



# American Immigrant: My Life in Three Languages

*Rosalie Pedalino Porter*

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## **American Immigrant: My Life in Three Languages** Rosalie Pedalino Porter

Immigration is one of the most contentious issues in twenty-first-century America. In forty years, the American population has doubled from 150 to 300 million, about half of the increase due to immigration. Discussions involving legal and illegal status, assimilation or separatism, and language unity or multilingualism continue to spark debate. The battle to give five million immigrant children America's common language, English, and to help these students join their English-speaking classmates in opportunities for self-fulfillment continues to be argued. *American Immigrant* is part memoir and part account of Rosalie Pedalino Porter's professional activities as a national authority on immigrant education and bilingualism.

Her career began in the 1970s, when she entered the most controversial arena in public education, bilingualism. This book chronicles the political movement Porter helped lead, one that succeeded in changing state laws in California, Arizona, and Massachusetts. Programs that had segregated Latino children by language and ethnicity for years, diminishing their educational opportunities, were removed with overwhelming public support. New English-language programs in these states are reporting improved academic achievement for these students.

This book is also Porter's testament to the boundless opportunities for women in the United States, and to the unique blending of ethnicities and religions and races into harmonious families, her own included, that continues to be a true strength of the United States. Porter examines women's roles, beginning in the 1940s and continuing through the millennium, from the vantage point of someone who grew up in a working-class, male-dominated family. She explores the emotional price exacted by dislocation from one's native land and traditions; traveling and living in the Middle East, Europe, and Asia; and the evolving character of marriage and family in twenty-first-century America.

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