

The Sacramento Movimiento Chicano and Mexican American Education
Oral History Project

Miguel Molina

Oral History Memoir

Interviewed by Kevin Carballo and Nicholas Alonzo
April 27, 2015

Transcription by Malcolm Barnes and Technitype Transcripts

Q Hi. Please state your full name.

[00:00:08]

Molina My name is Miguel Molina.

Q Please provide your birthdate.

[00:00:12]

Molina August 8th, 1958.

Q Please provide your marital status.

[00:00:16]

Molina I'm single.

Q Do you have children?

[00:00:19]

Molina I have two children, Carlos, who's thirty-one years old, and Sara,
who's twenty-nine years old.

Q Where were you born and raised?

[00:00:31]

Molina I was born in Santa Barbara, California.

Q And raised?

[00:00:35]

Molina Santa Barbara as well, Santa Barbara as well. I came to the Sacramento area when I was eighteen years old, coming out of community college.

Q What did your parents do for a living?

[00:00:49]

Molina My father was a church organist first. He also did Spanish radio for about forty-five years. It was called *La Hora Mexicana*; it was in Santa Barbara, 6:00 o'clock in the morning every day. Many of the farmworkers would listen to him on radio, and he would play music and educate them about services and things that were available to them in that area. He was actually an early icon in radio.

My mother was a court interpreter. She worked with *gente* who would get hurt on the job, and they would have workman's compensation benefits and they would need somebody to be interpreter both in the court and with doctors.

My parents together did an income tax and notary business. They also had a permission from the consulate in Los Angeles to do immigration paperwork out of their house, and so people would come to our house at all hours of the day to get a document so they could go to Mexico the next day. So this was the parents that I woke up with every day and watched work in my house. It was incredible. They were incredible people.

Q How many brothers and sisters do you have?

[00:02:07]

Molina I have twelve brothers and sisters. I am the seventh of twelve. So I like to say I'm the baby of the first half and the older brother of the second, because they're all brothers after me.

Q Wow!

[00:02:19]

Molina Yeah, big family.

Q Please describe your experiences as a child and youth in your family and neighborhood.

[00:02:25]

Molina Well, I was an athlete. Half my family were musicians because of the influence of my father. He played a grand piano every morning, and so my sisters were the first four of five children, and so they were like a choir. So music played a big role in the first half. Even the oldest brother played guitar. So they were more the musicians.

Then from about me down, we're all athletes, and there were eight brothers from me down, so we would play sports. So around us, we would actually hang out in Boys Clubs and pretty much hang out with athletes quite a bit in our lives.

My sisters, when I was growing up, were already at UC Santa Barbara. They were in college nearby, and UC Santa Barbara was very active at that time with the beginning of Chicano Studies and things that were going on. My sisters were actually

at the campus during that window of time. I was very fortunate to kind of get some early influences just by watching them and listening to them.

Didn't know what I wanted to do coming out of high school. I knew I was going to go to college, but I wasn't sure, so that's why I went to community college first.

Q Were you a Fellow, Felito, or were you actively involved in the Mexican American Education Project?

[00:03:48]

Molina No, I believe the project was right before I came. I think that most of the people that I'm aware of that were in the project, many of them were my teachers, many of them were my counselors, were people that as I transferred into the university, who really influenced my life and my education and eventually my professional upbringing, even at the university.

Q How did your participation in the Mexican American Education Project influence your thinking and involvement in the Chicano community?

[00:04:25]

Molina So I think my first teachers and the people who brought me coming as a transfer student out of Santa Barbara, I was already aware of Chicano issues. We had MEChA when we were in our high school, and so I was already involved in MEChA there. But I think when I came to Sacramento, Santa Barbara did not have—the Spanish-speaking, at least, children, that generation of children that were born there, were not necessarily all Spanish speaking. In fact, I would say most of us were

English speaking, but we were bilingual and we grew up in bilingual households. For example, even in my household, my dad would speak Spanish, my mom would speak English to us. So that was even kind of unique, but that wasn't that unusual with the kids I grew up.

But when I came to Sacramento, it was the opposite; it was predominantly Spanish speaking. So there was really a big shift about people's views on language, and it really wasn't hard to fall into courses that were now taught by Latinos. I didn't have very many Latino teachers in high school. I did not have very many Latino teachers even in community college. I can only think of one, maybe two at the most, while I was in community college. So until I got to Sacramento was I now in a very Spanish-speaking community, now had Chicano professors for the first time.

