



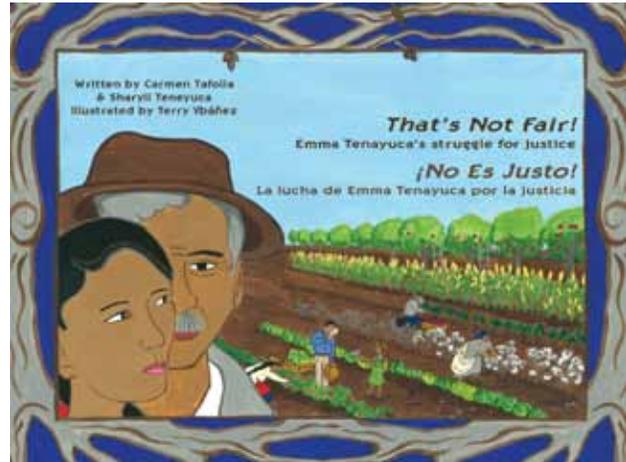
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## New title from Wings Press

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Emma Tenayuca was not born a hero of the poor, but by the age of 21 she had taken a stand that changed the world for oppressed American laborers forever. *That's Not Fair! / ¡No Es Justo!* tells how Emma learned, when she was very young, that one person can make a difference. This story of courage and compassion shows how each of us, no matter how young, can help to make the world more fair for everyone.



## *That's Not Fair! • ¡No Es Justo!* *Emma Tenayuca's Struggle for Justice /* *La lucha de Emma Tenayuca por la justicia*

Carmen Tafolla and Sharyll Teneyuca

Illustrated by Terry Ybáñez

*A Bilingual Edition in English and Spanish*

ISBN-10: 0-916727-33-5 • ISBN-13: 978-0-916727-33-8  
\$17.95 • 40 pages • full color illustrations • hardback, 9 x 12 inches • Publication: April 2008

The first-ever book about the first woman Mexican-American labor leader, a legend in her own time and an inspiration to oppressed people everywhere.

**TEA Tejas Star Book Award List for 2008-2009**

*"... an important book celebrating the struggle for justice and civil rights."*

*– School Library Journal*

From *Criticas*, March 1, 2008 • Starred Review

“... This inspirational story, illustrated with brightly colored, touching artwork, will teach readers that one determined person can make the world a better place. Highly recommended for all schools and public libraries.”

From *School Library Journal* (March 2009):

Gr 2-6—The title of this bilingual biography echoes the theme of the life of a legendary Mexican-American activist in Texas during the 1920s and 1930s. The story moves from Tenayuca’s childhood introduction to the poverty and unfair treatment of Mexican Americans living in her hometown of San Antonio to her increasing awareness of the injustice they suffered, and ultimate fight for their civil rights. Their plight made her angry: “She saw so many people go to work when it was still dark and not come home again until late at night. Many worked so many hours that they were coughing and sick, and still they did not earn enough to feed their children.” In 1938, at the age of 21, she led a successful strike of 12,000 pecan shellers whose pitiful wages had been cut from six cents to three cents an hour. In an afterword, which includes photographs of Tenayuca, the rest of her story is related: jailed many times, forced to move, she eventually worked her way through college and returned later to San Francisco as a reading teacher for migrant children. Ybáñez’s striking illustrations, framed by pecan-tree branches, are reflective of traditional Mexican mural art, with bold colors and simple shapes. An important book celebrating the struggle for justice and civil rights.—Lee Bock, Glenbrook Elementary School, Pulaski, WI

From *Multicultural Review* (Fall 2008):

“... salutary reading for all who think that young people are powerless against social wrongs.”

