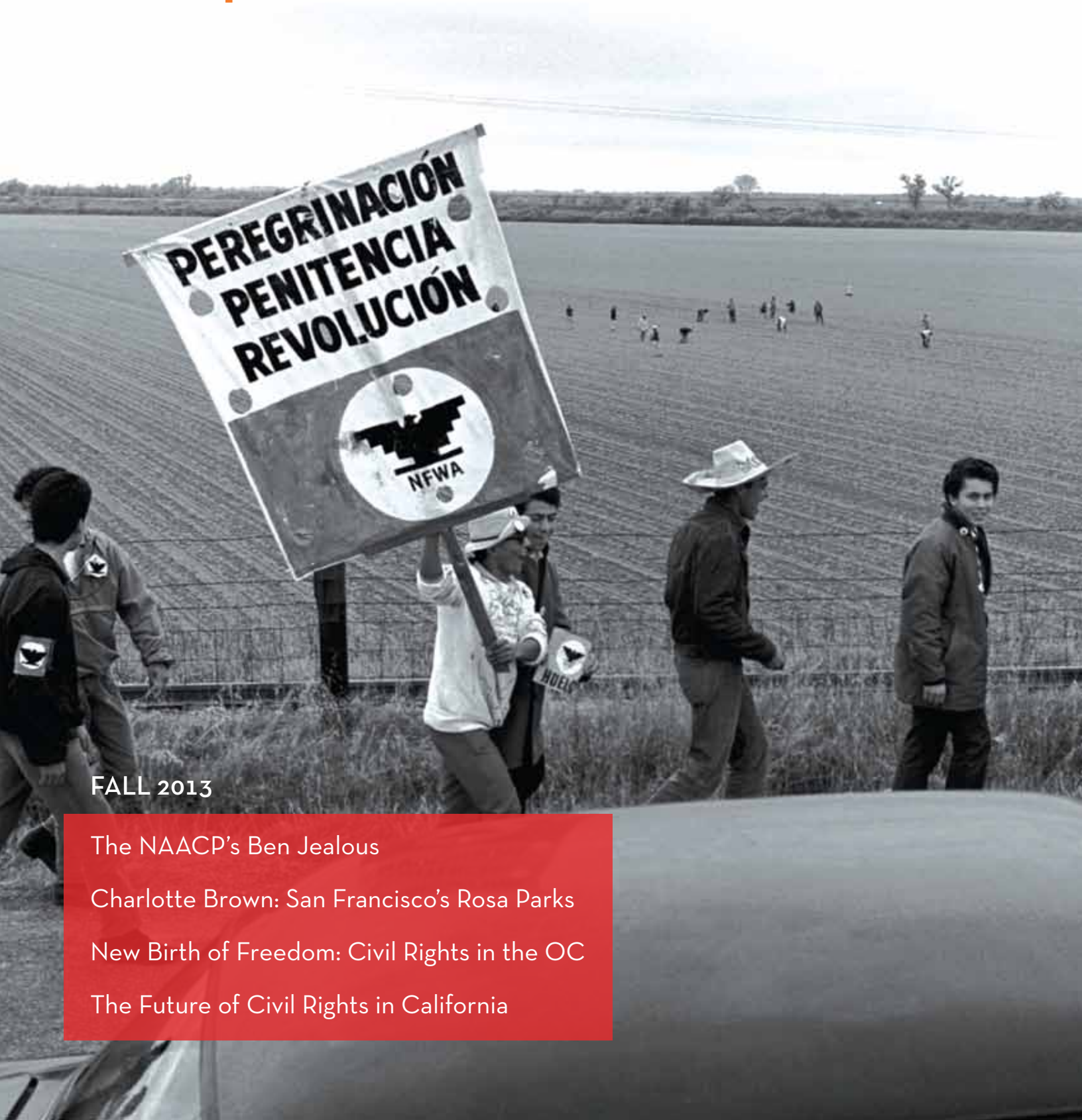


A  
STATE  
OF

# openMIND

A PUBLICATION OF CAL HUMANITIES



FALL 2013

The NAACP's Ben Jealous

Charlotte Brown: San Francisco's Rosa Parks

New Birth of Freedom: Civil Rights in the OC

The Future of Civil Rights in California

# cultivating A STATE OF OPEN MIND

This issue of Cal Humanities' *State of Open Mind* focuses on civil rights as we commemorate the 150th anniversary of the signing of the *Emancipation Proclamation* and the 50th anniversaries of the events of the civil rights movement – from the March on Washington where Martin Luther King Jr. delivered his “I Have a Dream” speech to the signing of major civil rights legislation in 1964 and 1965. These moments in history and the work that preceded and followed them forever changed how we see ourselves, our communities, and our world.