My first three classes in college were Chicano professors, and that was just a blessing. The person who picked me up from the Greyhound bus to start at Sacramento State was a Chicano counselor and he worked in the EOP Program. He was part of this project. His name was Ricardo Torres. He's still actually in the EOP Program today. He's about to retire, but he's still there today. He's probably been on campus at Cal State, Sacramento probably close to forty years. I'm going on thirty-one myself, so we both have a long run there.

Q Wow. So did your study of cultural anthropology or your knowledge of cultural issues influence your involvement and participation in the Movimiento Chicano?

[00:06:49]

Molina Absolutely, absolutely. I think the best teacher was the first one. I had a *profesora*, her name was Olivia Castellano. She was a poet. She was an English professor. I had her just for even a unique bilingual class. Even though I was coming from a community college, they put me in a bilingual English class and a bilingual Spanish class, so what that meant is half of us were in English and half us were in Spanish on both classes, and it was pretty unique. By the way, the professor on the Spanish, he was pretty important as well. His name was Jorge Santana, and he retired already from Cal State, Sacramento.

But Olivia, I think where Olivia probably was the best influence was just exposing me to Chicano writers. It was the first time I got to read *Bless Me, Ultima* and Rudolfo Anaya, and just the early writers that I would have never even knew existed in my life, you know, and *finally* I'm listening to stories that sound like me and look like me, and I can dream of me, you know. Yeah, it played a *huge* influence.

I really took a lot of pride in the word *Chicano*. I understood it; I understood what it meant to me. It was a very personal choice. I wasn't born in Mexico; my relatives were from Mexico. But I was born in Santa Barbara. In some ways, Chicano just made the better fit for me where I was and here in California. Didn't quite feel welcome by all the Anglos either and even being a predominantly White high school. So Chicano seemed to fit perfectly for me where I was in schooling and where I was mentally, politically, socially. So I think the early teachings coming out of the Chicano professors played a big role, and I think the project was really giving them the resources. I wish I could name them all, and I'm never going to be able to, but I

just know that that project played a huge role in really helping us trust that we had resources we never had, ever.

Q What are your earliest memories of events that attracted you to the Movimiento Chicano?

[00:09:12]

Molina Well, in Santa Barbara, we had the riots back in the early seventies, and so this was right around the time my sisters are at the university. During the same time, you heard the beginnings of the Brown Berets, and this was really the beginning of it. These were activists. These were people, even in my community in Santa Barbara at the time, who were being active and political, and they wanted to have voice, and they got students to organize. MEChA came out of this. Some of the literature came out of this.

But more than anything else, it energized people to go to school, get their degrees, you know, and trust that they had strength and that they needed to be represented, and so it started this wave. I know that I feel like I was on the back end of this first wave, because that first wave really were the ones that got Chicano Studies off the ground and programs like EOP. A lot of scholarship programs came out of it. Affirmative action came out of it. Well, as I'm graduating out of high school, well, now all of a sudden I'm being offered programs to go into community college, and now I'm an EOP&S. This is a program that would not have been there had my older brothers and sisters and people, a lot of the Latino leaders and Chicano leaders of those times, hadn't fought for.

Next thing you know, I'm in the programs. So I'm being pulled into college, I'm being supported, I'm being mentored, I'm being validated. I get to see somebody who looks like me. I have role models. So I'm excited about school, not even being sure what I wanted to do, I just knew college was the place, and I was going to just keep going. And so it played a huge influence in where I was going with the Chicano Movement.

Eventually it helped me to transfer to the university. The moment I was in the university, probably about a semester in, my counselor said, "Would you like to work with students yourself? You're a good role model yourself."

And I thought, "Wow! You'd hire me to work with other Latino students?"

"Yeah, absolutely."

And next thing you know, I'm a peer advisor. So while I'm doing my undergraduate, I'm doing the work of a counselor on the side. I'm only a student, and I have an office and I have a desk, and students are coming to me. But what was even better about that role was they asked me, "Do you want to go out to schools and talk to people?"

The first school I go to, I'm in a gym with five hundred students at lunchtime. I'm shaking like crazy, and I have a microphone, but yet I see a lot of Brown faces. And I'm just trusting my heart that there's a message to be said about college, and I start talking. I realize they were all crazy at first, but by ten minutes in, they were listening to everything I had to say. Next thing you know, I'm giving them the best advice, how to get into college, how to find scholarships, and I'm beginning the

beginning of a recruiter. So I'm an EOP student, I'm an EOP peer advisor, and here now I'm recruiting for EOP and just barely finishing up my bachelor's degree. I was finishing up in English thanks to this Chicana professor who got me to finally decide on a major. Of course, I'm focusing on Chicano literature.

