Revolution in the Classroom:

The 1968 Harrison High School Walkouts and the Rise of Youth Activism and Interracial Solidarity in Chicago

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"A group of Latinx teens huddled together, laughing and smiling, with one student wearing a Harrison Hornets jacket."[1]

[1] Hannah Bradford, Anna Hevrdejs, "The Harrison High School Walkout of 1968: Revisiting the Past to Inform the Present." The Harrison High School walkout of 1968: revisiting the past to inform the present | SAIC Digital Collections, 2016. https://digitalcollections.saic.edu/islandora/object/islandora%3Ajfabc_8281.

High school-aged youth are often overlooked in the history of activism, despite playing pivotal roles in countless social movements. In Chicago, during the late 1960s, the Chicago Public School (CPS) system became a powerful arena for this activism. In 1968, African American students at Harrison High School led a walkout, supported by their Latinx peers. These students demanded a reevaluation of the history curriculum and the inclusion of African-American and Latin-American history courses in the institution. This movement reflected a broader wave of revolutionary attitudes among minority youth and highlighted the increasing influence of young people in shaping social change. The Harrison High School walkouts were not a spontaneous outburst of protest but rather the culmination of years of deliberate discussion, sustained activism, and strategic preparation. These walkouts gained national recognition for their focus on curriculum reform and represented two major social movements of the 1960s and 1970s: the increasing activism among high school students and the growing interracial cooperation in the struggle for fair and equitable education.

The Walkouts: From Student Organization to National News

Harrison High School, located in Chicago's South Lawndale neighborhood, served a diverse student body predominantly composed of African-American and Mexican-American students. Founded in 1912, Harrison High School operated for an impressive seventy-one years before closing its doors in 1983.[2] Following World War II, the South Lawndale neighborhood became increasingly Latinx. As migrants moved into the working-class neighborhoods of Chicago in the 1950s and 1960's, descendants of earlier European immigrants relocated to the suburbs due to a perceived "decline in the neighborhood's quality."[3] By 1968, Harrison High

[2] "Chicago Carter Harrison Technical High School". Illinois HS Glory Days. Retrieved May 8th, 2024 https://leopardfan.tripod.com/id697.html

[3] Hannah Bradford, Anna Hevrdejs,"The Harrison High School Walkout of 1968: Revisiting the Past to Inform the Present." The Harrison High School walkout of 1968: revisiting the past to inform the present | SAIC Digital Collections, 2016. https://digitalcollections.saic.edu/islandora/object/islandora%3Ajfabc_8281.

School served a community of 3,100 students.[4] Harrison High School, a longstanding cornerstone of the South Lawndale community, quickly evolved into a focal point for student activism, driven particularly by African-American student groups advocating for change.

In his self-published memoir, student leader Pemon Rami vividly recounts his firsthand experiences on the frontlines of the Harrison High School protests. As he recalled, his efforts began as early as November of 1967, when the school dismissed educator Owen Lawson from Englewood High School for "over-emphasizing Negro history."[5] Rami and Lawson united to spearhead walkouts and protests at Englewood High School, focusing on the inclusion of Black history in the curriculum. The high school became the "epicenter" of the movement's effort where they organized strategy meetings with students to plan protests and even supported those embracing their cultural identity by cutting and styling students' natural hair.[6] The Englewood protests were met with small-scale success, but ultimately set the stage for Rami to become the forefront of the Harrison High School walkouts a year later. He teamed up with Vice President Victor Adams and President Sharon Matthews of the Black student organization, New Breed, to amplify their efforts.[7] The three students became the leading force of the African-American contingent in the movement, driving the push for greater diversity and representation on Chicago's West Side.

Efforts began as early as May of 1968, when community organizers, backed by the support of local parents, sponsored a conference called "Judgement Day for Racism in West Side

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[4] *The New York Times*. "SCHOOL IN CHICAGO SCENE OF DISORDER." 1968.
[5] Caroline Rolland-Diamond, "Black Power on Campus: Challenging the Status Quo in Chicago '68", *European journal of American studies* [Online], 14-1 | 2019, Online since 29 March 2019, connection on 09 May 2024. URL: http://journals.openedition.org/ejas/14321; DOI: https://doi.org/10.4000/ejas.14321 p. 11
[6] Pemon Rami. *Once Upon a Time When Blackness Was Golden*. Chap. 6 Pennsauken, New Jersey: BookBaby, 2022.
[7] Annie Howard, "Fifty years ago, 35,000 Chicago students walked out of their classrooms in protest. They changed CPS forever," *Chicago Reader*, October 4, 2018, https://www.chicagoreader.com/chicago/student-protests-1968-chicago-public-schools/Content?oid=59097994.