From *Booklist* (July 2008):

Grades 2-4. This handsome picture-book biography in English and Spanish relates the struggle of Mexican American farmworkers in the early twentieth century through the perspective of Emma Tenayuca, who became a labor activist. Growing up in San Antonio, Texas, in the early twentieth century, Tenayuca was shocked by the gross inequality around her, comparing her comfortable home to the extreme poverty of the many families of factory and farmworkers. As a smart, kind teenager, she spoke in public about the plight of the pecan shellers in the factories, and at 21, in 1938, she led 12,000 workers in a strike that forced factory owners to raise

wages. Co-authored by the late Tenayuca's niece and one of the activist's friends, the story is heavy on exclamatory messages. Yet the stirring, unfamiliar chapter in labor history and the humanitarian efforts of Tenayuca herself will intrigue children, who will also like the bold, mural-like illustrations, which show a child confronting suffering and growing up to make a difference. Pair this with Francisco Jiménez's personal stories and with *Sí Se Puede! Yes We Can*). – Hazel Rochman, in *Booklist*

From *La Voz de Esperanza* (Jan. 2008):

“No less than a legend in her own time and an honored figure in Mexican-American history . . . we celebrate the publication of the first book ever about this national heroine. . . . Emma's story is told in a beautiful full-color children's book aimed at the people Emma spent most of her life serving, the children who will shape our future as a just and fair society.

In this day and age when books about true female heroes are rare, this book on Emma Tenayuca is exceptional and sets a standard for future books. It targets young readers and clearly teaches values that seem to be lacking in our world today. Emma is portrayed as a child who is conscious of her world and the inequities that exist. She is an impressionable child who remembers the inequities that she sees and does what she can to alleviate them as a child and, eventually, as an adult. . . .

Throughout the book, the illustrations illuminate the text and strive to convey the tenor of the times. The illustrator, Terry Ybáñez, carefully researched the clothing, the homes, the school environment, and the general feel of the era in which this book is set, and this gives the story authenticity. . . .

Certainly, this is an excellent book for dual language classes as well as monolingual classes. Opportunities for oral language development abound.

The time has come for Emma Tenayuca to be recognized as a vital part of San Antonio history, a vital part of our national history, and our history of women who changed the world. It is fitting that the first book published about her is a children's book, for it is our children who hold the promise of a more just world.”

Also reviewed in *Congregational Libraries Today*, *San Antonio Express-News*, *National Catholic Reporter*, *Library Media Connection* and elsewhere.

## About the Book:

In the 1920s and 1930s, the pecan shellers of San Antonio, Texas, were some of the lowest-paid workers in the nation. They were all Mexican-Americans and newly arrived Mexicans, who had fled the revolution in their home country. Pecan shellers worked twelve hours a day, seven days a week, for as little as six cents a pound. In addition, they had to work in dusty, closed rooms. This made many of them ill. And then, in 1938, their wages were cut in half. They needed someone to be a voice for them, someone both brave and caring. They needed a hero. A young woman, barely twenty-one, answered their call. Her name was Emma Tenayuca.

*That's Not Fair! • ¡No Es Justo!* is set mostly in the 1920s, in San Antonio, Texas. The young Emma takes a long look around her and decides that life is not fair to some people. She begins to do things to change that. She teaches other children to read, and she learns the value of sharing what little she has with those who have even less.

*That's Not Fair! • ¡No Es Justo!* concludes by recounting how, just a few years later, barely out of her teens, Emma Tenayuca led 12,000 poor workers – the pecan shellers – in their historic strike for fair wages and improved working conditions. Historians regard this as the first successful large-scale act in the Mexican-American struggle for civil rights and justice. No less than a legend in her own time, she is now an honored figure in Mexican-American history.

Internationally-recognized Chicana poet Carmen Tafolla, a long-time friend of Emma, and Emma's niece, social justice lawyer Sharyll Teneyuca, tell how the young Emma learned that positive action is the way to justice in this, the first book ever – for children or adults – about Emma Tenayuca.

San Antonio artist Terry Ybáñez based her illustrations on historical photographs of Emma and San Antonio, and on her own experiences. She surrounds her pictures with autumn pecan tree limbs, and the many-hued blues of the south Texas sky.