So I'm thinking I'm going to go into a high school and be an English teacher and maybe a coach. I was an athlete. Remember I told you about my eight brothers. So I was an athlete. And I thought, "I'll go into a high school and I'll coach and I'll be an English teacher."

But I have to tell you, something turned. One day I got invited to go to Salinas. I was supposed to do a twenty-minute presentation, and I thought maybe I was only going to meet about thirty parents in a library, and four hundred parents show up, coming right out of the fields, and they asking me to do a talk. I'm sitting there giving this talk about college, and I'm doing it in English and Spanish. And I like to say my Spanish is more Spanglish than Spanish. But there I am with my *corazón* and just doing it. Those people wouldn't let me leave. I was there three hours, and it was because they kept asking me questions, "Why should my kid go from the Valley to Sacramento? Why should my kid go to college and not work in the fields?" You know, asking me questions that they probably never got to ask an educator, but here I am, this young Latino, trying to get them to understand why their kid should go to college, and we're having a dialogue.

And then I realized, "Man! I'm in the right place. This is where God wanted me. This is where I'm going to make a difference as a Chicano." And so I found what

I wanted to do, you know. I was going to definitely help admissions and in recruitment. Next thing you know, I changed my mind about my schooling. I was going to go for teaching credentials at UC Santa Barbara. I happened to find a Chicano named Miguel Martinez, who was in the master's program in counseling, and he happened to even get a grant—here's another program—gets a grant, and the grant pays for my master's to come in and to be a bilingual counselor, bilingual school counselor. So I shift gears, and I get a master's in school counseling.

The day after I finish my master's, Sac State hires me. I am now an EOP counselor and started my career. This is thirty-one years ago.

Q How did that make you feel?

[00:14:54]

Molina Empowered, empowered. I remember feeling in some ways I was crying, leaving Salinas, you know. Those were like my parents, you know, and I got a chance to really make a difference that evening. I remember that my tears were really just because I knew what an impact I was having. I knew I would never be rich, but yet I would be rich, you know. I wouldn't be rich monetarily, but I'd be rich from doing the good work, and made all the difference in the world, made all the difference in the world.

So from there, I got strong. I got very strong, then realized as a counselor, "Hey, I can bring in students like myself." And next thing you know, I have four Chicanos working under me. They're like you guys, undergraduates. And I'm teaching them how it works and getting them to go out in the neighborhoods and do

the work. Now I have a team. No longer am I by myself; now I have a team. So you start realizing the difference you have.

I think when I was going to be a teacher I visualized myself with thirty kids in a classroom. Now I see myself with tens of thousands of people over the years, how many people you make a difference in their lives. Nobody talks to parents, but I do, and I make it a point to talk to parents. I want parents to understand. My parents would not have understand. My parents thought financial aid was welfare, you know. I had to teach them what financial aid was. So I trust that unless somebody going through the experience goes into our neighborhoods and talks to parents, that we don't demystify the process for them. So I help people to understand that if you're going to do presentations, make parents be there, have their kids be there, so they dialogue for the first time about what college is really about, and kind of educate them. So that was my charge. And I'm good at it. I love it. I'm still doing it. I haven't quit. [laughter] Still doing it.

Q How did other Mexicans, Mexican Americans, and/or Latinos react to the terms *Chicano* and *Movimiento Chicano*?

[00:17:08]

Molina I think there were some people that were still split. You know, you had a lot of people that were from Mexico that were here, that really hadn't embraced the word *Chicano*. It was still, in their eyes, many of them still saw it as a negative word. I remember even my own parents thought the word *Chicano* was a negative word, but I think that's because of where they grew up and they were more immigrant, and so

they were more recently here, as opposed to the kids that grew up here, who fully embraced it and understood it and saw it more as a political and a self-empowering term. So I think there were differences. There were powerful differences that I saw.

Whites didn't like it because they didn't understand it. It was too new a word. It freaked them out. They heard us, they'd see us, and sometimes they'd see us being very political with the word *Chicano*. They didn't like it. So I know that it had an impact on their communities.