Schools." The 500 attendees participated in workshops that broached the subjects of inadequate teacher training, community control in schools, and racist curriculum in U.S. History modules. Victor Adams served as a keynote speaker at the event, quickly establishing himself as a key figure within the social and political fabric of educational institutions.[8] By the following school year, New Breed leadership was prepared to participate in protests in order to address the concerns from the conference. On Monday, September 16th, 1968, the first of the Harrison High School walkouts erupted after Principal Alexander Burke refused to meet with students advocating for a more diverse teacher population and a curriculum that better reflected their experiences.[9] Nearly 1,000 of Harrison's 3,100 students walked out, but were ultimately ignored by administration.[10] Throughout September 1968, Harrison students staged sit-in demonstrations in the lunchroom and auditorium until these protests were officially banned in October.[11] These efforts fueled a rising wave of demands for educational reform. While the students initially protested for a change in their school's curriculum, it quickly became evident that the issues at Harrison High School were part of a broader, burgeoning movement for systemic change in education.

By October, Latinx students, in particular, Chicano/a and Puerto Rican students, desired to join forces with the New Breed. The Latinx community of Harrison High School was inspired by a similar outpouring of activism and protest in the Southwestern United States. In March

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[8] Dionne Danns (2003). Chicago high school students' movement for quality public education, 1966–1971. *The Journal of African American History*, 88(2), p. 140

[9] Annie Howard, "Fifty years ago, 35,000 Chicago students walked out of their classrooms in protest. They changed CPS forever," *Chicago Reader*, October 4, 2018, https://www.chicagoreader.com/chicago/student-protests-1968-chicago-public-schools/Content?oid=59097994. pp. 13

[10] Hannah Bradford, Anna Hevrdejs,"The Harrison High School Walkout of 1968: Revisiting the Past to Inform the Present." The Harrison High School walkout of 1968: revisiting the past to inform the present | SAIC Digital Collections, 2016. https://digitalcollections.saic.edu/islandora/object/islandora%3Ajfabc_8281.

[11] Dionne Danns (2003). Chicago high school students' movement for quality public education, 1966–1971. *The Journal of African American History*, 88(2), p. 144

1968, Chicano high school students in East Los Angeles expressed concerns regarding the treatment of Mexican American students within local school districts. They cited inadequate facilities, discriminatory administration, and disproportionately high dropout rates as the driving factors behind their decision to stage protests. The ensuing walkouts were soon joined by their fellow Black and Asian peers and became known as the "blowouts."[12] In solidarity with the growing activism in the Southwest, Latinx students in Chicago joined forces with Black student leaders, uniting their demands with the New Breed's Manifesto to strengthen their collective call for change. According to Rami, the New Breed's Manifesto outlined the following orders:

Black Manifesto Demands

-Complete courses in Black history
-Inclusion in all courses the contributions of Black persons
-Black administration in schools in the Black communities
-More technical and vocational training
-More Black teachers
-Repair of school buildings in Black communities
-Holidays on the birthdays of such Black heroes as Marcus Garvey, Malcolm X, W. E. B. DuBois, and Dr. Martin Luther King
-Insurance for athletes
-Use of Black businesses to supply class photos and rings in Black Schools
-Better cafeteria food
-Military training relevant to Black people's needs
-More required homework to challenge Black students[13]

Led by Puerto Rican students, Latino activists demanded bilingual educators and counselors, a Spanish-speaking assistant principal, and two years of mandatory Latin American history as part of their own manifesto.[14] The concerns of the Latinx community closely aligned with those of the

