



## COMISION FEMENIL MEXICANA NACIONAL, INC.

### AN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Comision Femenil was established at the National Issues Conference in Sacramento, California in October of 1970 for the purpose of advocating for the issues of concern to Chicanas. Comision resolved to focus on issues pertaining to the Chicana and her family, to enhance and promote the image of the Chicana, and to build and strengthen Comision Femenil throughout the country.

In November of 1972. Comision Femenil testified on Chicana issues before the State Commission on the Status of Women. It was the first testimony of its kind ever to be presented to the State Commission. and this action was responsible for the immediate appointment of a Chicana to that commission in California.

In response to the crucial need for training and employment of low-income unskilled Chicanas, Comision Femenil developed the Chicana Service Action Center in 1972. In 1973, Comision addressed the equally needed service of child care, and created Centros de Ninos, two unique bilingual bicultural child development centers.

The First Annual Conference of Comision was held in Goleta, California in June of 1973. It was there that the first constitution of Comision Femenil Mexicana Nacional was drafted. More than 300 women attended-- Chicanas representing farmworker women, the trade unions, college campuses, grass roots communities and professional communities.

The plight of Chicanas being involuntarily sterilized compelled Comision into action in June of 1975. Comision joined in filing a lawsuit opposing these inhumane sterilizations. Hearings on the Madrigal v. Quilligan case resulted in a moratorium on coerced sterilization of women and the adoption of bilingual consent forms, as well as in greater enforcement of the federal government regulation which requires a 72-hour waiting period prior to performing the operation.

Comision Femenil is the first nationally-recognized Chicana organization to advocate issues within the international women's movement. In 1975. Comision women attended the International Women's Conference held in Mexico City, and took initial steps to establish communication networks with women from all over the world.

In November of 1977, Comision women attended the National Women's Conference in Houston, Texas. Comision Femenil takes special pride in the fact that its membership took a leadership role in developing the Plank for Hispanic women throughout the country, and that it was the National President of Comision who read the Hispanic portion of the Minority Women's Resolution to the convened body.

Following through with its commitment to represent Chicanas, Comision officers attended the United Nations Mid-Decade Conference on Women in July of 1980, which was held in Copenhagen, Denmark. Comision took

an active role through providing workshops, participating on panels, and providing translation and key logistical support to our world sisters.

Comision Femenil has been at the forefront of identifying and actively advocating issues critical to the growth and development of las mujeres de nuestra Raza. Recognizing that part of our growth must include political development, Comision provided a conference in 1982 designed to enable Chicanas to be effective key staff members of the political campaigns taking place that year.

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It is noteworthy to mention that Comision's 14 chapters, which are the foundation of the organization, are also striving to create positive changes for Chicanas in their respective communities. Chapters are involved in developing programs for young Chicanas, establishing scholarship funds, establishing employment and training programs and Chicana service centers, lobbying for appointments to boards and commissions, advocating Chicana rights through public testimony, and providing conferences and workshops.

Comision Femenil is dedicated to carry out the objectives set forth in the founding resolution drafted by a group of courageous Chicanas in 1970. We do this by devoting our energy to upgrading the status of the Chicana, we do this by creating political awareness, we do this by recognizing and respecting the diversity among us, and we do this by advocating Chicana participation in every phase of the decision making process in this society.



*CFMN chapters voice their emphatic support for the ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment at the "Last Walk for ERA."*