I think growing up, for me, I always felt the Black and African American brotherhood, I really always did, because I felt they were fighting the same way for their place in the United States, and I felt them in the same time we're fighting for our place. They were more numerous in some ways, but it didn't mean that we weren't fighting together. Then all of a sudden, we seemed to respect each other. And I saw Filipinos in the same way. I saw that the more the people of color become more of a brotherhood than antagonist, which is really odd today, because I see more gangs of color in neighborhoods, but that wasn't what we were going through during when we were growing up in those years. Sure, there was violence, but sometimes the violence was Brown-on-Brown and Black-on-Black. It wasn't necessarily color-on-color. So there was a big *movimiento* of people just wanting to find their place as Americans, because we weren't in the books. We weren't the teachers. We weren't the ones in the dialogue. We were adjusting to somebody else's college instead of us being part of that college.

Q And the term *Movimiento Chicano*?

[00:19:24]

Molina *Movimiento Chicano* to me, I think—god, it’s such a good word.

That’s a great question. I want to give MEChA a lot of credit for *Movimiento*, but it’s not just MEChA’s. There were so many other political organizations that were out there, MAPA. I can think of so many abbreviations, but there were a lot of different—La Raza Unida was another one. There were a lot of student groups and a lot of political groups that were using a way to just kind of *juntarse*, right? And remember that people are coming to this valley from Los Angeles, from Texas, from New Mexico, and so in those areas, those groups might have been La Raza Unida. Over here it might have been MEChA. So there were different groups, but the truth is they were all fighting for the same thing. They wanted a place in this great country, you know, and they wanted to hear their voice and they wanted to showcase the talents in what we write and our music and who we are and our voice. And it was strong.

Q While all of this was happening, did you ever hear about the Civil Rights Movement at the time?

[00:20:37]

Molina Absolutely, absolutely, yes. Yes, you couldn’t ignore it. It was too in-our-face. You know, when I think of Civil Rights Movement in the beginning, it seemed to have a Black and White color to it more than a Brown. It seemed like we were off to the side, yet we were still fighting.

So the early part is you saw the stuff that happened to Blacks in the United States with civil rights, but people forgot about Cesar Chavez. People forgot about the

migrant workers in California. People forgot about the families that grew up in poor areas throughout Northern and Southern California. So, you know, we were more the grassroots, and I have to say it that way, because I still believe that we still, to a degree, operate that way. We weren't really out in the media. So civil rights, to me, was almost this media word. When you read about the books, the books had civil rights in there and the media had civil rights, but they really didn't talk about the Chicano Movimiento. It was very grassroots, and it seemed like we would just pass it on among our families and our friends and our generations. So it had a different flavor. It didn't have this big outpouring that now people are starting to look at what it is, but it wasn't that way as you're going through it.

Q Did your involvement in the Movimiento Chicano change you personally?

[00:22:13]

Molina Yes, absolutely, absolutely. You know, it's funny, you always see those things like "Family first" and "What's important to you?" Community became very important to me. I just remember I was in this master's program, and in the master's program they would ask you to pick an object or something to identify what you thought you were going through in your life. And I remember saying, "Well, I think I would pick a link of a chain, because I don't have to be the top of the chain." I didn't really want to be top of it, but I knew I wanted to be a strong part of this chain that was helping pull other kids up, you know. So the link of a chain stands out in my mind of something that I felt like that was important to me, that I felt like my job and

my role in my community was to help others get up, get an opportunity, get these resources, find out what's available to them. So I really had that sensation that I'm pulling up a community to try to better themselves and the kids that come with that community. So that symbol really meant a lot to me, and it represented my *Chicanismo* as well.

Q What role do you believe that Chicanas played in the *Movimiento*?

[00:23:42]

Molina Oh, huge role. So I think Chicanas—I think, first of all, what this *Movimiento* did is it gave them voice. It did lower the sexism that's very prone in our culture. I saw and grew up with a lot of very strong Chicanas who were very well educated, who later on became directors, who later on just lead so many things, including sisters. I had a sister who was president of MAPA. She was strong. And she was one of the first. So I think the Chicano Movement did a lot for Chicanas.

I think when you look at literature, when you look at readings, it not only brought out rights for them and voice for them, but it also opened up a whole 'nother set of issues. This gay/lesbian came out. I mean there's a whole ton of things that were under the covers and people would never talk about, and all of a sudden, we're talking about it, and it's in our face, and everybody had to deal with it because that's who we are. We are a diverse community, and like it or not, everybody needed to dialogue about the differences in our community. And skin color, the darkness of skin versus the lightness of skin. There were so many issues that people wouldn't talk about, class and things like that.

