



**HISTORY
MAKERS**

CÉSAR CHÁVEZ

He fought for the rights of America's farmworkers.

The year was 1966. A group of farmworkers set off from Delano, California. They were about to march more than 300 miles to the state capital, Sacramento. Why? It was a nonviolent way to protest the unfair way farmworkers had been treated for generations. Leading the charge was César Chávez, a man who dedicated his life to improving the lives of others.

Unfair and Unsafe

Chávez was born in Arizona in 1927. When he was 11, his family lost their small farm, and they moved to California. His parents became **migrant workers**. They traveled from

farm to farm, depending on where they could find work.

As a kid, Chávez worked in the fields to help his family earn money. After he graduated from eighth grade, Chávez left school and began working full time.

Chávez and thousands of others spent long days in fields, picking avocados, peas, grapes, and other crops in the hot sun. Many didn't have access to clean water. Most were paid low wages, didn't get breaks, and worked in unsafe conditions.

Uniting Farmworkers

Chávez was determined to end the struggles farmworkers faced. In 1962, he co-founded a group that later became the United Farm Workers **union**.

"It was all about fairness and respect," says Paul Chávez. He

is César's son and president of the César Chávez Foundation. "He said, 'Once they see us as human beings and respect us, the rest will follow.'"

Chávez also used other nonviolent methods in his fight. In 1965, he took on the owners of California grape farms. He encouraged their workers to strike, or refuse to work. He helped launch a boycott, convincing people to stop buying grapes. To bring even more attention to his cause, Chávez led the 1966 march to Sacramento.

"When he marched, he inspired people to go out and exercise their rights," Paul Chávez says.

Ten years later, thanks in large part to Chávez's tireless

work, California passed a new law. It allowed farm laborers to form unions and to bargain for fair pay and better working conditions.

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A Lasting Impact

Chávez continued to fight for the rights of migrant workers up until his death in 1993. Since then, schools, parks, and even a U.S. Navy ship have been named after him. Eleven states, including California, celebrate official holidays in his honor.

Paul Chávez can think of another way to honor his father, who often said that you only lose when you give up.

"The best way to honor him is to make sure that his example is used in today's struggles to provide inspiration and hope to people," he says.

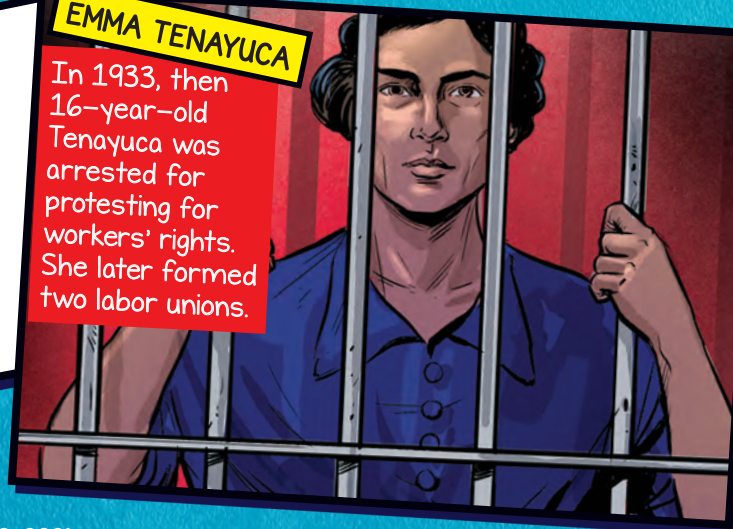
—by Alicia Green

LEADING THE WAY

Meet three more Latino and Latina leaders who fought for human rights.

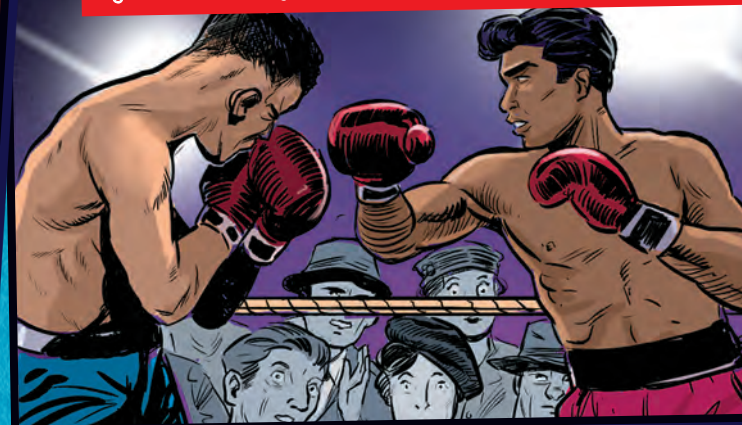
EMMA TENAYUCA

In 1933, then 16-year-old Tenayuca was arrested for protesting for workers' rights. She later formed two labor unions.



RODOLFO "CORKY" GONZALES

This boxer's most important fight took place outside the ring. In the 1960s, he started the Chicano movement to help fight for the rights of Mexican American people.



DOLORES HUERTA

She co-founded a farmworkers' union with César Chávez. Huerta often used the phrase "Sí se puede," which means "Yes we can."