



Photo credit:
John J Herrera Collection, Houston Public Library

A CLASS APART A NIGHT TOGETHER

Event Planning Toolkit for Organizations

A CLASS APART A NIGHT TOGETHER

Photo credits

Left: Jordi Valdés

Top middle, bottom right,
and bottom left: Lee (Russell)
Photograph Collection: Spanish
Speaking People of Texas Center
for American History UT-Austin

Top right: San Antonio Light
Collection, UTSA's Institute
of Texan Cultures, Courtesy of
the Hearst Corporation



Table of Contents

- 1. Introduction**
 - About the Film
 - About *A Class Apart*, A Night Together Event
 - From the Filmmakers
- 2. Planning Your Event**
 - 5 Basic Steps
 - Event Planning Checklist
- 3. Facilitating Discussions of *A Class Apart***
 - Tips for a Successful Panel
 - Facilitating Group Discussions
 - Discussion Questions
- 4. *A Class Apart* In Context**
 - Impact of the *Hernandez v. Texas* Case
 - Latinos in the United States Today
- 5. What You Can Do**
 - For Audience Members
 - For Your Organization
- 6. Resources**
 - Films
 - Online
 - Books
- 7. *A Class Apart* National Partner Organizations**

Introduction

About the Film

A Class Apart is a new documentary by award-winning filmmakers Carlos Sandoval (*Farmingville*) and Peter Miller (*Sacco and Vanzetti, Passin' It On*). The first major film to bring to life the heroic post-World War II struggles of Mexican Americans against the Jim Crow-style discrimination targeted against them, *A Class Apart* is built around the landmark 1951 legal case *Hernandez v. Texas*, in which an underdog band of Mexican Americans from Texas bring a case all the way to the Supreme Court - and win. The film begins with a murder in a gritty small-town cantina and follows the legal journey of the *Hernandez* lawyers through the Texas courts and ultimately to the United States Supreme Court. We see them forge a daring legal strategy that called their own racial identities into question by arguing that Mexican Americans were "a class apart" who did not neatly fit into a legal structure that only recognized blacks and whites. A grassroots national movement supports the legal efforts, with tiny contributions sent by Latinos from around the country paying for the *Hernandez* case to go forward. The film dramatically interweaves the story of its central characters - activists and lawyers, returning veterans and ordinary citizens, murderer and victim- within the broader history of Latinos in America during a time of extraordinary change.

About *A Class Apart*, A Night Together Events

A Class Apart raises important questions about inclusion, American identity, and equality before the law that are as resonant today as ever. There is no better way to celebrate this moment in our nation's history than to share it. On and after the night of the broadcast premiere (February 23, 2009 on PBS's AMERICAN EXPERIENCE – check local listings), groups throughout the country will host house parties and community screenings of *A Class Apart* in community centers, places of worship, cultural institutions, civic groups, campuses, and homes across America, guided by this discussion and planning toolkit.

The *A Class Apart*, A Night Together Project is brought to you by Active Voice and Camino Bluff Productions, in partnership with:

- The American Constitution Society
- The American G.I. Forum
- The Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities
- The Hispanic National Bar Association
- Latino Public Broadcasting
- The League of United Latin American Citizens
- The Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund

A CONVERSATION WITH THE *A CLASS APART* FILMMAKERS

Carlos Sandoval: I discovered the story of the *Hernandez* case oddly enough on the subway one day while reading a *New York Times* editorial, and it was on the 50th anniversary of the case. I had gone to law school, I'd never heard about this case. It surprised me that this case existed. I decided to delve further into it, and once I found out about the case and the fact that it covered not only issues of discrimination and the expansion of the Fourteenth amendment but it also allowed for a way to explore the issues of identity that surround being a Latino... I thought this was a case that was really, really captivating.

Peter Miller: I'm always interested in stories from American history, and in particular stories about people who have been left out of the traditional tellings of our history. When Carlos approached me about this film and said he was making a film about the Mexican American civil rights movement of the post-World War II era, I thought, "I don't know anything about that, this is a civil rights movement I should know about." So naturally, I was intrigued. And then when I got to learn a little bit more about the story, I realized that not only was this a very important story that the public needed to know about, but it also was a fantastic subject for a film with really compelling characters and with a wonderful dramatic storyline.

Carlos: I think that one of the greatest challenges of telling a story like this, a story that is in the past but not so distant past, and that comes out of a community that itself has not been documented for a variety of reasons, is trying to piece together that story.

Peter: Indeed, when we started working on this project, there [was] very little historical literature about this and we really were on our own in many ways, digging through the archives, talking to witnesses of this history, and trying to figure out what happened and putting together this elaborate puzzle.

Carlos: The *Hernandez vs. Texas* case is one that has not been generally documented by historians. This early Mexican American civil rights movement is only now coming into its own.

