

US Congressional Hispanic Caucus Meet with Mexico's Fox

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News Briefs

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The meeting took place four days after U.S. President George W. Bush visited Mexico, where the two leaders discussed potential solutions to long-standing issues such as drug trafficking and immigration.

Mexican presidential spokeswoman Martha Sahagun said that the conversation between Fox and members of the Hispanic Caucus - founded in 1976 in the U.S. House of Representatives - was positive and that the legislators spoke on behalf of the minority group they represent.

According to officials, the representatives said relations between the countries would improve but that some bilateral problems would take time to work out.

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Mexican President Vicente Fox, center in back row, poses for a picture with the U.S. Hispanic Caucus in his presidential residence of Los Pinos, Mexico City.

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been a constant source of tension between Mexico and the United States.

Menendez's colleague, Rep. Silvestre Reyes (Dem.-TX) also said there has been a shift in sentiment toward Mexico given the prospects of mutual economic growth under the North American Free Trade Agreement.

Reyes added that Bush was "a Republican who embraces relations with Mexico" and that his good-will gestures toward Mexico would have an important impact in Washington.

Regarding possible legislation that would grant amnesty to illegal immigrants working in the United States, Reyes said he did not know if such a measure would receive broad support in Washington and that much would depend on the way the bill was crafted.

Rep. Luis Gutierrez (Dem.-IL) noted that only when there is an objective discussion of immigrants and their contributions, and politicians stop using divisive rhetoric, will there be a better future for all people on both sides of the border.

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According to Menendez, concrete action will soon be taken, particularly concerning the controversial certification process by which the United States validates the anti-drug efforts of Latin American countries, including Mexico.

The certification issue has been a constant source of tension between Mexico and the United States.

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Americorp's Launches Campaign to Recruit 50,000 Young Adults

Washington - AmeriCorps today launched a bilingual campaign to recruit more than 50,000 young adults to mentor and tutor children, assist the homeless, restore national park trails and build homes.

The advertising campaign, geared toward young adults between the ages of 18-24, shows AmeriCorps members working with children and helping the homeless. It also introduces AmeriCorps' new slogan: "Your world. Your chance to make it better."

"Young people today may not think they can change the world, but they do think they can make it better, and they're hungry for ways to get involved," said Wendy Zenker, acting CEO of the Corporation for National Service, which oversees AmeriCorps.

"AmeriCorps lets them put their idealism to work... by spending a year in AmeriCorps, they learn skills, earn money for college and have the satisfaction of making a real difference" in their communities, Zenker said.

In exchange for spending a year in AmeriCorps, the domestic version of the peace corps, young people learn important skills, receive a small salary, health insurance and \$4,725 to pay for college, training courses or student loans.

More than 200,000 people from different age groups have joined AmeriCorps since 1994, which also offers services to non-profit organizations like the Red Cross, Habitat for Humanity, the Boys and Girls Scouts, shelters, community centers and religious institutions.

According to Independent Sector, a coalition of non-governmental organizations offering social services, 46 percent of the nation's 26 million 18-24 year-olds volunteered in the past year, up from 38 percent in 1996.

A Harvard University study stated that 60 percent of university students are involved in community service and 85 percent prefer volunteering to political activities as a way to solve problems in the community.

Many young people have prioritized community service over making money.

Zachary Sifuentes, 22, a Harvard graduate, turned down job offers of up to \$70,000 to join AmeriCorps, where he helped develop a community center for disabled kids.

"Growing up, my mom and I could not have made it without the help of others. AmeriCorps was my chance to give back," Sifuentes says in the organization's TV public service ad.

The public service campaign uses radio, television, newspapers, posters, signs and the Internet to get its message out.

Ex-wife of Suspected Cuban Spy Seeks Damages

Miami - The former wife of alleged Cuban spy Juan Pablo Roque, who apparently infiltrated Miami-based anti-Castro groups after deserting the Cuban air force, on Tuesday filed for damages.

Ana Margarita Martinez's attorneys alleged their client was deceived and sexually abused by Roque, who returned to Cuba in 1996, shortly before the nation shot down two small planes belonging to the exile group Brothers to the Rescue.

According to the attorneys, Roque used Martinez to carry out espionage activities that helped Cuba's MIG aircrafts shoot down the two Brothers to the Rescue planes.

The incident claimed the lives of four of the organization's members, three of whom were U.S. citizens.

In statements to the Spanish-language network Telemundo, Martinez she said she was confident about winning her case, because "this is a nation of laws."

The lawyers said they would use documentation that was recently declassified pertaining to "Red Avispa" (Operation Wasp), to which Roque allegedly belonged and several of whose members are currently being tried in a Miami federal court.