As I read through these stories, I am hit by the pain, the perseverance, and the beautiful generosity it takes to contribute to a world of new possibilities.

I am humbled by the courage of Charlotte Brown in 1863 to stand up to people telling her she could not have a seat on a San Francisco streetcar because of the color of her skin.

Put yourself in her place for a moment – what is it that you stand up for today? How do you do it? Why? How has your history, your thoughts about what is right or wrong, in other words, the humanities, informed your stance?

We are in the midst of a sea change in civil rights, being achieved by heroic determination similar to Charlotte Brown's in the 1860s and the civil rights marchers in the 1960s. People are overturning discrimination practices based on sexual orientation and gender identity across the nation.



Ralph Lewin,  
Cal Humanities President & CEO

## ON THE COVER:

*The movement to organize farmworkers is part of California's rich legacy of civil rights struggles.*

*Members of the National Farmworkers Association, led by Cesar Chavez, march 340 miles from Delano to Sacramento to demand better treatment and wages for farmworkers. Later, the organization, led by Chavez, Dolores Huerta, and Larry Itliong, became the United Farmworkers (UFW) and gained major improvements to farm labor conditions.*

*March, 1966.  
San Joaquin Valley, CA.  
March to Sacramento.  
Courtesy of Harvey Richards  
Media Archive*

“Put yourself in her place for a moment – what is it that you stand up for today?”

Cal Humanities has a long history of supporting programs related to the LGBTQ community, from the Academy Award winning film *Common Threads* to a more recent project, *The Search for Equality*, which documents first-person stories from San Diego's LGBTQ community. All these projects have contributed to pressing the conversation about equality related to the basic principles of civil rights and democracy.

At Cal Humanities we are remembering the civil rights movement to promote ideas about how we can improve our human condition. Please take time to go to our website where you can experience the wide array of our work through films, schools, libraries, and community centers across California.

We are thankful for your support and we'd love to hear your thoughts on our work. With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "RALPH". The signature is stylized with a large, flowing "R" and a trailing flourish.

visit our  
website at  
**calhum.org**





## in this issue:

p 4-5

An Interview  
with NAACP's  
Ben Jealous

p 6

Charlotte Brown:  
San Francisco's  
Rosa Parks

p 7

New Birth of  
Freedom: Civil  
Rights in the OC

p 8-9

Remembering  
Ruben Salazar

p 9-10

Marching Ahead:  
The Future of Civil  
Rights in California

Questions? Comments?  
Contact Rachel Goodman,  
Editor, *A State of Open Mind*,  
at [Rachel@well.com](mailto:Rachel@well.com)



# Vision for an Inclusive America

## A CONVERSATION WITH NAACP'S **BEN JEALOUS**

*What can the history of the civil rights movement tell us about how to achieve a more fair society today? That is a question we posed to Benjamin Todd Jealous, who at age 35, was the youngest person ever elected to serve as president of the NAACP. Though he wasn't born yet when the Civil and Voting Rights Acts became law, his life has been about keeping those rights intact for future generations. In December he will step down as president of the NAACP.*

**CAL HUMANITIES:** You were born and raised in California. How do you think this has influenced your views on civil rights?

**BEN JEALOUS:** I grew up in Monterey County. When I was a child, our county was on the front line of UFW's crusade to win civil rights protections for farm workers. I grew up hearing about Martin Luther King, Jr, but watching Cesar Chavez and Dolores Huerta on TV. Growing up on the coast of California, and the son of civil rights workers who had cut their teeth in the South, taught me that the struggle for civil rights and the struggle for human rights were both broad and ongoing.

**CH:** Wallace Stegner said that California is America, only more so. After leading the NAACP, the nation's oldest and largest civil rights organization, how does Stegner's statement resonate with you?