I think Chicanas, because of their discussions, all of a sudden opened up a wider dialogue about issues, and I am very grateful to all the Chicanas that I worked with, the professors that I had. I've had Olivia Castellano. I've had Patricia Gándara, who's now at USC. She was at UC Davis for many years. These are strong, *fuerte* women that were in my life. Juanita Martinez, she did the CAMP Program. Today's CAMP is run by Viridiana Diaz. These are some great Chicana Latinas that I've been around and that have done some great work. Just been fortunate, fortunate. I think they've played a big role.

Q What did you personally initiate or help initiate in this Movimiento Chicano?

[00:26:07]

Molina I think the biggest thing for me was really creating a network of Chicano professionals in a way that we were doing our work in our different communities, but we weren't tying each other together. I think in my mind, because I've been at it so long, this is now my thirty-first year, I'm now the Assistant Director of Admissions, and so I think what I feel like I've contributed to the Chicano Movement is this network of how to get Chicano/Latinos to finally prep people and get people ready for college.

The Chicano Youth Leadership Project would only grab the best of the best of students and bring them to Sacramento, and they would bring them in the summer. That was one way to do it. But we would go into neighborhoods and make sure that we went to Napa Valley and talked to all the kids in that area. Then we'd go to the

Santa Rosa area, do that. We'd go into the Salinas Valley and do that. And when we did it, we tried to do it as a team and we tried to do it where we represented all the segments. So we would go like a panel and talk about community college, UCs, and Cal States all in one discussion, so that the parents could ask us in English and Spanish, "How does it work? How do we pay for it? Why should I go to a UC school versus community college, or I should go to a Cal State versus community college?"

So it really changed the way that we look at outreach. So outreach to us as Chicanos, I think that we went after more a family outreach and a bilingual outreach, and we started out as very nontraditional, but we got to be a bigger player, and I think we're probably even one of the bigger players now.

Now that Latinos are now the majority in California, our work is pretty important because now it's how do we get the majority into college. So now people are asking us, "What have you guys been doing this year? How have you been successful?" And so our voice is pretty important now, and I'm glad. I'm glad.

But what's even better is we have this pipeline of students now coming out with bachelor's and master's degrees, who are now part of that recruitment team. There's even still money for students to go into the master's in counseling. There's migrant education monies that help. This is a network of fifteen counselors that every year flood into these neighborhoods. So over ten years, that's a lot of *gente* now that are working as professionals throughout Northern California, who know who I am and know who my friend Timo is at Davis, and know who my friends are at the

community college, and we just tie each other together. We have a wonderful network in Northern Cal, better than I've ever remembered it, ever, ever.

Q Wow. And so what were some of the organizations that you were involved in?

[00:29:02]

Molina MEChA was probably the earliest, programs like EOP&S and EOP. Remember I mentioned those quite a bit. Those were very important programs to me. I've worked with the Puente Project. It's very important here in California. I was actually part of the evaluation team of the high school Puente Project. I worked with Patricia Gandara. We followed the first high school Puente Project. I was in San Jose and followed a group of eight Chicanos that were going through high school at Andrew Hill High School, and documented their whole high school experience and why Puente worked for them. It was *awesome*. It was awesome work. I would get to videotape, interview, talk to their moms and dads, show up in their class, watch them pass notes and stuff, and crack up at how high school was. But I got to document their high school experience. And that was awesome.

What other programs? CAMP. I do a lot of work with CAMP. I do a lot of work with migrant education. I do a lot of work with ELAC. These are parent groups in school districts where they get bilingual—it's like a PTA, but different, a little different. It's got a little flavor. So we go and we talk to them. PIQE is another one that's out there right now. It's also a parent program. Wow! There's so many programs. AVID, we do work with AVID. Wow. I'm sure I'm going to leave some

out just because I want to capture all of them. But these are programs, all these programs have played a role.

In the early years, we also had programs called Student Affirmative Action, before affirmative action had been stopped. Their job was to diversify this campus. Even when I was hired, I was told, “Get as many Latinos into this campus as you can. If you need to waive transcripts, you’ve got to waive test scores, you do what you got to do to get them in here.”

My campus is now a Hispanic-serving institution. It was not. It only recently became in the last two years. We now have hit the threshold, which means we have 25 percent Latinos at Sac State. I want to take credit for that because I think I played a big role in getting Latinos into this campus. So I don’t get full credit; I had a team. I always had a team, but I’d like to think that I was a good part of that.

Q So what other significant activities did these other organizations play in the Movimiento Chicano?

