

FOREWORD: A TRIBUTE TO MARGARET MONTOYA

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UCLA School of Law is honored to host this important symposium, “Un/Masking Power: The Past, Present, and Future of Marginal Identities in Legal Academia.” At the heart of the Symposium is a retrospective analysis celebrating 20 years since the publication of Margaret Montoya’s seminal work on “Mascaras, Trenzas y Greñas: Un/Masking the Self While Un/Braiding Latina Stories and Legal Discourse.”¹ Professor Montoya’s piece is an icon in the literature of critical race theory. By connecting a personal narrative of her experience as a Latina law student with legal analysis, she created a powerful piece filled with ideas that have been pivotal in understanding how marginalized identities are managed in historically white, male arenas like the legal profession. Twenty years after its publication, the piece continues to provide insights with ongoing relevance to jurisprudential theories that describe the connections between race and law.² The issues being addressed at this symposium—including the progress made during the last two decades in recognizing and respecting marginalized identities as well as ideas about how to press forward in the future—are important in theory, but they are also very important, and have a great impact, on the lives and careers of countless lawyers and law students. The symposium papers demonstrate the lasting and impactful legacy of Professor Montoya’s work.

It is only fitting that UCLA Law celebrate this famous work, as well as the impact of the *Chicana/o-Latina/o Law Review*, the student-run law journal that published this article. Since 1972, the *Journal* has provided a forum for the discussion of central issues affecting the Latino community. It was the first and only law journal in the United States to focus primarily on how law and policy affect the Chicana/o and Latina/o community within the country. During the past four decades, the *Journal*

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¹ 17 HARV. WOMEN’S L.J. 185 (1994), 15 CHICANO-LATINO L. REV. 1 (1994).

² Christian G. Fritz, *The Perils and Promise of Teaching Margaret Montoya’s Mascaras Article in the First Year Law School Curriculum*, HARV. J.L. & GENDER 1 (2013), available at <http://harvardjlg.com/2013/02/the-perils-and-promise-of-teaching-margaret-montoyas-mascaras-article-in-the-first-year-law-school-curriculum>.

has established a reputation for publishing timely scholarly work on an array of topics, such as affirmative action, education and immigration reform. Work from the *Journal* has been cited as an authority in courts throughout the country.³ The prominence of *Mascaras, Trenzas y Greñas: Un/Masking the Self While Un/Braiding Latina Stories and Legal Discourse* is a quintessential example of the *Journal*'s influence.

We are extremely proud that leadership on groundbreaking critical race issues has been an important part of UCLA School of Law's history. Our Critical Race Studies (CRS) program is the only one of its kind among American law schools.⁴ We are also one of only a handful of law schools with several critical race theorists on our faculty. And, our program continues to grow. We recently hosted the Tenth Year Anniversary Symposium of the Critical Race Studies Program, which celebrated this growth and also energized ongoing support for improving the course of racial justice in our communities.⁵

In many ways, racial justice advocacy is most effective and meaningful when it bridges the gap between theory and practice, applying the insights of critical scholarship to community work. Our CRS graduates, as well as our students, are engaged in these efforts every day and employ critical frameworks in overcoming the perceived limits of law while capitalizing on its transformative potential. We are proud to be at the forefront of racial justice advocacy and scholarship, and proud to serve as a model for legal education throughout the country and the world. This symposium is yet another example of this ongoing commitment.

³ Chicana/o-Latina/o Law Review, http://www.escholarship.org/uc/uclalaw_cllr

⁴ Overview of the Critical Race Studies Program, <http://www.law.ucla.edu/academic-programs-and-courses/specializations/critical-race-studies/pages/default.aspx>.

⁵ Critical Race Studies 10th Anniversary Symposium and Inaugural Alumni Celebration & Fundraising Dinner (Mar. 7-Mar. 8, 2013).