**BJ:** All the issues the NAACP is focused on right now are relevant to improving the quality of life for millions of people in California. From fighting to end the epidemic of HIV, to downsizing bloated prison systems, to ending discrimination in employment based on race, the front lines of the struggle for civil and human rights in America cuts through California. At the same time, California remains a beacon for the rest of the world. From Van Jones to Pablo Alvarado, from Kamala Harris to Stuart Kwoh, California continues to produce some of the most visionary and effective reformers not just in the country, but in the world.

Photos courtesy  
of NAACP



September 24, 1965, Delano, CA, Grape Strike, Dolores Huerta.  
Courtesy of Harvey Richards Media Archive



**6** From fighting to end the epidemic of HIV, to downsizing bloated prison systems, to ending discrimination in employment based on race, the front lines of the struggle for civil and human rights in America cuts through California.

**CH:** Who were some of the thinkers that influenced you most in your approach to civil rights? Why?

**BJ:** Bayard Rustin, Ella Baker. They taught me that it takes good organizers to change the world. Martin Luther King Jr. and Myrlie Evers-Williams because they taught me that with faith, a great transformation can happen more quickly than most believe is possible.

**CH:** You served on the board of Cal Humanities for six years. What about the organization's mission attracted you?

**BJ:** As a nine-year-old, I visited my local natural history museum and heard stories about the best and worst of my county's history by older residents who had seen much of it with their own eyes. It changed my life. When Ralph Lewin handed me a copy of *California Uncovered* a decade ago, I saw in that project – and the broader spirit of the council that it represented – the opportunity to help ensure that millions of young people across this state received the same gift of understanding I had received at that little museum so many decades before.

**CH:** 2013-14-15 are big years for the commemoration of the Civil Rights Movement – from the March on Washington to the signing of the Civil Rights Act. What do you think we should be commemorating?

**BJ:** We should remember the strategies and tactics of the activists in the civil rights movement. Many of the people who we remember as heroes today were ordinary citizens who were fed up with segregation and discrimination. They built up power through organizing and coalition-building, and changed the course of American society. As we have seen in New York City and North Carolina just this past year, those strategies still work today.

**CH:** In some of your speeches you talk about advice your grandmother had given you. How do you think the notion of civil rights has changed from the country she grew up in, to the country you grew up in, to that your children are growing up in?

**BJ:** The civil rights battles of the 20th century took place largely in the court house, but the civil rights battles of the 21st century will take place largely in the state house. Winning this battle will require more than just good lawyers – it will also require a majority of voters who share a vision of an inclusive America.

*photo by Lia Epperson Jealous*



*photo courtesy of NAACP*

# SAN FRANCISCO'S OWN ROSA PARKS

by Elaine Elinson



*Charlotte L. Brown*  
*vs.*  
*The Omnibus Rail Road Company*

When young Charlotte Brown refused a San Francisco streetcar conductor's demand to disembark because "colored persons were not allowed to ride," she faced a social climate almost as hostile as Rosa Parks did in Montgomery, Ala., in 1954.

But Brown's challenge came almost a century earlier - on April 17, 1863.

San Francisco had the largest black population in the state. Yet African Americans could not vote, were prohibited from using the public library, and were forced to attend segregated schools.

On that April evening, Brown set out for a doctor's appointment. She boarded the horse-drawn Omnibus Railroad streetcar and took a seat midway down the car. When the conductor came around to collect tickets, Brown wrote, "I handed him my ticket and he refused to take it. He said that colored persons were not allowed to ride."

He ordered her off the streetcar. And when she would not move, he took hold of her and forced her off the car.

Brown's father - who had helped protect fugitive slaves seeking freedom in California - encouraged his daughter to fight the outrage in court. Just that year, a law had been passed in the Legislature allowing blacks to testify in cases involving whites.

The Omnibus Railroad justified its conductor's action by arguing that racial segregation was necessary to protect white women and children who might be "fearful or repulsed" by the prospect of riding side by side with an African American. The judge sided with Brown, but the victory was diminished by the paltry award: He ordered her reimbursed 5 cents - the streetcar fare.

Within days of the judgment, however, another conductor forced Brown and her father from a streetcar. Undaunted, the

young woman brought another lawsuit. In October 1864, Judge C.C. Pratt of the 12th District Court ruled that San Francisco streetcar segregation was illegal. In his opinion, he stated: "It has been already quite too long tolerated by the dominant race to see with indifference the Negro or mulatto treated as a brute, insulted, wronged, enslaved, made to wear a yoke, to tremble before white men, to serve him as a tool, to hold property and life at his will, to surrender to him his intellect and conscience, and to seal his lips and belie his thought through dread of the white man's power."