[12] Gordon Kieth Mantler, *Power to the Poor : Black-Brown Coalition and the Fight for Economic Justice, 1960-1974*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2013. p. 86
[13] Pemon Rami. *Once Upon a Time When Blackness Was Golden*. Pennsauken, New Jersey: BookBaby, 2022.
[14] Annie Howard, "Fifty years ago, 35,000 Chicago students walked out of their classrooms in protest. They changed CPS forever," *Chicago Reader*, October 4, 2018, https://www.chicagoreader.com/chicago/student-protests-1968-chicago-public-schools/Content?oid=59097994. pp.16; Dionne Danns (2003). Chicago high school students' movement for quality public education, 1966–1971. *The Journal of African American History*, 88(2), p. 144; There is no online record of the Latin American student manifesto, even though it is mentioned in many sources. It is assumed that the manifesto held similar concerns to that of the Black Manifesto by the New Breed.

New Breed. Like the New Breed, Latinx students sought representation on the CPS official board and the inclusion of minority history in the curriculum. Additionally, they advocated for bilingual teachers and course programs. These shared goals played a crucial role in their decision to collaborate and unite their efforts for educational reform.

Undeterred by the ban on protests, Victor Adams and Sharon Matthews along with the Latinx community continued their peaceful sit-ins. On October 7th, 1968, Adams and Matthews garnered widespread media attention when police forcibly broke up a lunchroom sit-in they were leading.[15] On October 10th, students set fires ablaze in trash cans throughout the school, causing the entire building to evacuate.[16] After these disturbances, administrators, teachers, students, and community groups met to discuss their grievances. All groups, students in particular, left dissatisfied with the results of the meeting and continued their protests.[17] These displays of protests only intensified, with Pemon Rami at the head of the effort directing both the Black and Latinx student population. He recorded that on Sunday, October 13, 1968:

> I organized a final meeting before the boycott of twenty-five representatives from more than thirteen Chicago high schools at the Umoja Black Student Center. The purpose of the meeting was to consolidate growing protests at numerous high schools and to form the Black Students for Defense subgroup of the Afro-American Student Organization to organize our collective demands and demonstrations.[18]

As the movement gained momentum, it became evident that the growing group of activists was not only well-organized and educated but also strategically executing the necessary steps to drive meaningful change. Their unprecedented level of cohesion and intellectual unity was due to Rami and the New Breed's emphasis on educated action rather than sporadic demonstrations.

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[15] Dionne Danns (2003). Chicago high school students' movement for quality public education, 1966–1971. *The Journal of African American History*, 88(2), p. 143
[16] *The New York Times*. "SCHOOL IN CHICAGO SCENE OF DISORDER." 1968.
[17] Dionne Danns (2003). Chicago high school students' movement for quality public education, 1966–1971. *The Journal of African American History*, 88(2), p. 144
[18] Pemon Rami. *Once Upon a Time When Blackness Was Golden*. Pennsauken, New Jersey: BookBaby, 2022.

Meetings among the high school students focused more on refining their demands, educating themselves on the national scale of protests in places like Los Angeles, and clearly communicating the purpose of their resistance group with similar strategies to that of larger Black and Latinx civil rights groups. The protesters at Harrison High School focused on implementing effective changes with a clear long-term goal in mind.

However, despite efforts through formal channels, these outlets proved ineffective, leading the Harrison High School movement to escalate to direct acts of protest. On October 11th, 1968, the Harrison High School movement organized an attempt to rally the entire student body to participate in a walkout. An impressive 2,500 Black and Latinx students participated. This was followed by a demonstration on October 18th, 1968. Pemon Rami and Victor Adams held a mock funeral of the Board of Education (BOE) at Civic Plaza in brown berets. Rami remembered that "at a designated time, Victor Adams and I ran across the Plaza and jumped on the coffin, destroying it! Some students wore Black Ku Klux Klan robes as they silently carried the coffin."[19] The photograph of the event became the cover of *Ebony Magazine* and *Jet Magazine*. This public act was the final push of media attention that the movement needed and is representative of the lengths the student organizations needed to go to finally get their voices heard.

[19] Pemon Rami. *Once Upon a Time When Blackness Was Golden*. Pennsauken, New Jersey: BookBaby, 2022.