Photo credit: Jordi Valdés



Carlos Sandoval (Producer/Director) is the co-producer/director of the highly acclaimed documentary *Farmingville*. A lawyer and writer, Sandoval's work has appeared in the *New York Times* and other publications. Of Mexican-American and Puerto Rican descent, Sandoval worked on immigration and refugee affairs as a member of the U.S. delegation to the United Nations, and as a program officer for The Century Foundation. He has participated on several public television funding and programming panels as well as on film festival juries and panels.



Peter Miller (Producer/Director) has worked on dozens of historical and social issue documentaries, including as a producer of several of Ken Burns's films and of Barbara Kopple's Academy Award-winning *American Dream*. His own work includes the critically acclaimed documentary *Sacco and Vanzetti*, *The Internationale* (Oscar short-list), and *Passin' It On* (shown on P.O.V., winner of over twenty film festival prizes).

Planning Your Event

CONNECT With A Class Apart Online!

- **Connect with other A Class Apart fans on the Facebook!**
Just log into www.Facebook.com and search for "A Class Apart," or visit <http://www.facebook.com/pages/A-Class-Apart/38365902140>.
- **Take pictures at your event and share them online!**
Send photos from your event to AClassApartTheMovie@gmail.com, and we'll post them on our Facebook page!

5 BASIC STEPS

#1: Define Your Objectives

Figuring out your objectives is the first step in planning a great event! Are you interested in the civil rights movement? Do you want to heighten your organization's profile and build new partnerships? Do you feel strongly about what happened to Latinos before, during and after World War II? Do you love documentaries? Having a sense of what you'd like people to take away from their evening with *A Class Apart* will help you plan and set a good tone. Here are some possible objectives (not a definitive list – get creative!):

- **Raise public awareness** of the history of Latinos in the United States. If your main objective is public education, plan to set aside at least half an hour for Q&A with the audience, and have fact sheets handy.
- **Highlight ongoing civil rights struggles and connect motivated audiences** with ways to get involved. For an action-oriented event, prompt panelists and participants to focus on what needs to be done and how audience members can contribute.
- **Build coalitions with new allies** who are "beyond the choir." If this is your goal, be sure to recruit co-sponsors for your event, and think outside the box! A local Rotary or Chamber of Commerce are two possible ideas.
- **Identify new policy stakeholders and potential leaders**, particularly among Latinos and other communities of color. A screening of this type might help to build visibility for an existing leadership program, or invite audience members to volunteer as mentors.
- **Raise the visibility of your organization.** If your goal is to showcase your organization's work, invite people who can raise the profile of your event, including press, potential funders and other influential decision makers.

#2: Identify Your Target Audience

Do you hope to engage an audience that is motivated around the issues and ready to get more involved? Would you like to reach "beyond the choir," and introduce the issues to new audiences?

Have A Spanish-Speaking Audience? The *A Class Apart* DVD will be available with a Spanish audio track and subtitling. Host your event in Spanish, or use the English language track and Spanish subtitles to bring in a mixed crowd. If you plan to have a panel or discussion at your event, make your screening as accessible as possible by finding a translator and bilingual facilitators (volunteers may be able to do this for free).

#3: Recruit Partner Organizations

Partner organizations can help broaden your outreach and establish new, potentially long-term partners. Ask partners to contribute ideas, time, resources, and/or panelists for the event. Partners can get involved in a variety of ways, but even if it's as simple as getting the word out about the event through their listservs or websites, every little bit helps! Civil and human rights organizations, student groups, public interest law firms, universities and colleges, faith-based organizations, libraries, museums, and media/film centers are some possible co-sponsors. To really broaden your reach, try contacting an organization you've never worked with before that will share an interest in *A Class Apart*. This will help you reach new potential supporters and bring your messages "beyond the choir."

#4: Get the Word Out

Visit www.CaminoBluff.com to download email, flyer and press release templates for your event!

- **Publicize online.** The simplest thing you can do to promote your event is to create an email blast and send it out widely via listservs. We recommend you send out the email twice: two weeks before, and then a reminder several days before your event. If your organization has a website, be sure to post information about your event there, and ask any co-hosts to do the same.
- **Post flyers in your community.** Create an *A Class Apart* flyer to advertise your event. Make copies (in color if your budget permits) and post them in high traffic areas, such as college campuses, shopping malls, grocery stores, churches and recreation centers.
- **Contact local media.** Ten days before your event, send a press release to local media outlets, including ethnic media. Try to target reporters covering civil rights issues, and customize your press release to highlight the film's relevance to your community. If your event will feature prominent panelists or local heroes, make sure to mention them!
- **Make calls to local television and radio programs** including local news, public affairs programs, talk radio and Spanish language stations. Let them know about your event, explain its importance to your community, and if possible direct them to a local expert or advocate who can be available for interviews. Try contacting assignment editors (for local TV news) or producers (for public affairs programs or talk radio).

