

## **PBS Home Video Spotlights Mexican Americans' 1950s Struggle for Class Recognition**

*"A powerful reminder of the civil rights movement. One to watch."  
– Austin American-Statesman*

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ARLINGTON, VA (Date) – In the new AMERICAN EXPERIENCE documentary, **A Class Apart**, PBS Home Video highlights the landmark 1950s Supreme Court case that redefined civil rights for Mexican Americans in the United States. Award-winning producers Carlos Sandoval (*Farmingville*) and Peter Miller (*Sacco and Vanzetti, The Internationale*) tell the historic tale of how a small-town Texas murder case sparked the Mexican American civil rights movement and put an end to Jim Crow-style discrimination against this minority group. Hailed as “eye-opening” and “outstanding” by the *Baltimore Sun*, ***A Class Apart: A Mexican American Civil Rights Story*** will be released on DVD April 21.

### ***A Class Apart: A Mexican American Civil Rights Story***

In the tiny town of Edna, Texas, in 1951, a field hand named Pete Hernandez murdered his employer after exchanging words in a gritty cantina. From this seemingly unremarkable small-town murder emerged a landmark civil rights case that would forever change the lives and legal standing of tens of millions of Americans. This AMERICAN EXPERIENCE film tells the little-known story of a band of underdog Mexican American lawyers who took their case, *Hernandez v. Texas*, all the way to the Supreme Court, where they successfully challenged Jim Crow-style discrimination against Mexican Americans.

In the landmark legal case, prosecution lawyers forged a daring legal strategy, arguing that Mexican Americans were "a class apart" and did not neatly fit into a legal structure that recognized only blacks and whites. As legal skirmishes unfolded, the lawyers emerged as brilliant, dedicated, humorous and at times terribly flawed men. This film dramatically interweaves the story of its central characters—activists and lawyers, returning veterans and ordinary citizens, murderer, and victim—within the broader history of Latinos in America during a time of extraordinary change.

To order any DVD release from PBS Home Video, including ***A Class Apart: A Mexican American Civil Rights Story***, please call **(800) PLAY-PBS** or visit **shopPBS.org**.

### **ABOUT PBS DISTRIBUTION**

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programming from *Super Why!*, *Wordgirl*, *Cyberchase*, and *Arthur*.

**TITLE:** *A Class Apart: A Mexican American Civil Rights Story*

**SERIES:** American Experience

**RUNNING TIME:** approximately 1 hour

**FORMAT:** DVD

**SRP:** \$24.99

**PREBOOK:** 3/24/09

**STREET DATE:** 4/21/09

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