low-income communities. She became the first woman and first Latina to graduate from Notre Dame Law School and later held leadership roles in federal anti-poverty programs.
- **Antonia Pantoja:** Educator, Social worker, feminist, civil rights leader, and founder of ASPIRA, the Puerto Rican Forum, Boricua College, and *Producir*. First Puerto Rican woman to receive the US Presidential Medal of Freedom.
- **Carmen Rivera de Alvarado:** A social worker and advocate who moved to New York City in the 1950s, working closely with the Puerto Rican migration division to address housing, labor exploitation, and cultural integration for newly arrived Puerto Ricans.
- **Emma Temayuca:** Mexican American labor organizer and civil rights activist, who led a wave of strikes by women workers in Texas during the 1930s.
- **Aaron Montgomery Ward:** He and other businessmen were responsible for keeping the park-like setting along Lake Michigan in Chicago.
- **Luis Valdez:** is a pioneering Chicano playwright, director, and filmmaker. He founded **El Teatro Campesino** in 1965, using theater to highlight the experiences of Mexican American farmworkers and communities. He wrote the influential play **Zoot Suit** and wrote and directed the 1987 film **La Bamba**, based on the life of rock-and-roll singer Ritchie Valens.

- **Notable Texans of Mexican Origin:** Although there were many activists in different parts of the country, there are many that were active in Texas. Most were born there, others were born in other places then spent the a great deal of time in Texas. Listing of names at <https://h1.nu/1DuVp>