According to Telemundo, attorneys for Roque's former wife are asking that compensation be paid from Cuban funds frozen by the United States after the Cuban revolution.

Relatives of those who died in the tragedy were awarded last week nearly \$97 million from these funds.

The men were pensive, and the majority of children and mothers were crying."

The train took its human cargo through El Paso, Texas, and across the border into Juárez, Lucio reported. "There was a terrible cry. Many had daughters and sons who had stayed behind. They had married others here and did not want to return to Mexico."

(Francisco E. Balderrama is a

professor of Chicano Studies and History at California State University-Los Angeles. Raymond Rodríguez is Professor Emeritus of History at Long Beach City College. They co-authored the book "Decade of Betrayal: Mexican Repatriation in the 1930s," published by the University of New Mexico Press and winner of the Gustavus Myers Center Award.)

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"El Respeto al Derecho Ajeno es La Paz."
"Respect for the Rights of Others is Peace"
Lic. Benito Juárez

EL EDITOR

Established 1977 - Texas' Oldest Hispanic Owned Newspapers

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Aniversario De 70 Años:

La Gran Depresion y El Racismo Causan Huida de un Millon de Mexicanos de Los EEUU

Por Francisco Balderrama y Raymond Rodríguez

No es un capítulo de la historia de los Estados Unidos que se enseña en nuestras escuelas, pero pasó.

Hace setenta años esta semana, el Servicio de Inmigración y Naturalización de los Estados Unidos lanzó la primera redada llevada a cabo en un lugar público, en California. A las tres de la tarde, el 26 de febrero, 1931, los agentes uniformados del Servicio descendieron en La Placita, un parquecito frente a la histórica calle Olvera en Los Angeles, reverenciada como el lugar donde se fundó la Ciudad de los Angeles. La policía local además de diputados y oficiales de policía que llegaron desde lugares tan distantes como San Francisco y Tucson, Arizona, reclutados para ayudar en la raza.

Un mes más tarde, el 23 de marzo, el primer tren oficial de repatriación salió de Los Angeles con destino a la frontera con México. Otro tren, con más de mil repatriados, partió al mes. De allí en adelante los trenes partían con una regularidad determinada por la velocidad con que el Servicio de Inmigración y Naturalización podía acorralar a suficientes familias de antecedente mexicana para hacer que el viaje resultara económicamente viable.

Al finalizar la gran depresión de los años treinta, se había rastreado a un millón de mexicanos o mexicanoamericanos de costa a costa, que luego se enviaban o

se perseguían hacia el sur. Según cálculos de historiadores, hasta 60 por ciento de los perseguidos eran niños nacidos en los Estados Unidos, que por ende eran ciudadanos de los Estados Unidos.

En ciudades porteras como Los Angeles, Nueva Orleans y Nueva York, se contrataban buques de carga y petroleros vacíos para depositar a los mexicanos en las costas oriental y occidental de nuestro vecino al sur. Las comunidades del medio-oeste de los Estados Unidos ofrecían a sus residentes mexicanos comida, gasolina y a veces dinero para incentivarlos a que se fueran. Se concertaron tarifas reducidas con las compañías locomotoras para acarrear a los indeseados hombres, mujeres y niños más allá de la frontera nacional.

Esta absoluta violación de sus derechos constitucionales no detuvo a los fanáticos grupos cívicos, postas de veteranos, congregaciones de iglesias y otras organizaciones que clamaban por deportar a los mexicanos.

La intención declarada era juntar a los mexicanos sin documentos de inmigración de los Estados Unidos. Se calculaba que eran unos 400,000. Con la histeria motivada por los medios de comunicación en contra de los mexicanos, muchos optaron voluntariamente por irse. Fueron más los que se fueron por su propia voluntad que los que fueron deportados o repatriados oficialmente. Muchos pensaban regresar a los Estados Unidos

una vez corregida la situación económica.

Con 175,000 residentes mexicanos, el condado de Los Angeles se convirtió en un hervidero de repatriación. En un periodo de cinco meses se repatrió a 50,000 mexicanos, doble el número de personas sin documentos que se decía vivían allí.

El Departamento de Bienestar Social de Los Angeles puso de su parte al reunir a los mexicanos en lista para asistencia y mandarlos mudar. El movimiento también se dirigió a los hospitales, sanatorios y asilos. Si eran móviles los pacientes, se los llevaba a los trenes de repatriación que partían. Si estaban encamados, se cargaban con cama y todo en los camiones que los llevaban hasta la frontera. Estarían mejor en su "patria," insistían los oficiales. El cambio de paisaje hasta podía acelerar su recuperación, afirmaban.

Tuvo tanto éxito el Departamento de Bienestar Social del condado que llegaron representantes de otros condados de todo el país para aprender a mejorar sus programas de repatriación.