#5: Set the Agenda

- **Invite a Keynote Speaker:** Invite a local leader or scholar to speak about some of the themes the film raises, such as the fairness of the judicial system, the gap between legal and social equality, and/or the impacts of racial prejudice in the United States.
- **Host a Panel Discussion:** Panelists can help put the film in context, whether it's providing historical background or connecting the issues in *A Class Apart* to current events. It's always a good idea to have a range of perspectives represented – possible panelists might include representatives from civil rights organizations, Latino or otherwise; local professors or historians; legal professionals; veterans; community organizers; and elected officials. Co-sponsors are great resources for potential

panelists for the discussion, and they'll be even more eager to promote the event if they're being represented. Still stuck? Try contacting the local branches of the *A Class Apart* partner organizations listed at the back of this manual.

- **Hold a Public Reception:** Plan a special post-screening meet-and-greet to allow opportunities for networking and continued discussion after the screening. (If you have a budget for refreshments, even better!)
- **Highlight Current Advocacy Efforts:** Highlight a piece of local or national legislation around legal justice reform or civil rights and provide concrete steps audience members can take to show their support. (Inviting people to participate in a letter-writing campaign to elected officials to initiate a specific legislative change is one idea.)
- **Suggest Further Outlets for Action:** Offer audience members concrete ways they can get involved and support your and your partner organizations' work. These might include visiting your website to find out about upcoming events, volunteering for a specific initiative, becoming a member, making a donation, etc.
- **Stay In Touch!** Have a system for collecting email addresses and phone numbers at your event, and follow up with audience members and co-sponsor organizations in the days after. You've worked too hard to let those relationships disappear!

PLANNING CHECKLIST

Hosting a public *A Class Apart*, *A Night Together* screening is easy if you plan ahead! Visit www.CaminoBluff.com to download customizable flyers, email blasts, and press releases.

Preliminary planning – at least 8 weeks prior

- Book the venue and date for your screening.
- Recruit local organizational partners to broaden your reach, and help identify roles for each one (such as publicity, panelist coordination, and reception planning).
- Determine speakers, panelists, and moderator (if applicable).

Logistical planning and initial outreach – 3-4 weeks prior

- Create an email blast and get the word out electronically. Make sure to include your website or RSVP information, if applicable.
- Choose the format for your screening (TV broadcast or DVD), and check all of your equipment well in advance.
- TV: Find your local station and search for broadcast times on PBS's website.¹
DVD: Order *A Class Apart* through the AMERICAN EXPERIENCE website.²
- Secure food for reception.
- Draft event agenda and vet with partners.

1. Online at <http://www.pbs.org/tvschedules/>.

2. Online at <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/class/>.

More logistical planning – 2 weeks prior

- Contact press, including local television stations and/or radio programs. (See “Get the Word Out” for more information.)
- Contact community calendars about your event.
- Create a flyer to publicize your screening, and post in high-traffic areas.
- Confirm all details with event staff (caterer, venue, IT, etc.).

Media outreach – 10 days prior

- Send out press releases to media outlets.
- Make calls to local television and radio programs.

Final planning – several days prior

- Test screen your event equipment one last time to make sure there aren’t any glitches.
- Send a reminder email blast.
- Follow up with press who expressed an interest in covering the story.
- Finalize agenda.
- Make copies of handouts to distribute at the event.

At the event itself

- Take photos!
- As people arrive, ask them to sign up to receive updates from your organization.
- Have a timekeeper so that panelists/speakers remain within their assigned time.
- Announce a call to action or have materials available for attendees to follow up.
- Let audience members know that they can learn more about the film on the AMERICAN EXPERIENCE *A Class Apart* website, and invite them to host screenings of their own!

After your screening

- Follow up with audience members and invite them to future meetings and events.
- Send your event photos to AClassApartTheMovie@gmail.com. View them and connect with other fans on the *A Class Apart* Facebook page!³

3. Online at <http://www.facebook.com/pages/A-Class-Apart/38365902140>.

Facilitating Discussions of *A Class Apart*

TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL PANEL

- Give your panelists an idea of who will be in the audience, so they can tailor their comments to the audience's needs and interests. (For example, if you anticipate a general audience, ask panelists to tone down any sector-specific jargon.)
- Decide what you'd like the panelists to say. Depending on time, you may want to ask each speaker to give a brief reaction to the film in context of their work, or just jump straight into the discussion. If time permits, allow each speaker to briefly introduce themselves and explain how their work is relevant to the issues raised in the film. (You can also create a hand-out with your panelist's bios to distribute to the audience.)
- Have an experienced moderator keep the discussion moving and field questions from the audience.
- As the panelists speak, encourage them to choose specific scenes from the film and link them to their comments.
- Remember to reserve as much time as possible for Q&A with the audience!

