Chicano Movement 1971 - 1974
One man’s perspective in photos

The photos displayed here are only a few of the hundreds of photographs I took between 1971 and 1974 when I was a journalism student at the University of Colorado in Boulder. I transferred from Mesa College in Grand Junction where I was co-editor of the “Criterion” student newspaper. My intention was to complete my undergraduate studies and enter into the law school. I was in my early 20s, married to Deborah (Mora) and had been discharged from the Air Force in December 1969. While serving at Da Nang Air Force Base in Vietnam, I won my first camera in a poker game. At the Criterion, I learned the basics of journalistic photography and darkroom techniques. When we arrived in Boulder, the United Mexican Student Association (UMAS) was in its third year and had enrolled about 1,000 students. Cesar Chavez, Corky Gonzales, and Reies Tijerina already were national figures in the Chicano Movement and I was just learning about them. I went to work as a stringer for the Colorado Daily (CU campus newspaper) and one of my first assignments was to interview Florencio “Freddy” Granado the newly elected UMAS president. I soon learned that relations between the Daily and UMAS were tense and that UMAS had been the subject of many controversial news stories. While at Mesa College, I was recruited to the anti-war movement by the Vietnam Veterans Against the War and had participated in several demonstrations and marches. I soon found myself drawn into the Chicano Movement. During my first semester, I was hired to be a photographer by UMAS Publications. We published several issues of “Somos Aztlan,” magazine and later a few issues of a newspaper by the same name. In the spring of 1972, Richard Falcon was fired by the University administration from his job as assistant director of UMAS-EOP. There were walkouts and demonstrations in support of Falcon organized by UMAS. During that crisis, I was approached by Falcon and Granado — they wanted me to publish a newspaper in support of Falcon. The University prevailed and Falcon, Granado and dozens of their supporters were purged from the campus. The experience convinced me that there was an important role to be played by creating our own alternative media. I started “El Diario” student newspaper during the summer of 1972. Until I graduated in May 1974, I spent much of my time documenting the Chicano Movement. I met and interviewed the jefes, Chavez, Gonzales and Tijerina and many others including: Jose Angel Gutierrez, Lalo Delgado, and Dolores Huerta to name only a few. Deborah and I traveled to Arizona when Chavez was ending a 25-day fast. We attended El Partido La Raza Unida’s first national convention in El Paso, Texas, and Tijerina’s unity conference in Albuquerque. During the summer of 1973, I joined the staff of “El Malcriado,” the United Farm Workers Union and went to California to cover the 1973 Grape Strike and later the UFW’s constitutional convention in Fresno, Calif., that fall. I graduated with a B.S. in Journalism in May 1974 while were occupying TB-1, the offices of UMAS-EOP. After six people died in two car bombings, university officials agreed to negotiate an end to the occupation. The top administrators of UMAS-EOP were removed and were replaced with two co-directors — one was a student, the other was a staff member. I was elected to be co-director of UMASEOP and served for one semester. In January 1975, my wife Deborah was accepted into the university’s study abroad program and we went to Jalapa, Veracruz, Mexico for a semester. During the summer of 1975, we moved to Pueblo, Colo. and started “La Cucaracha” a community newspaper the following year. After publishing La Cucaracha for eight years, I was hired at The Pueblo Chieftain where I spent the next 22 years.
Several hundred supporters marched under a hot Arizona sun to a conference center where United Farm Worker Union founder Cesar Chavez ended a 25-day fast. Joseph Kennedy III, (Center behind the cross) joined the marchers. Chavez was fasting in support of cantaloupe workers who were on strike in Arizona, his home state.
Cesar Chavez breaks 25-day fast  
June 1972
At a Mass held at a Phoenix convention center, Cesar Chavez ended his fast in support of Arizona farmworkers who were striking cantaloupe growers. Joseph Kennedy III (left) and folksinger Joan Baez (right) joined the hundreds who had traveled to Phoenix to encourage Chavez to end his fast out of concern for his health. Chavez fasted numerous times during his years of organizing the United Farm Workers Union. Many believe these fasts shortened his life.
During the Grape Strikes in 1973, Chavez worked long days. He was often seen leaving the UFW headquarters at La Paz, Calif., as early as 4 a.m. and returning around midnight. This photo was taken at a rally in a park in Lamont, Calif., on a hot afternoon when his exhausting schedule showed on his tired face.
Corky Gonzales