[00:31:30]

Molina Early, like in my undergrad, one of the programs that was probably really famous was called the Chicanito Science Project. It was run by Sam Rios. He was a professor in Ethnic Studies. We would go into community centers and teach kids about science. It was like early STEM stuff, you know. But we were actually in the poorest of areas. I remember going to the Washington Neighborhood Center and teaching the kids for the first time how to use a microscope and teaching them how parts of an orange was like the reproduction system. And these were little, little kids.

We would teach them what the orange was and what the stem was and what the seed was. It was a really smart way to teach them stuff. We all were assigned projects, and we had to just get in front and support each other. We all had to come up with our ideas.

Man, there was a whole ton of Chicanos that went through this and helped in a lot of different school districts in this area that were poor, really poor. But here we were with our science tools and teaching them science. This was a class. This was actually a General Ed class as part of your bachelor's degree. You didn't have to pick it, but we did, we all picked it. So I think that had a huge impact here in Sacramento. I thank Sam for that one. That was a great one.

Then when the CAMP Program came, now they're going after migrant students, trying to get the first-year migrant students to come onto campus and trusting that there'd be a home for them. So I think that program's played a big role

Now today, we fast-forward, now we're working with AB 540 and undocumented students. One of the programs that we have on our campus is run through what we call the Serna Center. It's in honor of our former professor Joe Serna, who was also the mayor in Sacramento, and who also, he himself, used to have a fellowship that would bring Latinos from Los Angeles and Southern Cal to do internships to work with senators and assemblymen. Joe Serna was honored after he passed away, so they created the Serna Center as a tribute to him. The Serna Center brings speakers, but also does some programs. Through the Serna Center, we've been

able to bring in more services now for undocumented kids, and the AB 540, which is a whole ‘nother *movimiento* in and of itself.

I like to think that we’re ahead of the game. We don’t have a full-fledged center like UC Davis just recently got one. We don’t have that yet, but we’ve been operating as if we had, just in our own grassroots manner. So we play a big role in making sure undocumented kids know what resources are available to them. So I feel like we’re reliving that thing all over again with a different group of kids, but yet it’s within our own culture. It’s kind of a trip. [laughs]

Q Did the Movimiento Chicano raise your consciousness along social, cultural, political lines?

[00:34:22]

Molina Absolutely, absolutely, yes, because you knew there was a time where, number one, we’ve never not been underrepresented. I know that the majority today is in the first grade, we’re now the majority, but for my whole lifetime, we’ve been underrepresented and still continue to be. So socially and politically, yeah, I’m still operating in a college that still doesn’t have administrators that are Latino, you know. Even with a Latino president, I would say the majority are still White or non-Latino, even the professors. I’ve seen our Chicano/Latino professors dwindle down to the lowest percentage I’ve ever seen in thirty-one years. We’re, like, going backwards.

When here we have more Latino kids coming into campus, we’re actually losing Latino professors, and we don’t seem to have a generation right behind them to fill in the spots and nor do we have a campus that’s dedicated to fill those spots yet.

So, yeah, it influenced me quite a bit. I'm still angry. I'm still fighting. That's why I still fight to get students into college, because I want them to fill those spots. I want them to become those professors. I want them to trust they can go get their master's and get their doctorates. I recently just went back to school myself to get my doctorate, maybe because of that same fire, you know. It's one thing that you want other people, but you also want to walk the walk yourself. So I finished my doctorate because I wanted to show other people "If I can do it, you can do it." I want them to see us as role models and I want them to get those spots. The nice thing is, I do feel this nice little wave coming of Latinos through the master's and doctorate programs. I'm just waiting for the university to hire them. That's the bigger issue.

Q How did these changes impact your personal relationships with family, peers, and significant others?

[00:36:23]

Molina I don't think it ever impacted me family-wise. I think my parents always supported me with college, and even if I was calling myself a Chicano, even as I went into communities, I think, if anything, my parents were proud that I was carrying their work. I saw them as community-based people. I think my parents, though they weren't as educated as I was, I think they appreciated it. I had brothers and sisters who were very supportive. I thought they were doing fantastic work. I have a sister who became a Superintendent of Schools, but she first was a teacher of two-way immersion schools. In fact, I consider her an expert in it. I have another

sister who was a principal of a continuation high school, who just became director of all the continuation schools in San Jose.

So education for all of us and family has been huge. We're all doing very good work in our communities. We're all doing good work with Latino families. So I don't feel that it had any negative. I always saw it as positive. The more I embellished my culture and who I was, seemed like the family and everybody got stronger.