A jury awarded Brown \$500.

All Californians should celebrate the courage and tenacity of young Charlotte Brown who - without the backing of the 14th Amendment, a national civil rights movement, or even the right to vote - took a stand for racial justice on the streets of San Francisco.

*Elaine Elinson is co-author of "Wherever There's a Fight: How Runaway Slaves, Suffragists, Immigrants, Strikers, and Poets Shaped Civil Liberties in California" (Heyday, 2009). The story of Charlotte Brown is part of a touring exhibit, "Wherever There's a Fight: A History of Civil Rights in California" and the subject of a radio documentary funded by a Cal Humanities California Documentary Project Grant. This article originally appeared in the San Francisco Chronicle and is reprinted here in edited form with permission.*

*(above) Omnibus Cable Co. cars on turntable, Howard & 26th St, San Francisco, CA., ca.1889-1893. Photographer: Unknown. Albumen print. Courtesy of the California Historical Society, deYoung Coll., CHS2011.511*

*other than a usual stopping place for this defendant for leaving passengers as in the*





# NEW BIRTH OF FREEDOM

## Civil War to Civil Rights in California

by Felicia Harmer Kelley, Cal Humanities

*Sitting side by side after being Freedom Riders 50 years ago are Edward B. Johnson, left, and John R. Lewis. Photo: Karen Tapia, California State University, Fullerton*

Orange County is better known for its conservative politics than it is for its civil rights movement. So it was a stirring moment when Georgia Congressman and civil rights leader John R. Lewis came to Cal State Fullerton to talk about the legacy of the civil rights movement. He also honored Edward B. Johnson of Inglewood, who was arrested in 1961 for riding buses to protest segregation in the South.

“Many, many people left this state, came south, got arrested, beaten, jailed, to change America forever,” Lewis remarked, as he recalled a time when he, Johnson, and thousands of other activists risked their lives confronting racist laws. A little-known fact is that so many activists traveled from places like Orange County to fight for racial equality.

“Many, many people left this state, came south, got arrested, beaten, jailed, to change America forever.”

Lewis’ visit and Johnson’s story were part of a project titled New Birth of Freedom: Civil War to Civil Rights in California, sponsored by the Center for Oral and Public History at CSUF and funded by a Cal Humanities’ Community Stories grant. Its aim was to explore and celebrate the profound role California has played in struggles for social justice at two major junctions in history.

The exhibit at CSUF included stories of activists such as Gonzalo Mendez who, in 1945, sued to integrate Orange County schools. And Loren Miller, the son of slaves who, in 1947, represented more than 100 plaintiffs seeking to invalidate housing covenants that prevented Blacks from purchasing or renting housing in the county. He later became a California Supreme Court justice.

It took 30 graduate students, working under the direction of CSUF faculty members to unearth oral histories, texts,

images, objects, and video and audio recordings that ended up as part of the multi-media exhibit at Cal State Fullerton. The project was directed by Dr. Benjamin Cawthra with support from Dr. Natalie M. Fousekis.

The project strengthened campus-community connections, particularly with African American, Japanese American, and Mexican American communities in Orange County – and fostered new collaborations with K-12 educators, civic leaders, and cultural organizations in the region.

As Congressman Lewis concluded his remarks that night he reminded the audience of current challenges to minority voting rights. “We must not give up. We must not give in. We must not give out. We must keep the faith, keep our eyes on the prize, and never, never turn back.”

*The “New Birth of Freedom” exhibit at the Arboretum features a wall with information about the case that desegregated public schools in Orange County. Photo by Karen Tapia, California State University, Fullerton*



# OPINION:

## Remembering Ruben Salazar, pioneer journalist

by Raul A. Reyes



*Photos courtesy of the Salazar family*

*Cal Humanities is proud to support the film, "Ruben Salazar: Man in the Middle," which airs on PBS in 2014. This documentary by Phillip Rodriguez explores the life and death of the journalist Ruben Salazar who chronicled Los Angeles' burgeoning Chicano rights movement in the 1970s.*

On August 29, 1970, Latinos marched in East Los Angeles to protest the number of Hispanic casualties in Vietnam. An estimated 25,000 people turned out for the National Chicano Moratorium, the largest political assembly of Mexican Americans to date. It was a peaceful gathering until the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department showed up to investigate reports of looting. Then the protest turned violent, and when the smoke cleared, three people were dead, including journalist Ruben Salazar.