FACILITATING GROUP DISCUSSIONS

If you are hosting a large screening of *A Class Apart*, breaking out into small groups of 6-8 people may be a good way of generating more intimate conversations. If you go this route, identify a handful of facilitators well in advance and make sure to go over these guidelines with them before your screening, so they'll be ready on the day of the event. The facilitators' basic job will be to guide interesting conversations and ensure that everyone participates. Ask facilitators to encourage people to share their reactions, provide some background information, and help the group think about ways they can continue to engage with the issues. Additional tips:

- **Take a Minute to Reflect.** Right after you screen *A Class Apart*, ask people how they felt about it. Let people speak from their hearts before you move the conversation into the discussion questions. *A Class Apart* is a powerful experience, and sharing it on an emotional level is one great reason to host a house party.
- **Explain the purpose of the conversation.** To keep the group on track, clearly articulate your goals for the dialogue at its outset. Why did you bring everyone together?
- **Set ground rules.** Encourage people to participate, actively listen, and leave enough time for others to speak.

- **Guide the discussion, but don't micromanage!** Pick a few of the discussion questions you think your audience will find most interesting to get the conversation started, but be flexible. People will bring in unique ideas and experiences, so let the conversation flow!
- **Provide some context.** You needn't be an expert, but most audiences will enjoy hearing a bit of context about the film. This guide includes key facts you may want to share.
- **Encourage everyone to participate!** Factors like age, ethnicity, socioeconomic class, education level, and familiarity with a topic can all influence how comfortable people feel about sharing their reactions, especially if people don't know each other already. Keep this in mind and actively encourage everyone to participate! Emphasize that everyone brings something unique to the table, and provide a variety of ways for people to share. For example, you might ask everyone to write down a sentence about their initial reaction and have a couple of people read their thoughts aloud before starting the conversation.
- **Brainstorm ways people can continue to engage with the issues.** What opportunities are there in your community for people to get involved? Come prepared with suggestions for ways to take action and let everyone contribute ideas.
- **Thank everyone!** Thank your guests for participating, and ask them to share closing thoughts.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

General

- What did you learn from this film, and how might you act on what you learned?
- Imagine that you could send a copy of this film to anyone in the world. To whom would you send it and what would you say to them about why you want them to see it?
- Describe a moment in the film that you found particularly inspiring or disturbing. What was it about that scene that moved you?

The Significance of Historical Memory

- Did you already know about the history recounted in the film? What is the impact of people and communities knowing or not knowing this history? Who benefits and who is harmed by having this history remain invisible? In particular, how might greater knowledge of the *Hernandez* case influence the way Latinos see themselves today?
- What role does the acknowledgment of historical wrongs play in a nation's ability to heal from long-term discrimination? In your view, what form should that acknowledgment take?
- In the film, we hear a radio interview in Spanish with García, an example of local media coverage of the case. Elsewhere the case received little coverage. How does media coverage influence the impact of an event like a Supreme Court civil rights victory? Do you know of current struggles for justice that are not reported in mainstream media outlets? What are the effects of their exclusion?

Citizenship and Constitutional Protections

- What is the significance of the film's title, "A Class Apart"?
- The film observes that, "Legal citizenship for Mexican Americans was one thing; equal treatment turned out to be quite another." In what ways can laws guarantee equality? In what ways are laws limited in their ability to guarantee equality? In addition to changing laws, what kinds of things need to happen to eliminate discrimination when it is infused in the social code (not just the legal code) of a community or country?
- For decades, Americans have debated the value of diversity and whether or not it should be actively promoted by law (e.g., in affirmative action policies). What do you learn about the value of diversity from the questions about Mexican Americans that members of the Supreme Court asked Gus García and Carlos Cadena?
- Why did attorneys representing the State of Texas support the right of the court to exclude Mexican Americans from juries? How would inclusion of Mexican Americans, especially in trials of white defendants, challenge the social order? How would you define or describe a "jury of your peers"? Would it have to include people of your race, ethnicity, socioeconomic class, age, or gender? Why or why not? Why is judgment by a jury of peers important enough to American democracy that it is guaranteed by law?
- What do you learn from the film about the significance of the Supreme Court? Why did the *Hernandez* lawyers feel the need to have their case heard before the Supreme Court? How does the Supreme Court differ from local, state, and lower federal courts, both in terms of jurisdiction and in terms of who serves and how they come to hold their positions?
- In what ways did the victory in *Hernandez v. Texas* benefit Mexican Americans? How did the decision benefit all Americans?

Prejudice and Discrimination

- Prior to viewing the film, what images came to mind when you heard the term Mexican American? What were the sources of your ideas about Mexican Americans? In what ways did the film confirm or challenge your ideas?
- Given the history of discrimination against Mexican Americans because they were not perceived as white, how is it that America came to define Mexican Americans as legally white? What role did racism play in the designation of Mexican Americans as white?
- How was the experience of Mexican Americans similar to and different from the experiences of African Americans?
- Thousands of Mexicans came to be American citizens as the result of a military conflict in 1848 in which the United States took control of former Mexican territory. What did you learn from the film about the integration of a resident population into a new nation? In what ways does this history impact your view of today's immigration debates? What lessons does the experience of these early Mexican Americans hold for people in the world today who are displaced by war or forced to live under a new government? What lessons does it hold for today's Latino Americans?
- Describe the discrimination faced by Mexican Americans prior to the *Hernandez* decision. For those in the room who were part of that community, what discrimination did you experience or witness? What are the long-term effects of pervasive discrimination such as being denied jobs, being prohibited from buying homes in good neighborhoods, not having quality schools, or the existence of "sundown towns"? How have those effects filtered through subsequent generations, even after the most blatant discrimination has ended? Is there discrimination against Latinos today? If so, how has it changed?