Para los que regresaban a Baja California y los estados del norte de México, los puertos principales de entrada eran Tijuana y Nogales. No obstante, la mayoría tenía lazos familiares en los estados centrales de Guanajuato, Jalisco y Michoacán. Para ellos el puerto principal de entrada era Ciudad Juárez a la otra ribera del Río Grande de El Paso, Texas. Ninguna de las dos

ciudades tenía la infraestructura necesaria para recibir adecuadamente a la masa humana tan fríamente depositada en la frontera.

Las familias llevaron los animales caseros, plantas y otras posesiones importantes y esenciales. En una escena repetida en toda la nación, las familias se escindieron. Los hijos mayores se negaban a viajar con los padres. Para ellos, México no era su hogar. Para introducir un poco de levedad, a veces se contrataba a mariachis para que tocaran corridos populares.

Pero eso hizo poco para levantar el ánimo de los deportados confundidos. Lucas Lucio, un líder comunitario de Santa Ana, California, describió la patética escena en la estación de tren de su ciudad: "Llegaron cientos de mexicanos. Los hombres estaban serios y la mayoría de las mujeres y niños lloraban. Se levantó un grito terrible. Muchos tenían a hijos y a hijas que se quedaban atrás. Se habían casado con otros aquí y no se querían regresar a México," nos informó Lucio.

(Francisco E. Balderrama es profesor de Estudios e Historia Chicano en la California State University-Los Angeles. Raymond Rodríguez es Profesor Emérito de Historia en Long Beach City College. Escribieron conjuntamente el libro "Decade of Betrayal: Mexican Repatriation in the 1930s," publicado por la University of New Mexico Press and ganador del premio Gustavus Myers Center.)

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70th Great Depression, Racism Drive Anniversary: Million Mexicans Out of US

By Francisco E. Balderrama and Raymond Rodríguez

Seventy years ago this week, the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service launched the first raid it carried out in a public place.

At 3 p.m. on Feb. 26, 1931, uniformed agents swept into La Placita, the small park across from historic Olvera Street in Los Angeles, revered as the site where the City of Angels was founded. Local police and sheriff's deputies, and officers from as far away as San Francisco and Tucson, Ariz., were recruited to help.

A month later, on March 23, the first official repatriation train left Los Angeles for the Mexican border. A second train, with more than a thousand repatriates, left a month later. Thereafter, trains departed with a regularity determined by the speed with which the INS could herd together enough families of Mexican heritage to make the trip economically feasible.

By the end of the Great Depression, about 1 million Mexicans and Mexican Americans were tracked down from coast to

coast and shipped or chased south. By historians' estimates, as many as 60 percent of them were children born in the United States, and therefore U.S. citizens.

Port cities, such as Los Angeles, New Orleans and New York, used coastal freighters and empty tankers to haul Mexicans to Mexico's east and west coasts. Communities in the Midwest offered their Mexican residents food, gasoline and sometimes monetary inducements to get them to leave. Cut-rate fares were arranged with railroads to ferry the unwanted men, women and children out of the country.

The wholesale violation of their constitutional rights did not deter zealous civic groups, veterans' posts, church congregations and other organizations clamoring to get rid of the Mexicans.

The declared intent was to round up Mexicans who were in the country without immigration papers. Estimates put their number at about 400,000. With a national anti-Mexican hyster-

ia fanned by the media, many Mexicans chose to leave voluntarily, more left of their own volition than were officially deported or repatriated. Many expected to return once the U.S. economic situation improved.

With 175,000 Mexican residents, Los Angeles County became the hotbed of repatriation. In one five-month period, 50,000 Mexicans -- double the purported number of undocumented people living there -- were repatriated.

The Los Angeles Welfare Department was doing its part by culling Mexicans who were on the relief rolls to send them packing. County hospitals, sanitariums and asylums were also targeted. If patients were mobile, they were led onto departing repatriation trains. If they were bedridden, their beds were placed on trucks and carted to the border. They would be better off in their "home country," local officials contended. The change in scenery might even speed their recovery, they said.

So successful was the county's welfare department that other counties throughout the

nation sent representatives to learn how to improve their own repatriation efforts.

For those returning to Baja California and the northern Mexican states, the major ports of entry were Tijuana and Nogales. However, most had familial roots in the central states of Guanajuato, Jalisco and Michoacán. For them, the major port of entry was Ciudad Juárez, across the Río Grande from El Paso, Texas. Both cities were ill-equipped to handle the mass of humanity callously dumped at the border.

Families carried pets, plants and other prized and essential possessions. In a scene repeated across the nation, families were torn apart. Older children refused to accompany their parents. To them, Mexico was not home. In attempts to induce levity, mariachis were sometimes hired to play popular corridos.