Pemon Rami and Victor Adams jump on a coffin representing the BOE; October 18th, 1968.[20]

The Harrison High School walkouts reached their peak with one of the largest student protests in Chicago's history. On October 30th, a special to the *New York Times* reported 33,000 absentees in the Chicago School System, 24% of the 137,000 total students. In addition, five hundred African American teachers showed their solidarity by withholding their attendance in support of the movement.[21] The students and supporters marched through the streets of the West Side and stopped to vandalize the Jacques Marquette-Louis Jolliet Memorial with the words "Latin Kings". The image was first reported in the *Chicago Sun-Times* and is now archived in the Chicago History Museum's "Latinx Community in Chicago (1960-1980)" collection. The

[20] Pemon Rami. *Once Upon a Time When Blackness Was Golden*. Pennsauken, New Jersey: BookBaby, 2022.
[21] Special to The New York Times. "24 % OUT OF SCHOOL IN CHICAGO BOYCOTT." *The New York Times*, 1968.

protests garnered national attention, and soon the demands of the community were heard by the BOE.

"Latin Kings" painted on the Jacques Marquette-Louis Jolliet Memorial; October 30th, 1968. [22]

The students continued to strategize how to receive their demands. With media attention at an all-time high, the Harrison movement scheduled a sit-in for multiple schools in the area on November 4th, 1968. Administrators took preemptive action and called in police to participating schools. On October 30th, the Board of Education invited seventy student leaders and three teachers to a crucial meeting to address their demands. Adams and Matthews led the charge, telling board members, "the system is going to have to be destroyed or rebuilt to include Black

[22] Hermon Atkins MacNeil, "Jacques Marquette-Louis Jolliet Memorial." Chicago Monuments Project, 1926. https://chicagomonuments.org/monuments/jacques-marquette-louis-jolliet-memorial.; Bradford, Hannah. Hevrdejs, Anna;"The Harrison High School Walkout of 1968: Revisiting the Past to Inform the Present." The Harrison High School walkout of 1968: revisiting the past to inform the present | SAIC Digital Collections, 2016. https://digitalcollections.saic.edu/islandora/object/islandora%3Ajfabc_8281.

and Latin American people and Chinese people," and that the “concern is not whether I graduate in June, but whether I get a good education when I'm in school. I can't achieve an education in this system.”[23] A significant shift occurred between Rami’s initial manifesto, which focused primarily on the African-American population, and Adams’ broader declaration of advocating for multiple minority groups in West Side schools. The movement exemplified the growing commitment of high school-aged activists to educate themselves and strategically navigate protest efforts for systemic change.

Ultimately, it was not the Black student population that received attention from these protests by the BOE, but the Latinx community. After months of explicit demands for educational reform, faculty advocacy, and a growing interracial community of protestors, the BOE determined that overcrowding at Harrison High School was the main cause of the student protests. Eventually, talks between the BOE and the Harrison movement subsided, and the BOE moved forward to open a new high school in the Pilsen neighborhood. In 1974, the BOE approved an $8.9 million investment to construct and run Benito Juarez High School.[24] Three years later, the school hosted its first class of students, priding itself on Spanish-English bilingual education. The Latinx community finally had a dedicated space to engage in their language, culture, and histories.

Although this high school served the needs of the Latinx community, the decision by the BOE undercut the tactical moves of African-American student leaders. Benito Juarez High School caused relations between Latinx and African Americans to fissure despite their common

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[23] Dionne Danns (2003). Chicago high school students’ movement for quality public education, 1966–1971. *The Journal of African American History*, 88(2), p. 146

[24] "How Pilsen's Founding Mothers Built a High School". *WTTW Chicago Public Media - Television and Interactive*. 2017-10-13. Retrieved 2017-11-03.; Annie Howard, “Fifty years ago, 35,000 Chicago students walked out of their classrooms in protest. They changed CPS forever,” *Chicago Reader*, October 4, 2018, https://www.chicagoreader.com/chicago/student-protests-1968-chicago-public-schools/Content?oid=59097994. pp. 22

activist front. Mexican families in the area praised the high school as "a much needed school, one that promoted Mexican culture and pride" and tightly held onto that new space for Mexican identity.[25] While the walkouts advanced the needs of Latinx students, they also strained the interracial solidarity that had been built during the course of the activism.