- Veteran Ramiro Casso says, “We went to fight to give people liberty and to give them their civil rights, and then we come back home and we find that it is the same way as we left it.” What role did WWII veterans play in making demands for civil rights? How did their military service change perceptions and expectations? Why was the 1949 denial of a memorial service to Pvt. Felix Longoria a pivotal moment? What is the current relationship between military service and struggles against discrimination?

Leadership and Change

- Would you call Gus García a hero? Why or why not? What lessons about him would you teach in schools? Would they include his battles with alcohol and mental illness? Why or why not? What are the benefits and drawbacks from the desire for perfection in our heroes?
- History often recounts only the stories of leaders or famous people. In what specific ways did ordinary people make possible the victory achieved by the lawyers? What did you learn about community involvement in change from the experience of people like Pauline Rosa or those who contributed their pocket change?
- How do you think the Supreme Court victory influenced the way that Mexican Americans saw themselves? How did it influence the community's ability to fight for and claim their civil rights?

A Class Apart In Context

THE IMPACT OF *THE HERNANDEZ V. TEXAS* CASE

When the Supreme Court ruled in 1954 that Mexican Americans were a class of persons deserving equal protection of the law under the U.S. Constitution, it laid the groundwork for many important rulings over the next 55 years. As of January 2009, over 602 court decisions and 38 Supreme Court decisions included citations to the *Hernandez* case.⁴

4. Source: LexisNexis.com, a legal database online at <http://www.lexisnexis.com/>.

Recently, the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund relied on the *Hernandez* case in an important lawsuit protecting the rights of Latino children and families. *Santamaria v. Dallas Independent School District* (2006) charged the Dallas ISD and an elementary school principal for segregating Latino children from white children in classrooms. MALDEF successfully argued that under *Hernandez*, Latino children had a right to be treated on equal terms as white children, and the Court ordered the school to desegregate its classrooms.

Below is a brief timeline of some important cases that have relied on the *Hernandez v. Texas* case.

- May 1954** *Hernandez v. Texas*: Supreme Court holds that the exclusion of Mexican Americans from juries violates the equal protection rights of Mexican Americans.
- June 1973** *White v. Regester*: Supreme Court upholds a district court's decision to dismantle voting districts in Texas that were based on past discrimination against Latino and African American voters.
- June 1973** *Keyes v. Denver School District No. 1*: Supreme Court holds that because Latinos and African Americans suffer from similar discrimination, the combined number of black and Latino children relative to whites should be considered for purposes of determining whether a school is segregated.
- June 1978** *Teamsters v. United States*: Supreme Court affirms decision in favor of Latino and African American employees who were channeled into lower paying, less desirable jobs than those reserved for white employees.
- Feb 2003** *Miller-El v. Cockrell*: Supreme Court reverses murder conviction of an African American male in part on the basis of historical, systemic exclusion of African American jurors by the Dallas prosecutor's office.
- Nov 2006** *Santamaria v. Dallas ISD*: Federal district court stops classroom segregation of Latino students from white students, which had been maintained on the false pretense that the Latino students were limited in English proficiency.
- Sept 2008** *Northwest Austin MUD No. 1 v. Mukasey*: Federal district court panel concludes that the 15th Amendment gave Congress authority to extend voting rights protections to language minority persons, including Spanish-speaking Latinos.

LATINOS IN THE UNITED STATES TODAY

A note on language:

"Hispanic" is derived from the Spanish word hispano, and was first used in the U.S. census in 1980. Though often applied to all Spanish-speakers, it more specifically refers to those with cultural heritages tied to Spain. In contrast, "Latino" comes from the word latinoamericano, and describes people of Latin American origin. It is the preferred term for many in the U.S. today, though Hispanic and Latino are often used interchangeably.⁵ Here, we've used the terms used by our sources.

Latinos in the United States have come a long way since the 1950s, but inequalities persist. Some fast facts:

- **Hispanics represent a disproportionate percentage of people living in poverty.** As of 2006, one of every four people living in poverty in the U.S. was of Hispanic origin,⁶ though Hispanics accounted for less than 15% of the total population (excluding Puerto Rico).⁷
- **Most Latino students face discrimination.** Eighty-four percent of Hispanic students reported in 2007 that discrimination is a problem in schools, up from 38 percent in 2002.⁸
- **Hispanics are severely underrepresented in America's board rooms.** Only 1% of executive officer positions were filled by Hispanics in 2006.⁹
- **There are relatively few Hispanics in the legal profession.** In 2004, just 3.3% of all lawyers and 5.7% of all law students were Hispanic.¹⁰
- **There are very few Latino judges.** Only 2.8% of all judges serving in state courts are Latino,¹¹ and to date, the Supreme Court of the United States has never had a Latino Justice. (In fact, of 110 Justices in the Supreme Court's history, 108 have been white males.)
- **Hate crimes against Latinos continue to rise.** In 2008, the F.B.I released statistics showing that hate crimes against Latinos had gone up a staggering forty percent from 2003-2007.¹²