Corky Gonzales, founder the Crusade for Justice in Denver, Colo., was a powerful and charismatic speaker. He may be best remembered as the author of the poem, “Yo Soy Joaquin,” considered by many to be the cornerstone of Chicano Studies. He organized youth conferences at the Crusade for Justice in the late 1960s that drew hundreds of Chicano youths from throughout Aztlan. Once an organizer of the Viva Kennedy campaign to woo the Mexican-American vote in support of John F. Kennedy in 1960, Gonzales became dissolution with the Democratic party and helped found El Partido La Raza Unida, an independent political party for Chicanos.
March 17, 1974, Denver, CO
Thousands of supporters of the Crusade for Justice marched through the street of Denver, Colo. on St. Patrick’s Day, 1974, to commemorate the anniversary of the police attack on the organization’s headquarters that left Luis “junior” Martinez dead and numerous Crusade members beaten and jailed. In addition, Ernesto Vigil, a member of Corky Gonzales inner circle was wounded and a police officer was shot.
Nation’s civil rights leaders come to support Crusade
Representatives of the American Indian Movement, Puerto Rican Independence Movement, La Raza Unida, American Civil Liberties Union and other civil rights groups came to Denver on March 17, 1974 to support the Crusade for Justice on the one-year anniversary of the police attack on the organization. In this photo, Corky Gonzales is in the center, flanked on the left by famed attorney William Knuntsler, and on the right by AIM leader Russell Means. Burt Corona, leader of CASA in California can be seen in the upper left of the photo.
Popular perch for demonstrations at State Capitol
The pedestal for the statue of a Civil War soldier at the foot of the State Capitol steps in Denver was a popular perch for demonstrators in the 1970s. The soldier seems to be flying a Mexican Flag at this March 17, 1974 demonstration in support of the Crusade for Justice.
Corky Gonzales, March 17, 1974
Corky Gonzales listens to one of the many speakers who came to support the Crusade for Justice on the first anniversary of the Denver Police attack on the group’s headquarters. Gonzales, a former professional boxer, was founder and recognized leader of the Crusade.
Anti-war protestors rally in CU fountain area
Students protested in Boulder after U.S. blockaded North Vietnam’s Haiphong Harbor. On this day, thousands of students participated in a march and blockade of the Boulder Turnpike in symbolic retaliation of the mining of Haiphong Harbor
Capitol steps were frequent site of anti-war protests
Anti-war protesters gathered on the steps of the state capitol in the snow in the fall of 1971. The war in Vietnam created common ground for the Anti-war Movement and the Chicano Movement. Speakers included leaders of the SDS — Students for a Democratic Society, Vietnam Veterans Against the War and the Crusade for Justice.
Anti-war demonstration broken up with tear gas
The University of Colorado campus looked like the war zone the students were protesting in May 1972. Police wearing riot gear and shields used tear gas to disburse the crowds of protesters who had blockaded the Boulder Turnpike.
UMAS members protest delays in financial aid
During the fall of 1973, hundreds of Chicano students marched on Regents Hall in Boulder to protest long delays in delivering financial aid checks. Students believed the university was late in providing the promised financial aid in an attempt to cut the number of UMAS students that had grown to about 1,400 students. What was known as the Financial Aid Crisis included a brief occupation of Regent Hall and the governor’s office. The yearlong confrontation came to a head with the takeover of TB-1 in May 1974.
Folksinger Joan Baez sings for grape strikers
Joan Baez performs for striking grape pickers in Lamont, Calif., in July 1973 as Daniel Ellsberg, (in blue leaning on the cab of the truck) looks on. Baez and Ellsberg were two of many celebrities who came to California that summer to support strikers. Hundreds of picketers were arrested on the picket lines that summer and two strikers were killed before UFW President Cesar Chavez called off the strike.
AIM leader Dennis Banks supports Grape Strike
UFW becomes full edged member of AFL-CIO
The United Farm Workers Union held its constitutional convention in Fresno, Calif. in September 1973. Cesar Chavez was elected president at the convention that transformed the UFW from an organizing committee to full edged union under the AFL-CIO. Sen. Edward Kennedy was one of many speakers of national prominence who spoke at the meeting.
Whistleblower Daniel Ellsberg supported Grape Strike
Military analysis Daniel Ellsberg gained national prominence by leaking the Pentagon Papers to the New York Times in 1971. The damning report of U.S. failed policies in Southeast Asia and Vietnam helped shift public opinion against the War in Vietnam. He is seen here with UFW co-founder Dolores Huerta at a rally in Fresno during the summer of 1973. Ellsberg came to support strikers and walk the picket lines at a time when hundreds were being arrested.
Mothers were among UFW’s strongest supporters

Women were among the strongest supporters of the UFW’s attempt to organize farm workers. They understood the relationship between the union’s fight against the irresponsible use of pesticides in the Fields and the epidemic of miscarriages, still births, and early childhood brain cancers they were experiencing. This woman stands with her brood at a strikers rally in Lamont, Calif. during the Grape Strike of 1973.
Sen. Ted Kennedy welcomes UFW into AFL-CIO
Sen. Ted Kennedy was one of the main speakers at the UFW Constitutional Convention in September 1973. UFW President Cesar Chavez had been a strong supporter of Robert Kennedy’s bid for the Democratic Party’s presidential nomination in 1968 before Kennedy’s assassination. Other Kennedy’s who supported Chavez included Ethel Kennedy and Joseph Kennedy III.
Cesar Chavez meets with Rodolfo “Corky” Gonzales
This rare meeting between Cesar Chavez and Corky Gonzales took place at the Crusade for Justice in Denver during the summer of 1974. Chavez was seeking support for his boycotts of lettuce and grapes. The two leaders of the Chicano Movement represented diverse strategies. Chavez advocated nonviolence, while Gonzales, a former professional boxer, had a more militant, self-defense approach.