The history of the Harrison High School walkouts follows a clear, progressive timeline, from the education of student leaders to the eruption of widespread protest across the Chicago Public Schools system. Led by African American students, particularly Victor Adams and Pemon Rami, the demands for a more representative educational system inspired and galvanized the imaginations of their peers, sparking a collective drive for change. When Puerto Rican, Mexican, and Chicano/a students joined the front, the movement spread to include a similar list of demands brought about by other racial groups. The Harrison movement gained momentum with strong support from Latinx students, who made up the majority on the West Side. However, this shift ultimately undermined the New Breed's efforts, as the Board of Education prioritized addressing the Latinx community's demands, thereby sidelining Black student voices. While the walkouts were lauded in activist newspapers and memoirs, their legacy was marked by a complex and sometimes strained relationship with Latinx supporters.

Interracial Solidarity and Its Nuances

The intertwined stories of Black and Latinx student leaders unfold along distinct, yet intersecting narratives. One key criticism of the walkouts is that the Black student population at Harrison High School was sidelined, as the Latinx community co-opted their cause, ultimately undermining their original demands. Lake Forest College, in partnership with the Chicago

[25] "Mexicans and African Americans in the Struggles for Better Schooling at Harrison High School." *El BeiSMan*, 2018. http://www.elbeisman.com/revista/post/mexicans-and-african-americans-in-the-struggles-for-better-schooling-at-harrison-high-school. pp. 7

History Museum, wrote in their report of the walkouts that "The relationship between the African American and Latinx communities in the Pilsen and South Lawndale neighborhoods was never simple. Racial and ethnic "othering" existed within both communities and distrust and bigotry played a key role in their interactions."[26] Until 1973, Latinx students were labeled as "white" in the education system, which created a space where "Latin Americans had to hold on tightly to their particular identity."[27] The "powerful Latinx presence" created tension as the two racial groups pursued distinct demands, including bilingual educators and counselors, a Spanish-speaking assistant principal, and a mandatory Latin American history course. While they briefly united in protest, their separate agendas often highlighted the underlying divisions between them.[28]

Yet, the racial "othering" experienced by the youth of the West Side was a result of decades of systemic racism that plagued the area. The tensions between Black and Latinx residents can be traced to disputes in the housing market for generations prior. Historian Lilia Fernández argued that "Rather than risk the very likely possibility that these residential slots would be increasingly filled by Blacks," realtors began, "a conscious policy of encouragement of Mexicans to settle in 26th Street, if not outright recruitment."[29] The unfortunate racism of the

[26] Hannah Bradford, Anna Hevrdejs,"The Harrison High School Walkout of 1968: Revisiting the Past to Inform the Present." The Harrison High School walkout of 1968: revisiting the past to inform the present | SAIC Digital Collections, 2016. https://digitalcollections.saic.edu/islandora/object/islandora%3Ajfabc_8281.
[27] Annie Howard, "Fifty years ago, 35,000 Chicago students walked out of their classrooms in protest. They changed CPS forever," *Chicago Reader*, October 4, 2018, https://www.chicagoreader.com/chicago/student-protests-1968-chicago-public-schools/Content?oid=59097994. pp. 30; Hannah Bradford, Anna Hevrdejs,"The Harrison High School Walkout of 1968: Revisiting the Past to Inform the Present." The Harrison High School walkout of 1968: revisiting the past to inform the present | SAIC Digital Collections, 2016. https://digitalcollections.saic.edu/islandora/object/islandora%3Ajfabc_8281.
[28] Hannah Bradford, Anna Hevrdejs,"The Harrison High School Walkout of 1968: Revisiting the Past to Inform the Present." The Harrison High School walkout of 1968: revisiting the past to inform the present | SAIC Digital Collections, 2016. https://digitalcollections.saic.edu/islandora/object/islandora%3Ajfabc_8281.
[29] Lilia Fernández, *Brown in the Windy City: Mexicans and Puerto Ricans in Postwar Chicago* (University of Chicago Press, 2012), ProQuest Ebook Central, chap. 6, p. 221

housing market caused residents to be protective of their identities, as well as hostile towards those who appeared to be favored by the inequitable realtors.