Now, are all my friends Latino? No, I think I have diverse friends, but I have mostly Latino friends, of course. I'm thinking of my girlfriend. We've been together almost twenty years. She comes from a family of ten, and I'm from a family of fourteen, and so together, all these families, we get together, it's almost eighty people in those two families alone, just those two families.

I think we're enriched. I think we have a lot of talent. I think it's been nothing but positive. I'm excited about where we're going, but I want to highlight all the talent and all the things that this community has to offer. That's big to me. It's huge to me.

Q And so what about the peers?

[00:38:30]

Molina Well, I feel supported. Here I'm doing doctorate work and I'm doing it on Latinos. Most of the students in there are not Latinos. Even my professors are not predominantly Latinos. And I'm talking about Puente and Chicano and I'm using these words, and you know what? They seem to trust my *corazón*. And I have to say

that most of the work I do, I do from my heart. I feel their support. So I don't really feel a backlash.

The only time I can ever remember a backlash of any kind was early when I was in my undergrad, and really that was part of me sorting out who I was as a Chicano and as a Latino, because I did have students who had just gotten here from Mexico. I grew up here in California, in Santa Barbara and then next in Sacramento, and I remember just our little value differences, you know, that my Spanish wasn't as good as theirs. There was just little things that were—that was like our little culture clash within our own culture. But you know what? It all worked out. People just have to learn to respect that we're all different. We're a diverse group. We don't have to be exactly alike. We're not alike. As Latinos and Chicanos, we're so diverse. It was just a matter of us working it out to appreciate each other's differences even within our culture.

Q Can you please describe some of the impacts that your involvement with the Movimiento Chicano had on your career?

[00:40:04]

Molina Oh, I think it made my career. I don't think I could have stayed in the roles I have, even to get the Assistant Director of Admission, where I have control of a *puerta*, of a university. It made my career, you know, just because I stayed focused. When I'm pulling in students, even though I'm looking for Latino students, I'm also pulling in students of color. I'm also pulling in low-income students. And remember low-income students could be White students, could be Asian students, could be

Vietnamese students, right? And so the nice thing is, you're hoping you can get as many Latinos as you can, but that doesn't mean that's the only kids you're getting, you're pulling in, you know. You're going to schools and just hoping that you tap on a few of the Brown faces before they walk out of the room and say, "Hey what are you going to do? What are you going to do?" Because there's a couple of them that want to run out. And I go and I make sure, and I tap on them and say, "Did this help you? Is there ways I can help you?" And stay connected with them. People have learned to email me to ask questions. I have brothers of brothers now. I have generations of kids where I have their brothers and younger brothers and sisters and friends and friends. It's amazing, this little mushroom that happens when you start recruiting *gentes*.

So I don't know. I think it's been very respected. I think my career took off because of that. I think that's what made my career so valuable. And I'm not done. I'm ready next to go to community colleges and run one. Part of the reason I went for the doctorate was because I wanted to run a community college. I also don't see Latinos running community colleges. And so I want to be one of those fighting in there. I think community colleges struggle, and I want to be one of the people that helps turn that around. I want to see all the Latinos be successful. I'm tired of them minimizing that all these kids are dropping out, even at the community college level. It's bad enough at the high school level. I don't want to see it at the community college level. So I'm ready to go to that next level.

Q And so looking back at your experience in the Movimiento Chicano, are there any issues left unresolved?

[00:42:11]

Molina Yes. We're still underrepresented in administrative positions, in places where decisions are made of how we educate children. We're still really, really—it's an unresolved issue, absolutely. Until you and I can say that our books had our Chicano history in it, until we can see ourselves in the literature, in the American history, that we see Chicanos and the contributions that we made in war, contributions we made in labor, the contributions we made in education, until that day, it is *completely* unresolved. We still have a fight. We have a long fight in that sense. So, yes, it's a part of me. That part won't go away, won't go away. That's why I love Puente. Puente brought back literature into the classroom, brought back role models, brought back—but they're such a small program. It should just be across the curriculum. They should mirror what Puente does in community colleges and high school, and they should just do it across the curriculum. That whole fight in Tucson, Arizona, is about what Puente did in California and to make sure it happens there. It's the same fight. So, yes, that's very much unresolved.

Q What do you feel when you see a part of the Chicano Movement being expressed in a book, film, or the media?