Forty-three years later, it is important to remember Salazar because he was a pioneering Hispanic reporter who was killed under mysterious circumstances. It is important to remember him because his death made him a hero of the Latino civil rights struggle. And it is important to remember him because the issues that he cared about continue to resonate with Latinos today.

Salazar was the most prominent Hispanic journalist of his time. He interviewed President Eisenhower, Cesar Chavez, and Robert F. Kennedy. He was the first Mexican American columnist at the *Los Angeles Times* and served as News Director for L.A.'s Spanish-language news channel. On the day of the Chicano Moratorium, he covered the march and afterwards went to a bar with his crew. He was there when an L.A. Sheriff's deputy fired a tear gas projectile into the bar. It pierced Salazar's skull and killed him instantly. He was 42 years old.

The circumstances surrounding Salazar's death were rightly considered suspicious. Salazar had been warned by law enforcement against pursuing stories about the Latino civil rights struggle. Days before he was killed, he met with members of the US Civil Rights Commission to express his concern that he might be targeted or framed by the police. Though Salazar was a citizen who died at the hands of law enforcement, no criminal charges were filed against the deputy who killed him or against the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department. President Nixon's Department of Justice declined to investigate the shooting.



It's no wonder that conspiracy theories sprang up around Salazar's killing. The bar where Salazar was killed was 22 blocks away from the park where the march ended, and the deputy who shot him admitted that he fired into the bar without being able to see inside. According to the Associated Press, the canister that killed Salazar was "designed to be blasted through doors or windows and not shot at people." His body remained on the floor of the bar for almost three hours before officers examined it.

Salazar's death exposed a troubling lack of transparency in the LASD. It wasn't until 2011 that documents were released from the Sheriff's Department's investigation of the case. *L.A. Times* columnist Hector Tobar concluded, "Salazar's death wasn't a murder. But it was a stupid and entirely preventable accident." A civilian watchdog group noted that the LASD had "circled the wagons around its deputies, offered few explanations and no apologies" in the aftermath of the shooting. Yet the fact that Salazar's shooting was not deliberate does not make it less of a tragedy.



*Photo courtesy of the Salazar family*

was dedicated to illuminating problems that plagued Latinos in East L.A., including poverty, unemployment, police brutality, and poor schools.

Salazar's death was a seminal moment in the Latino civil rights movement. He deserves to be remembered for his crusade against social injustice, and because he devoted his life to empowering his community.

*This article was reprinted in edited form with permission from NBCLatino.com and the author.*

Still, Salazar's legacy lives on. There are parks and schools in Los Angeles bearing his name, and he was honored by the Postal Service with a stamp in 2008. But consider that Salazar was not a political figure, nor an activist. He was a journalist doing his job. He

# MARCHING AHEAD: California's Civil Rights Future

by Rachel Anne Goodman



© Ryan Beiler | Dreamstime.com

*Note: The author, and all those interviewed for this story, have been part of projects funded by grants from Cal Humanities.*

Which struggles for civil rights will define the next two decades in California? Our Constitution guarantees the right to change our country's direction when it ceases to be an inclusive, fair place. Since 1964, huge strides have been made protecting the legal rights of women, gays, and minorities. But despite progress, such as the legalization of same-sex marriage, the work is far from done.

When I spoke to Cruz Reynoso, now 83 and the first Latino appointed to the California Supreme Court, he speculated that California would continue to struggle with de facto

(continued)