Fernández further emphasized this point in her book, offering a compelling justification for the cautious attitudes of Latinx communities in the city. She wrote specifically on the case of Chicano/as in the movement, claiming that:

> Unlike in the Southwest, where Chicanas/os were more recognizable as a racial minority, Mexican Americans in Chicago had struggled to gain visibility for decades. They had to make a case for why they qualified for federal entitlement programs aimed at remedying social inequalities. Machine-regulated War on Poverty funds that managed to trickle into local communities went primarily to African Americans, thereby earning political loyalty from the black submachine.[30]

The involvement between African Americans and Latinx communities in political landscapes necessitated fragile unity because of each group's unique treatment by larger institutions. While the "machine" of government-funded programs and education remained beyond the political reach of both groups, its regulation fueled racial tensions, revealing the deeply entrenched challenges Harrison High School students had to overcome in their struggle for solidarity.

Journalists from the Pilsen-based online magazine *El BeiSMan* report on this very trend, arguing that the distinct fronts of activism were necessary to address the unique needs of each community while still advancing a shared cause. They preface the article by asserting, "Although Mexican and African Americans have a history of coming together to form alliances for common goals, these alliances should not assume that both communities are conflict free. Conflict between both communities has also divided them."[31] In their retrospective analysis of the walkouts, they pose a critical question: why did each group create separate manifestos if they

[30] Lilia Fernández, *Brown in the Windy City: Mexicans and Puerto Ricans in Postwar Chicago* (University of Chicago Press, 2012), ProQuest Ebook Central, chap. 6, p. 231

[31] "Mexicans and African Americans in the Struggles for Better Schooling at Harrison High School." *El BeiSMan*, 2018. http://www.elbeisman.com/revista/post/mexicans-and-african-americans-in-the-struggles-for-better-schooling-at-harrison-high-school. pp. 2

were united under the common cause of improving education? According to an interview with former Mexican students who participated in the Harrison High walkouts,

> Even though African American and Latino students suffered from discrimination at school, Mexicans were envious of African American students, stressing that African Americans received more resources than Mexican students. For example, Mexican students wanted a school soccer team and felt discriminated against because African Americans participated in school sports such as basketball.[32]

Latinx students recognized the injustice of the marginalization of African American students, but they also acknowledged the strength of their African American peers in voicing their demands. However, while Latinx students engaged in parallel activism, their efforts often lagged behind those of their African American counterparts. It is essential to recognize that the initial actions taken by African American students catalyzed the Latinx front of the educational protest movement. While the Latinx community developed its own list of activist goals, it was the framework established by African American organizations that made these efforts possible.

This framework created the foundation for the Latinx community of the Midwest at large to engage in activism aimed at educational reform. ALAS, Alianza Latino-Americana para el Adelanto Social (Latin American Alliance for Social Advancement), was a small but quickly growing organization serving the increasing number of Pilsen's Mexican and Puerto Rican residents. In April 1969, a large community meeting was held to discuss the Latinx Student Manifesto from the Harrison High School walkouts, as well as the ongoing struggles faced by Latinx students at Harrison.[33] The *Latin Times* newspaper, reaching the wider Chicago-land area from the suburbs to East Chicago, IN, reported a similar discussion forum in August of 1969 on

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[32] "Mexicans and African Americans in the Struggles for Better Schooling at Harrison High School." *El BeiSMan*, 2018. http://www.elbeisman.com/revista/post/mexicans-and-african-americans-in-the-struggles-for-better-schooling-at-harrison-high-school. pp. 6

[33] Lilia Fernández, *Brown in the Windy City: Mexicans and Puerto Ricans in Postwar Chicago* (University of Chicago Press, 2012), ProQuest Ebook Central, chap. 6. p. 207

Channel 11's *Nuestra Raza Habla* (*Our People Speak*). The bilingual newspaper urged readers to support their representatives and watch the broadcast which hosted Dolores Guerrero, a Spanish resources teacher at Harrison High School, and representatives from the BOE.[34] The walkouts established a new platform for Latinx students to voice their grievances, empowering them to take action and extending that influence to the wider community through the activism of their African American student leaders.