## About Emma Tenayuca:

Emma Tenayuca was born on December 21, 1916, in San Antonio, Texas. The second of eleven children, Emma went to live with her grandparents at an early age. Her grandfather often took her to the Plaza del Zacate (Milam Park), where many political figures of the early twentieth century and exiles from the Mexican Revolution gave speeches about the plight of poor workers. At 16, Emma became involved with the Labor Movement when she joined a picket line – and was arrested – during a strike against the Finck Cigar Company. By the age of 20, Emma had become General Secretary for ten chapters of the Workers Alliance of America. Emma was concerned about the extreme poverty and injustice suffered by Mexican-American workers. In 1938, wages for south Texas pecan shellers (nueceros) were cut drastically. Cases of tuberculosis almost doubled among the workers, mostly caused by breathing pecan dust in crowded, closed rooms. Highly respected for her powerful speeches and her negotiation skills, the workers asked Emma to represent them. Thus, at the age of 21, she led the city's 12,000 pecan shellers in a demand for decent wages and better conditions. At several points, well over 8,000 workers actively joined the strike,

despite their starvation-level poverty. Emma was jailed many times and denied work because of her fierce defense of the poor. Always controversial, she was forced to leave San Antonio to get a job where she was less well known. She worked many years, saved money and put herself through college in San Francisco, California. Twenty years later, she returned to San Antonio, earned a Masters Degree, and became a reading teacher for migrant children. Emma died in 1999, leaving behind a large extended family, many who loved her and learned from her, and a legacy of social change and commitment to justice. This book was written by Emma's niece, Ms. Sharyll Teneyuca, and Emma's friend, Dr. Carmen Tafolla, in her memory. The song sung by the old man in the story is a traditional song of migrant farmworkers. In the year 1985, it was recorded on the album *Canciones de mi padre* by Linda Ronstadt.

### About the Authors and Illustrator:

Dr. Carmen Tafolla is an internationally published writer and a native of San Antonio's West-Side barrios. The author of five books of poetry and many children's stories, short stories and non-fiction works, her most recent books include *Sonnets and Salsa* (poetry), *Baby Coyote and the Old Woman / El coyotito y la viejita* (illustrated children's book), and *The Holy Tortilla and a Pot of Beans: A Feast of Short Fiction* (recipient of the Tomás Rivera Award for Young Adult Fiction), all published by Wings Press. Tafolla's *What Can You Do With a Paleta?* (Tricycle Press) recently won the Charlotte Zolotow Award. Tafolla holds her Bachelors, Masters and Doctoral degrees in Education, and has taught at universities, presented at schools and colleges throughout North America and Europe, opened a dual-language school in San Antonio for gifted and creative children, and presented at schools and colleges throughout North America and Europe. In 1999, she earned the Art of Peace Award from the President's Peace Commission of St. Mary's University for literary works reflecting peace, justice, and human understanding. She lives in San Antonio in a 100-year-old home, with her husband, children, and many pecan trees.

Ms. Sharyll Teneyuca is a graduate of Rice University and New York University School of Law. She was voted Outstanding Young Lawyer by the San Antonio Young Lawyers Association in 1985 for her work as the founder and director of the Pro Bono Law Project, the first volunteer attorney assistance project for the representation of indigents in civil matters in Bexar County. As a Municipal Court Judge, she created the Community Service Program, providing an alternative to incarceration for citizens unable to pay city fines. Both programs have become an integral part of the San Antonio community. She has endeavored to carry on her Aunt Emma's legacy of compassion for human beings and dedication to justice. A former Legal Aid staff attorney, she practices law (and makes wonderful pecan pralines) in San Antonio, where she lives with her husband and three sons. She is currently at work with co-author Carmen Tafolla on the full biography of Ms. Emma Tenayuca.

Ms. Terry Ybáñez is a painter and printmaker whose work has been exhibited at the University of Mexico (Mexico City), the Galería de la Raza (San Francisco) and elsewhere. A respected artist in her hometown of San Antonio, Texas, she has donated her time to create historical murals honoring significant San Antonio women, including Emma Tenayuca. She illustrated two prior books for children: *Hairs/Pelitos* (1994) by Sandra Cisneros, and *Christmas Tree: El Árbol de Navidad* (1997) by Alma Flor Ada. Booklist cited Ybáñez for her "bold, energetic paintings;" Publishers Weekly praised her work as "a buoyant celebration." Ybáñez holds degrees in Studio Art and in Bilingual/Bicultural Studies. She lives near San Antonio's 300-year-old Mission San José with her husband and two very friendly dogs. She teaches art in an inner-city high school.