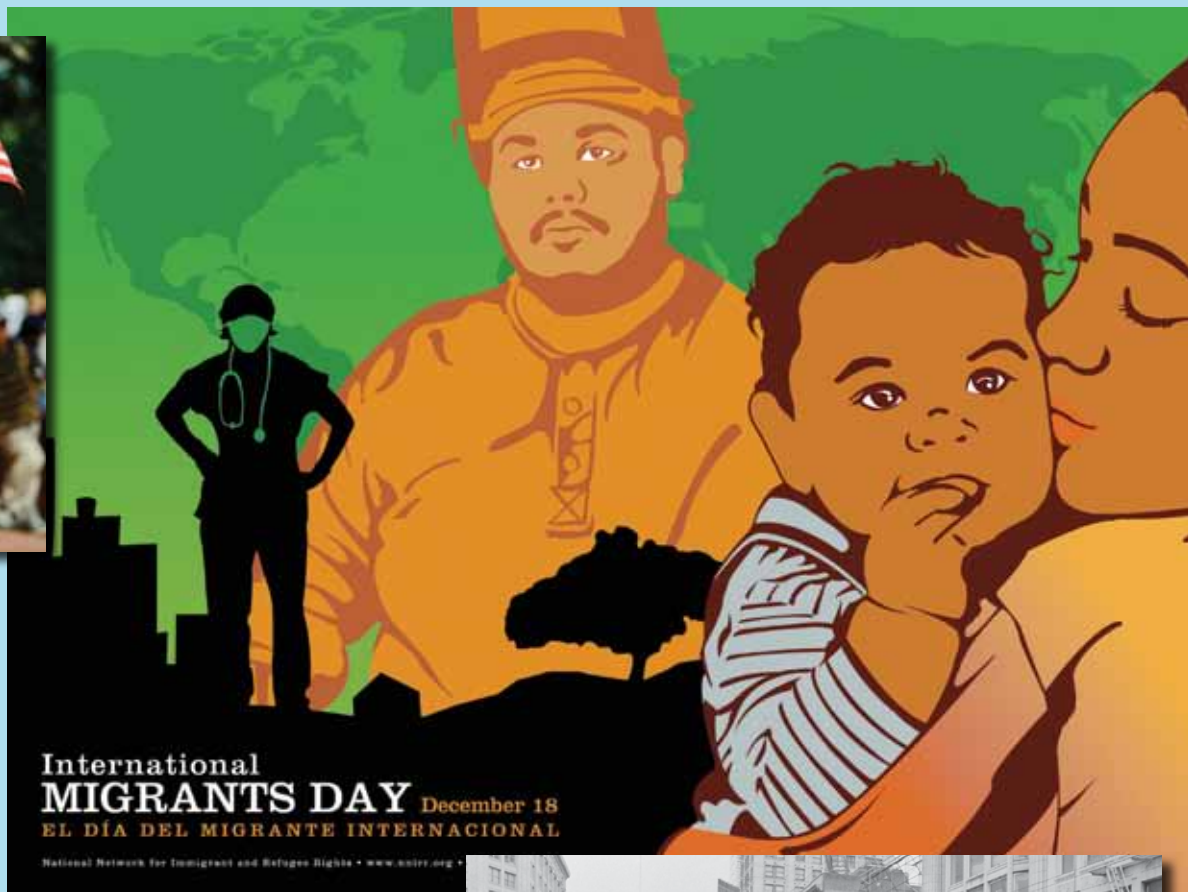
## MARCHING AHEAD: *continued*

segregation as immigrants arrived from other countries.

"I'm very pleased that we got rid of segregation by law in the schools and housing, but the reality is that we still have it. In LA there are many schools that are 90% Latino. Why is that? In part, it is because of where people live, and sad to say, there is a great variation in family wealth."

Reynoso mentioned his fondness for the words of the late US Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis: "We can have democracy in this country, or we can have great wealth concentrated in the hands of a few, but we can't have both."

Tougher drug and gang sentencing laws caused California's prison population



*Art by Favianna Rodriguez, 2013*

to surge by 500% in the last decades of the 20th century. Reynoso in part blames the "school to prison pipeline" that begins with expulsion of students of color.

Although just over half of California's adult male population is nonwhite or Latino, those groups make up three-quarters of the men in prison. In 2011 the US Supreme Court ruled that California's prison overcrowding constituted cruel and unusual punishment. Prison conditions, sentencing laws, and racial profiling will remain at the top of the agenda for the ACLU and other civil rights groups in the years to come.

Artist Favianna Rodriguez tells the immigrant-youth story in a positive light using her chosen medium of printmaking. She says legal reforms are twenty years overdue. "Immigrants today represent the civil rights battle of our time. They are ask-



*"Big Colored Parade" Market Street to City Hall. May 26, 1963. San Francisco News-Call Bulletin newspaper photo archive. Courtesy UC Berkeley, Bancroft Library*

ing to not be racially profiled. They are asking for the right to be able to attend school."

Rodriguez also worries about corporate power dwarfing the power of everyday people. "The question is actually going to be where does the business of business end and the rights of people begin? It's a battle for the survival of the planet itself."

