

## **FIGUEROA MERCADO, LOIDA (1917–1996)**

The historian and political activist, Loida Figueroa Mercado was born in Yauco, Puerto Rico. In 1941, Doña Loida, as she was affectionately known to her students and colleagues, earned a B.A. degree from the Polytechnic Institute, today known as the Interamerican University; an M.A. and a Ph. D. from the Universidad Central de Madrid, Spain. One of the earliest academically prepared Puerto Rican women, Dr. Figueroa Mercado was the author of numerous classics in Puerto Rican history including, the acclaimed *Breve Historia de Puerto Rico, volumes I and II*, and *Acridulces* (poems, 1947), the novel *Arenales* (1961; 2nd edition, 1985). She was a Fellow at Yale University in 1975, and as visiting professor in the Department of Puerto Rican Studies, Brooklyn College, CUNY, from 1974-1977, created the foundational history courses in the curriculum. An avid supporter of Puerto Rican independence, Dr. Figueroa Mercado was a member of the island's Socialist Party and ran for the mayoralty of Mayagüez. She was honored by the Cuban government with the National Medal of Culture.