Despite these ongoing challenges, the power of Latinos in the U.S. is significant and growing:

- **Nearly 75% of Hispanics are U.S. citizens.** As of 2004, nearly three-quarters of Hispanics residing in the U.S. were either native or naturalized citizens.¹³ And, the majority of Latinos in the United States are native-born.¹⁴
- **Hispanics are the largest minority.** According to the most recent U.S. Census Bureau data, Hispanics make up more than 15% of the U.S. population, and are the fastest-growing minority group.¹⁵
- **The number of Latino elected officials is low, but steadily increasing.** Although there are only 31 Hispanics serving in the 111th U.S. Congress (5.7% of all members),¹⁶ the number of Latino elected officials overall increased by 37% from 1996-2007.¹⁷ At the highest levels of office, there was an even greater increase in that period, with the number of Latinos serving in federal and state legislatures growing by more than 50%.¹⁸
- **Latinos are a significant voting constituency in the U.S.** In the 2008 election, 9% of the electorate was Latino, up from 8% in 2004.¹⁹

5. Want to learn more? Try reading *Are Chicanos The Same As Mexicans?* (online at <http://www.azteca.net/aztec/chicano.html>) or *Hispanic vs. Latino: ¿Cuál es la diferencia?* (online at <http://borderbeat.net/story/show/128>).

6. "Income, Poverty, and Health Insurance Coverage in the United States 2006," Table 3, p.12. U.S. Bureau of the Census. Online at <http://www.census.gov/prod/2007pubs/p60-233.pdf>

7. "U.S. Hispanic Population Surpasses 45 Million, Now 15 Percent of Total," U.S. Bureau of the Census, May 1, 2008. Online at <http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/population/011910.html>.

8. Fry, Richard and Felisa Gonzales. *One-in-Five and Growing Fast: A Profile of Hispanic Public School Students*. Washington, DC: Pew Hispanic Center, August 2008.

9. The Alliance for Board Diversity. 2008. *Women and Minorities on Fortune 100 Boards*. Online at http://www.hacr.org/docLib/20080131_ABDfinalreport12208.pdf.

10. *Miles to Go: Progress of Minorities in the Legal Profession (Executive Summary)*. American Bar Association Commission on Racial and Ethnic Diversity in the Profession. 2005. Online at <https://www.abanet.org/abastore/index.cfm?fm=Product.AddToCart&pid=4520014>.

11. *National Database on Judicial Diversity of State Courts: National Report*. American Bar Association. Online at <http://www.abanet.org/judind/diversity/national.html>.

12. Potok, Mark. "Anti-Latino Hate Crimes Rise for Fourth Year In A Row," October 29, 2008. Online at <http://www.splcenter.org/blog/2008/10/29/anti-latino-hate-crimes-rise-for-fourth-year/>.

13. Ramirez, Roberto. *We the People: Hispanics in the United States*. U.S. Census Bureau, Dec. 2004. Online at <http://www.census.gov/prod/2007pubs/acs-03.pdf>.

14. *We the People: Hispanics in the United States*.

15. "U.S. Hispanic Population Surpasses 45 Million, Now 15 Percent of Total," U.S. Bureau of the Census, May 1, 2008. Online at <http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/population/011910.html>.

16. *Membership of the 111th Congress: A Profile*. Congressional Research Service. Online at http://assets.opencrs.com/rpts/R40086_20081231.pdf.

17. "NALEO Educational Fund Releases 2007 Directory of Latino Elected Officials," NALEO Educational Fund, July 12, 2007. Online at <http://www.naleo.org/pr071207.html>.

18. "NALEO Educational Fund Releases 2007 Directory of Latino Elected Officials."

19. Lopez, Mark Hugo. *The Hispanic Vote in the 2008 Election*. Washington, DC: Pew Hispanic Center, November 2008. Online at <http://pewhispanic.org/files/reports/98.pdf>.

What You Can Do

A Class Apart shows everyday people making change in extraordinary ways – from the attorneys who pushed the unlikely case forward, to the woman who stood up to ensure her children would be treated fairly in school, and the countless men and women who contributed their hard-earned dollars to see that the *Hernandez* case went to the Supreme Court. How can you make a difference? Below are possible actions to suggest to your members and audience members, and a few ideas for next steps if your organization is interested in using *A Class Apart* as part of ongoing efforts.

