Gracia Molina de Pick is a life-long educator, feminist, mentor, and community activist for women’s equality, indigenous peoples, labor and immigrant’s rights. She was born in Mexico City into a family of political reformers. Her grandfathers on both sides of the family were nationally important intellectuals, writers and activists before and during the Mexican Revolution of 1910, writing books and articles advocating for the end of the Porifiro Díaz dictatorship, founding an opposition party (Partido Anti-Reeleccionista), and helping to write the sections of the Mexican Constitution of 1917.

As a young girl of 13 Gracia went with her aunt on Sunday visits to the home of Frida Kalho where she also met Diego Rivera and learned … “great people are never only for themselves, but always fight for those who cannot defend themselves.” Frida and Diego were part of the Mexican ‘Liga de Escritores y Artistas Revolucionaros’ which created a cultural renaissance inspired by the Mexican Revolucion of 1910 and funded by the Mexican government.

As a teenager she was a founder and head of the youth section of the Partido Popular, the only political party that promised the vote for women. Gracia attended the National Teacher’s School where she was specially trained to teach in indigenous villages in a culturally proficient way. Additionally, she participated in protests and demonstrations to protect poor student’s equal rights.

Gracia studied International Law at the Feminist University in Mexico City having been influenced by its founder Adela Formoso whose purpose was to educate girls from the province that otherwise would not have had the opportunity to attain a career.

In 1955 Gracia met Richard A. Pick, an American who was visiting Mexico City on a business vacation. In 1957, after two years of courtship, they were married and moved to San Diego. One year later Mexican women voted for the first time in Mexican presidential elections. She became a US Citizen in 1961.

In San Diego Gracia worked as a teacher and mentor to Mexican American students at Granger Junior High School in National City. There she organized parents to demand a fair allocation of school resources for Mexican-American students. She also worked to end the policy and practice of language and academic discrimination whereby monolingual Spanish speaking students and those who had a poor command of English were placed in mentally retarded classes. With her husband Richard, a self-made businessman, they mentored low income Mexican-American and African-American students to develop employment skills and then placed them in summer jobs often in her husband’s business.

In 1963 she was a founder of IMPACT, a community grassroots organization fighting for the civil rights of Mexican-Americans in San Diego. In 1964 Gracia taught Peace Corps recruits at San Diego State College and soon became an important voice in the Chicano Movement.

Her home began to be a center for discussion by Chicana/Chicano SDSU students and faculty where Gracia assisted with the development of MAYA, a Chicano student organization. At SDSU she obtained a teaching credential and a master’s degree; she pursued doctoral studies at UCSD and USC.

As an instructor at San Diego Mesa College she developed an academic program that gave birth to the first Chicano Studies Department in a community college in the nation.

She was one of two women faculty members of the Chicano Concilio for Higher Education (CCHE) that gave birth to the Plan de Santa Barbara published in 1969. Her home continued to be the center of reunions of Chicano faculty, students, staff and community activists. She also acted as liaison and promoter of the Chicana/o Studies Department at SDSU. In 1970, she left her tenured position at Mesa College and became a founding faculty member of the Third College at UCSD and the author of the Third World Studies Sequence. There, she was advisor to UCSD students in MECHA.

All her life Gracia has been an energetic proponent of educational and feminist reform especially for Latinos. The extent of her life’s work and activism is impressive. In 1970, she worked with Francisca Flores and Lilia Aceves to found the Comision Femenil Mexicana Nacional, the first national feminist Chicana organization. She was the Chicana Caucus Chair of the National Women's Political Caucus and a board member of the National Council of La Raza, the first Civil Rights Advocate group for Mexican Americans (1969-1977). She published in REGENERACION, the first theoretical article on Chicana Feminism presented at the National Chicana Houston Conference (1971) and was an organizer and promoter of the first USA sponsored National Women's Conference in Houston (1977). Gracia was also a national organizer for Chicana participation at the U.N. World Conferences on Women where she was a presenter and workshop moderator at Tribunes and Forums in 1975, 1980, 1985, 1995, and 2000.

Her life’s work on behalf of indigenous people, immigrants, gay and worker’s rights, women’s rights and Chicano Studies has been honored with numerous awards, by the The State of California Legislature, the California and San Diego Democratic Party, the California Rural Legal Assistance, the Centro Cultural de la Raza, San Diego Mesa College, the Veteran Feminists of America, the UFW, the National Women’s History Project, and many other feminist, educational, and political organizations.

All her life Gracia has been noted for her enthusiasm, intelligence, optimism, commitment and her willingness to sacrifice and struggle for social, economic, and political justice.