[00:43:38]

Molina Pride, pride. I feel a lot of pride. I love seeing that we have movies about us now, you know, that we're finally getting our stories. There are so many

wonderful stories. I love hearing about the heroes. Remember we had a lot of military families. We had people that helped build railroads throughout California. We had people, like my dad, who did Spanish radio. We don't even know what that whole media thing is in California that were influenced by Latinos and artists, how they even moved up. We've let so much go by because we weren't part of that history books, that we now have a chance to go back and re-find those people and highlight who they were and how important they were in this culture and in this American culture as Latinos and Chicanos.

Q Describe how the Movimiento Chicano impacted community life here in Sacramento or where you lived.

[00:44:33]

Molina Sacramento was just the hotbed. I believe it already had a beautiful network of people who grew up here, people who came here. You had a mix, but you had a hotbed of Chicano Movement. We had poets. We had activists. Royal Chicano Air Force was here. This project was here, Mexican American Project. You had Serna's project bringing in kids working right with assemblymen, right with senators, who later on themselves became senators and assemblymen. Some of these guys even pipelined and became them.

I think Joe Serna's work was huge. Man, there's so much to give credit to all these people. Sacramento alone was so powerful, just the work that they did with Cesar Chavez and Dolores Huerta and the UFW Movement. God, there were so many

movimientos that came through Sacramento, and that this town had such an impact on those *movimientos*.

That's why doing this history right now is so rich. You're just getting a piece of what I think is huge, because so many of them have passed away. But Jose Montoya's work with his poetry, but also his activism, Olivia Castellano and her poetry, wonderful works, Senon's work with cultural anthropology. I can think of so many. I hope we capture all of them. Renée Marino [phonetic].

We used to have the Cross-cultural Research Center here on our campus. I think it was a product of the Mexican American Project. They would give us books on culture and how to understand culture and define culture. These were books that were—I must have had those books in about seven different classes through my undergrad and graduate, which was really nice because I knew they were coming right from the Cross-Cultural Research Center. We wouldn't even have those dialogues for multiculturalism if it hadn't been for their works. So their influences have been tremendous. You said besides Sacramento, did you say?

Q: Yeah, where you lived.

[00:46:47]

Molina Well, I like where we're at in California, you know. I'm still angry that things like the 187 went through. I'm still angry that we became this English-only state. There's still some unravelling we have to do, especially with bilingual education. Remember that *gente* wanted us to just learn English, yet around the world, it's multiple languages. And so now people are wanting to value language

again. Well, then, revive bilingual education so that people do get to support all the languages they want to know. I want a Latino to be trilingual or if they want to learn four languages, but more importantly, that they know their own language and really get a chance to learn it in a classroom. And if the teaching can be bilingual, then so be it, so that its two-way immersion. I'm very, very much a proponent of that as well.

Q What do you see as current or future challenges for the Chicano community?

[00:47:47]

Molina I think our challenges are always been that somebody gets ahead and they forget who they are, you know. I think that's always been a challenge. I'm going to use—and I don't mean to pick on my president of this campus, but here's a Latino in charge of a whole university. To me, it's really important that he be proud of himself as a Latino that he got there, that he embrace his culture, that he use his language, that he be a role model, even at that level, but not turn his back on his own community. And it's really important to me that as we get these opportunities and we become more empowered, that we remember where we're from and where we got and that we don't just get into these roles, because I so want to get these kids in these roles, but not to forget who they are, not to forget what got them there, and not to forget to look back and pull other kids up around them. That's more important to me. And it's really remembering what community is really all about.

Q Do you see yourself as staying involved in meeting these challenges?

[00:49:01]

Molina Yes, yes. I'm not done yet. I've still got some fire in me. Oh, yeah. I just will take different angles. I will probably leave the university now and go to the community colleges, as I mentioned, but I'll still stay in the fight. The undocumented kids is a good fight right now. I'm fighting and really trying to be a huge advocate, making sure those kids get the information. They're so forgotten. Remember, they could be deported tomorrow. They're a tough group that needs a lot of help right now. And so yeah, there's still a lot of good work to do.

Q Is there a specific community college?

[00:49:36]

Molina I'm probably going to go to Woodland, which is close by, which is close by, which is predominantly Latino, the one I'm heading towards.

Q Well, we're actually, we're done.

Molina Okay, thank you so much for this. This was an honor. This was an honor.

Q Thank you. Thank you for sharing part of your experiences.

Molina Thank you, thank you. I'm not sure I got to say enough of the names, but I wanted to mention some names along the way. But I tried to work, squeeze them in.

Q Thank you very much.

Molina Thank you. Thank you so much.

[End of interview]