FOR AUDIENCE MEMBERS

- **Continue the Conversation.** Host a screening of *A Class Apart* with your neighbors, in a community group, at your place of worship, or at a local college, law school or high school. Have a special event for immigrants and help them learn about this important chapter of American history. Introduce *A Class Apart* to as many people as possible and keep the dialogue going!
- **Share Your Story.** *A Class Apart* tells the story of many of the brave men and women who helped advance the Mexican American struggle for civil rights, but there are many more whose stories remain untold. Do you know your local heroes? Talk to your family and friends and find out if and how they were involved in civil rights struggles for Latinos or other groups.
 - **Veterans** can contribute stories to the Library of Congress's Veterans' History Project.²⁰
 - **Part of the *A Class Apart* generation?** Add your story to the archive at the U.S. Latino & Latina WWII Oral History Project at the University of Texas at Austin²¹, which has collected over 500 interviews since its inception in 1999.
- **Register to Vote.** Between 2004 and 2008, the number registered Latinos voters doubled, and Latinos have become increasingly influential in the political process. If you are a citizen 18 or over and haven't yet registered to vote, visit www.rockthevote.org or www.votesmart.org for instructions specific to your state. www.VotoLatino.org is a great resource for Latino-specific issues.
- **Invite Your Local Policymakers to Watch *A Class Apart*.** Many elected officials are unfamiliar with the culture and history of their Latino constituents, and given the increasing political power of Latinos, many politicians are eager to learn more! Call or write your local officials to encourage them to watch *A Class Apart* to gain a better understanding of the history of Latinos in the United States.
- **Join the Movement.** Carlos Cadena and Gus García were civil rights pioneers, and many organizations are continuing the struggle for Latino civil rights today. The *A Class Apart* national partners (see final page of this Toolkit) are just some of the many groups that are continuing to fight for equality today. Volunteer, donate, visit their websites or join a local chapter to find out how you can get involved.

20. Online at <http://www.loc.gov/vets/vets-home.html>.

21. Online at <http://www.lib.utexas.edu/ww2latinos/>.

FOR YOUR ORGANIZATION

- **Organize a Screening with Local Policymakers.** Help elected officials or other leaders gain a better understanding of the history of Latinos in the United States, and use your screenings as an opportunity to open a dialogue about your organization's priority areas. Possible tie-ins to the film might include language access for Spanish-speaking children in schools; the importance of diversity in judicial appointments and other leadership positions; the need to raise awareness of Latino history within the community; and so on.
- **Help Extend Legal Services to Underserved Populations in the Community.** Many people lack access to legal representation, but pro bono services and legal aid clinics can help reduce unmet demand. Use a targeted screening of *A Class Apart* as an opportunity to inspire local law students or attorneys to provide free legal services to those in need. Law firms and law schools may be interested in partnering with you on these efforts.
- **Inspire an Art Show.** *A Class Apart* highlights many of the complexities of identity in the United States and will give many audience members a new perspective on a seemingly familiar time and place. Host an *A Class Apart*-inspired art show to encourage people to share their own experiences in a creative way! Ask local artists to create pieces inspired by issues raised in the film – this might include visual art, photography, film, music, and/or performance pieces. This activity will work especially well with youth. Provide opportunities for discussion, and use your artistic display to inspire and facilitate new dialogues about issues in your community.
- **Uplift Local Heroes.** Use a screening of *A Class Apart* as an opportunity to highlight local heroes in your community – people who fought for civil rights in the post-World War II era, or those who are doing so today.

Resources

FILMS

Border Bandits, Directed by Kirby Warnock (Dallas: Trans-Pecos Productions). After a group of Mexican banditos raided the McAllen Ranch in 1915, Texas Rangers set out for punishment. What happened next influenced the relationship between whites and Latinos in Texas for generations to come. <http://www.borderbanditsmovie.com/>

Farmingville, Directed by Carlos Sandoval and Catherine Tambini (New York: Camino Bluff Productions, 2003). An intimate look at tensions in a small Long Island town reveals the challenges faced by communities across America as a growing numbers of Latinos head to the suburbs and the heartland. <http://www.farmingvillethemovie.com>

Justice for My People: The Hector P. Garcia Story (Corpus Christi: KEDT, South Texas Public Broadcasting System, 2002). This film tells the story of Dr. Hector P. Garcia – Mexican Revolution refugee, medical doctor to the barrios, decorated war veteran, civil rights activist, American G.I. Forum founder and presidential confidante - and his fight to ensure justice and equality for Mexican Americans. <http://www.pbs.org/justiceformypeople/>

Mendez vs. Westminster: For All the Children/ Para Todos Los Niños (Koce-TV, PBS). When Sylvia Mendez and her siblings were banned from attending the all-white school near their Orange County home, the Mendez family fought back. Their 1946 victory desegregated public schools in Orange County, California and helped pave the way for school desegregation across the nation. <http://www.koce.org/prodMendez.htm>

Salt of the Earth. Directed by Herbert J. Biberman (Independent Productions/International Union of Mine, Mill & Smelter Workers, 1954). Mexican-American mine workers strike to achieve equal pay and equal treatment in this classic film.