Historical Preservation through Art: Nicole Marroquin

Although the interracial solidarity between the two groups was fragile and at times marked by underlying tension, the Latinx community today views the walkouts as a pivotal moment in their activism, one that significantly shaped their fight for educational justice. Nicole Marroquin is an acclaimed interdisciplinary artist and associate professor at the Department of Art Education at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Her work focuses on Chicago school uprisings between 1967-74 which she expresses through screen prints, sculptures, collages, and interviews.[35] Her current research entitled "Harrison, Froebel and Some Historical F(r)ictions" is a compilation of blog posts from January 2018 to December 2019. These posts are essential to the historical preservation of these protests, as they archive posters, interviews, and resources to further explore the history of the schools.[36] Digital archives like this are crucial for preserving

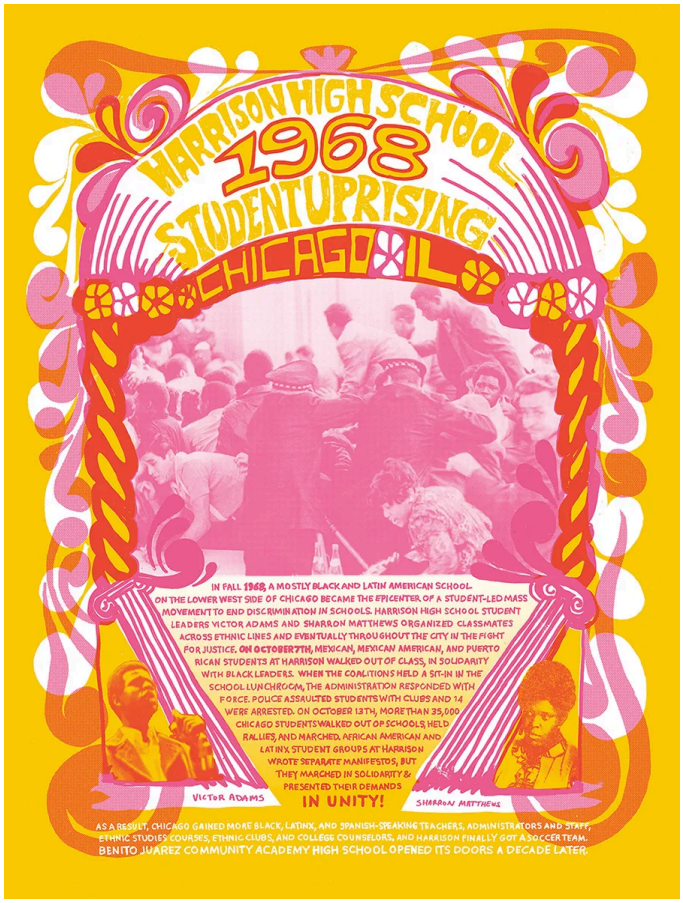
[34] "[Illegible] Latin American Student Difficulties Discussed." *Latin Times* , 29 Aug. 1969, p. 1. *Readex: Hispanic American Newspapers*, https://infoweb-newsbank-com.proxy.library.nd.edu/apps/readex/openurl?ctx_ver=z39.88-2004&rft_id=info%3Asid/infoweb.newsbank.com&svc_dat=EANASP&req_dat=0D0CB61955915575&rft_val_format=info%3Aofi/fmt%3Akev%3Amtx%3Actx&rft_dat=document_id%3Aimage%252Fv2%253A11E3EC2ACCFF4D57%2540EANASP-11E9DEA091224E88%25402440463-11E8DF6A21DA13A0%25400-120F715F2A67B497%2540%25255BIllegible%25255D%252BLatin%252BAmerican%252BStudent%252BDifficulties%252BDiscussed. Accessed 27 Apr. 2024. p. 1-2

[35] Nicole Marroquin, "Bio." Be Here Now, 2019. https://www.nicolemarroquin.com/about.

[36] Nicole Marroquin, "Harrison, Froebel and Some Historical F(r)ictions." Be Here Now, 2018-2019. https://www.nicolemarroquin.com/harrison-and-froebel

this historic moment, ensuring that its significance is not lost to time and remains accessible for future generations to learn from and build upon.

The archive plays a crucial role in preserving Harrison's legacy today, but it is Marroquin's artwork that amplifies the narrative, transforming historical events into powerful visual expressions that evoke emotion and provoke thought. Her most popular work on the subject, *Harrison High School Student Uprising* (2017), is a silkscreen print detailing the event as a colorful poster.