Justice Cruz Reynoso says some of the racial and economic tension in our state would be eased by simple contact between people of different ethnic backgrounds. "The secret, of course, in changing those attitudes, is to have one person look at another as a human being."

*Rachel Anne Goodman is the creator of "Pastures of Plenty: A History of California Farmworkers," and "Boomtown Chronicles: Reflections on a Changing California."*



# Support Cal Humanities

Like me, you may feel the state of our democracy is in a fragile state these days. But closer to home, Cal Humanities is a force for deeply meaningful conversations at the heart of our democracy and at the center of our lives. We lift up the important stories of California and beyond that help us think wisely together about how we can reinvigorate our democracy by drawing on the humanities to help us better understand and respond to the challenges of our time.

There is no more important work to do, and no more important time to do it.

Your generous gift, coupled with the support of foundations, corporations, and other donors, makes our work possible. Here are a few examples:

- **COMMUNITY STORIES:** Sharing the history and experiences of California's places and peoples. Exhibits such as *New Birth of Freedom: Civil War to Civil Rights in California* (see pg. 7) tell moving stories from a local perspective.
- **CALIFORNIA READS:** Bringing Californians together across the state to read about and discuss what binds us or divides us. Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston (*Farewell to Manzanar*) was one of the participating authors. "Remembering our civil rights history is so important, not just for current residents, but for new arrivals; so they can feel a sense of pride in their state, and not just take from it, but give back, too."
- **THE CALIFORNIA DOCUMENTARY PROJECT:** Supporting film, radio, and new media productions that help us learn more about our own state, such as *Ruben Salazar: Man in the Middle*, and *Wherever There's a Fight: A History of Civil Rights in California*.

Your contribution helps us fund media, exhibits, and conversations that are vital in helping make sense of our times.

Please consider making a generous donation today, and help create a more connected, more vibrant state and nation.

We've provided an envelope for your convenience, or you can donate online at [calhum.org/connect/donate](http://calhum.org/connect/donate).

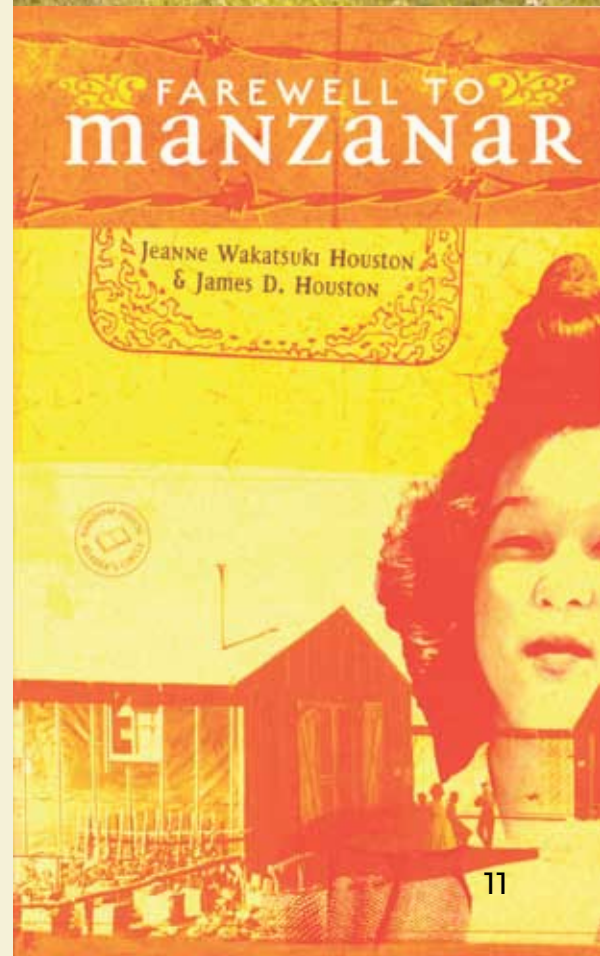


Thank you for your support in the past, and I look forward to a productive year ahead.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Luis Herrera". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Luis Herrera  
Board Chair, Cal Humanities





312 sutter street, suite 601  
san francisco, ca 94108-4323  
[www.calhum.org](http://www.calhum.org)

NONPROFIT  
ORGANIZATION  
US POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
SAN FRANCISCO, CA  
PERMIT NO. 11379