With All Deliberate Speed. Directed by Peter Gilbert (Serviam Media, Inc. and TELEDUCTION, 2004). This film examines *Brown v. Board of Education* and its impact a half-century later, as communities still struggle to ensure equal educational opportunities for all. <http://www.brownvboard.info/film.htm>

ONLINE

Conference on Hernandez v. Texas at Fifty. <http://www.law.uh.edu/Hernandez50/>
Provides a wealth of articles and primary material about the case from a 2004 conference sponsored by the University of Houston Law Center and Arte Publico Press.

The Oyez Project, Hernandez v. Texas, 347 U.S. 475 (1954)
http://www.oyez.org/cases/1950-1959/1953/1953_406/ Legal summary of the *Hernandez* case.

Handbook of Texas Online
<http://www.tshaonline.org/>
A vast storehouse documenting the rich and complex history of the state of Texas.

The Pew Hispanic Center
<http://pewhispanic.org/>
A nonpartisan research organization designed to improve understanding of the U.S. Hispanic population and to chronicle Latinos' growing impact on the nation.

BOOKS

White But Not Equal: Mexican Americans, Jury Discrimination, and the Supreme Court. Ignacio García (University of Arizona Press, 2009). More than just a legal discussion, this book looks at the *Hernandez v. Texas* case from start to finish and places the story within the larger issue of the fight for Mexican American civil rights.

"Colored Men" and "Hombres Aquí": Hernandez v. Texas and the Emergence of Mexican-American Lawyering. This edited collection of essays contains the papers presented at the University of Houston Law Center's 2004 *Hernandez* at 50 conference, as well as source materials, trial briefs, and a chronology of the case.

A Class Apart

National Partner Organizations

A CLASS APART
A NIGHT TOGETHER

ACTIVE
voice®

Active Voice (www.activevoice.net)

Active Voice uses film, television and digital media to tell the human stories that spark social change. Our team of strategic communications specialists develops partnerships among filmmakers, funders, and thought leaders; plans and manages screenings and high profile events; repurposes digital content for viral distribution; produces educational collateral; and consults with industry and sector leaders. Since our inception in 2001, Active Voice has built a portfolio of campaigns focusing on issues including immigration, criminal justice, healthcare, and sustainability.

C A M I N O
B L U F F
P R O D U C T I O N S , I N C .

Camino Bluff Productions, Inc. (www.caminobluff.com)

Camino Bluff Productions, Inc. is dedicated to making independent films that reflect and are inspired by the Latino experience in the United States. Founded by Carlos Sandoval in 2001, Camino Bluff produced both the documentary *A Class Apart* and the Sundance award-winning documentary *Farmingville*.

The American Constitution Society

(www.acslaw.org)

ACS is one of the nation's leading progressive legal organizations. Founded in 2001, ACS strives to ensure that fundamental principles of human dignity, individual rights and liberties, genuine equality, and access to justice enjoy their rightful, central place in American law.



The American G.I. Forum

(www.americangiforum.org)

Founded in 1948, the American G.I. Forum is a Congressionally-chartered Mexican American veterans' and civil rights organization with chapters throughout the U.S.



The Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities

(www.hacu.net)

HACU represents more than 450 colleges and universities committed to Hispanic higher education success in the U.S., Puerto Rico, Latin America, Spain and Portugal. HACU is the only national educational association that represents Hispanic-Serving Institutions, and its member institutions are home to more than two-thirds of all Hispanic college students.



The Hispanic National Bar Association

(www.hnba.com)

HNBA is a not-for-profit national membership organization that represents the interests of the more than 100,000 Hispanic attorneys, judges, law professors, legal assistants, and law students in the United States and its territories. Since its founding three decades ago, the HNBA has acted as a force for positive change within the legal profession through a combination of issue advocacy, programmatic activities, networking events, and educational conferences.



Latino Public Broadcasting

(www.lpbp.org)

Latino Public Broadcasting supports the development, production, acquisition and distribution of non-commercial television that is representative of Latino people, or addresses issues of particular interest to Latino Americans.



The League of United Latin American Citizens

(www.lulac.org)

The mission of the League of United Latin American Citizens is to advance the economic condition, educational attainment, political influence, housing, health and civil rights of the Hispanic population of the United States.



The Mexican-American Legal Defense and Education Fund

(www.maldef.org)

Founded in 1968 in San Antonio, Texas, the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF) is the leading nonprofit Latino litigation, advocacy and educational outreach institution in the United States.



The *A Class Apart Project* in Texas is supported by The Meadows Foundation.

A CLASS APART is a co-production of Camino Bluff Productions, Inc. and the Independent Television Service (ITVS), in association with Latino Public Broadcasting (LPB), with funding provided by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB), for American Experience, with additional production funding provided by: Houston Endowment, The Horace & Amy Hagedorn Fund at the Long Island Community Foundation, New York State Council on the Arts, Humanities Texas a State Partner of the National Endowment for the Humanities, and Funding Exchange/Paul Robeson Fund for Independent Media.