Harrison High School Student Uprising (2017)[37]

The print is featured on various websites as a visual representation of Harrison's history, not only sharing the story of protest but also actively participating in activism by preserving this fragile

[37] Nicole Marroquin, *Harrison High School Student Uprising*. 2017, Silkscreen. Hull House, Chicago

legacy for future generations. However, her most impactful work came from her collaboration with fellow educator Paulina Camacho and students at Benito Juarez High School between 2014 and 2018. Over the course of a select group of students' high school careers, Marroquin and Camacho led a research-intensive art project aimed at teaching the current generation about the protests of their historical peers. Below is Marroquin's statement of purpose for the project.

> ...[We] asked the students in her classroom if they had heard of the walkouts at Harrison or Froebel, or the struggle that had paved the way for their own school. None had. By now, Paulina's interest had been piqued as well; she had turned up only one student with any knowledge of the details leading up to the founding of Juarez High School. Paulina and I knew what we had to do—bring the images and accounts of the uprisings directly to the students. We immediately began to design a curriculum to ensure that this history would not be forgotten again.[38]

The lack of awareness about the groundbreaking protests at Harrison and Froebel highlights the importance of history and heritage in Marroquin and Camacho's project. They viewed art as a tool to educate the next generation about their roots, ensuring that the invaluable efforts and legacy of past students were not forgotten. From that moment on, students created a diverse range of artwork inspired by the research they gathered from Latinx and Chicago newspapers, interviews, and books, bringing their findings to life through creative expression.

One untitled image by Marroquin in collaboration with the students was a mock-up of the October 7th sit-in police raid. The collage cuts out an image of the raid and places the students and police in a modern-day lunchroom, reflecting what it would have been like for a current student to witness the event through a cell phone.

[38] Nicole Marroquin, "Youth as Engaged Cultural Workers: Benito Juarez High School and the Legacy of Student Uprisings on the Lower West Side of Chicago." *Visual Arts Research* 44, no. 2 (2018): https://doi.org/10.5406/visuartsrese.44.2.0043. p. 46

Untitled Image (2018)[39]

This artwork underscores the deep reverence that today's Latinx community holds for their activist past. Without the efforts of previous generations, the current students at Benito Juarez High School would not only lack a school in their neighborhood but also miss out on the extensive bilingual programs that are now a vital part of their education. Marroquin reported that by the end of the project, "Students who once considered themselves merely spectators to history began to realize that they were instead benefactors of a legacy, and proposing, executing, and presenting public artwork in the community transformed their relationship to the struggle for justice."[40] Marroquin is one of many educators who are committed to honoring the activist legacies of the past while inspiring and empowering the Latinx activists of the future.

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[39] Nicole Marroquin, "Youth as Engaged Cultural Workers: Benito Juarez High School and the Legacy of Student Uprisings on the Lower West Side of Chicago." *Visual Arts Research* 44, no. 2 (2018): https://doi.org/10.5406/visuartsrese.44.2.0043. p. 1

[40] Nicole Marroquin, "Youth as Engaged Cultural Workers: Benito Juarez High School and the Legacy of Student Uprisings on the Lower West Side of Chicago." *Visual Arts Research* 44, no. 2 (2018): https://doi.org/10.5406/visuartsrese.44.2.0043. p. 50

Conclusion

The Harrison High School walkouts were a pivotal moment in several key areas: student-led activism, educational reform, interracial solidarity, and evolving protest strategies. Yet, despite the months of tireless student effort, their actions have often been reduced to just one protest among many. The student leaders behind these efforts deserve to be recognized and remembered for the revolutionary changes they sparked. It is now the responsibility of today's educators to ensure that Harrison High School is included in the broader conversation about youth-led protests and their lasting impact on society. Additionally, historians of student activism in Chicago must continually acknowledge interracial solidarity among these efforts, in spite of the complications each group faced. Harrison High School stands as a prime example of the bold experimentation and activism that defined the youth movements of the 1960s and 1970s. The protests there serve as a powerful model for understanding the motivating factors that drive young people to engage in today's political and educational conversations, continuing to inspire activism and change in the world today.

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