But that did little to raise the spirits of the befuddled deportees. Lucas Lucio, a community leader in Santa Ana, Calif., recounted the pathetic scene at his city's railway station: "Hundreds of Mexicans came.

Aniversario de 70 Años Desde La Primera Redada de la Depresin:

Un Millon De Repatriados Encuentran Hostilidad, Dificultades Volver a Mexico

Por Francisco E. Balderrama y Raymond Rodriguez

(Segunda de dos instalaciones. Durante la gran depresión de los años 30, el gobierno de los Estados Unidos deportó a un millón de mexicanos y mexicano-americanos. Todo comenzó con una redada del Servicio de Inmigración y Naturalización de los Estados Unidos en la calle Olvera en Los Angeles el 26 de febrero, 1931).

Muchos de los repatriados llegaron a la frontera en condiciones deplorables. En cada tren y caravana iban acompañados de la malnutrición y la muerte. En un tren del medio-oeste, murieron 25 pasajeros -- niños y ancianos. Las condiciones en la frontera eran abominables. Un periodista describió a mujeres que recogían frijoles caídos de los sacos rotos para alimentar a sus familias hambrientas. No se conseguía ni comida, ni albergue ni medicinas a ningún precio.

El transporte al interior era irregular. Las familias muchas veces esperaban semanas o meses hasta ver aparecer un tren. A los que se aventuraban hacia el sur en sus propios carros o camiones, se les proveía de mapas que indicaban dónde encontrar comida, agua y gasolina. Los caminos peligrosos de las montañas y el desierto cobraron muchos muertos. El camino al sur estaba marcado de cruces de entierros y bienes caseros abandonados. Nadie sabía qué se le esperaba al llegar a su destino.

En un principio el gobierno mexicano les dio la bienvenida a los repatriados. La idea era que

con las habilidades adquiridas en los Estados Unidos, ayudarían a que México llegara a ser una nación más moderna. A los que poseían habilidades con la agricultura se les prometía tierra, semillas y equipo agrícola si se asentaban en lugares que el gobierno quería desarrollar.

El problema era simple, sin embargo. México no tenía ni suficiente tierra ni suficientes recursos para volver a acomodar a los cientos de miles que regresaban.

Aquellos repatriados que contaban con ahorros abrían pequeños negocios o empezaban sus propias empresas. Los que tenían carros los convertían en taxis; los que tenían camiones los alquilaban para transportar carga pesada.

Pero, para la mayoría, la vida se tiñó de una aspereza denigrante. México también sufría los estragos de la depresión, y el trabajo era escaso. Y la mayoría de los residentes resentían la competencia que les hacían los agringados, los mexicanos "americanizados", por los pocos trabajos que había.

Al aumentar el número de repatriados, llegó a su punto culminante el resentimiento contra ellos. Los que se habían quedado en México se oponían a los esfuerzos de su gobierno en acomodar a los repatriados. Criticaban el que hubieran enriquecido la economía estadounidense, sólo para que se dejaran deportar sin conflicto después. Ahora los babosos, estúpidos, esperaban que se les recibiera con brazos abiertos.

Al trabajar en los Estados

Unidos, los repatriados habían enviado millones de dólares a sus familias en México. Ahora, dadas las circunstancias penosas en que se encontraban, se mudaban con sus parientes hasta poder establecerse de nuevo.

Las que sufrían más en este caso eran las mujeres que volvían. Su manera de vestir, el uso de cosméticos, y su comportamiento se volvían fuentes de conflicto. Las "frescas" habían olvidado su lugar. Las suegras veían a las esposas de los hijos que regresaban con desdén.

La situación para los niños era aún peor. Muchos no hablaban bien el español. Con frecuencia los matriculaban en años menores al suyo en la escuela y se los trataba como tontos. Se burlaban de su manera de vestir, además de su forma de hablar y en general su forma de ser "americanizada." Los pochos, o niños nacidos en los Estados Unidos, respondían a las burlas en inglés, enfureciendo más a los que los atormentaban.

Muchos de los pochos encontraban imposible el adaptarse al estilo de vida mexicano. México estaría bien para sus padres, pero no lo era para ellos. Emilia Castañeda de Valenciana, quien repatrió a Los Angeles como adulto durante la Segunda Guerra Mundial, recuerda, "Mi papá estaba muy orgulloso de que eramos ciudadanos de los Estados Unidos. El le decía a la gente que no pertenecíamos en ese país. ¿Por qué iba a negar que yo era ciudadana norteamericana?" Expresaba los sentimientos de muchos de sus con-

géneros. La única esperanza que los sostenía era que al llegar a la mayoría de edad, podrían volver a los Estados Unidos.

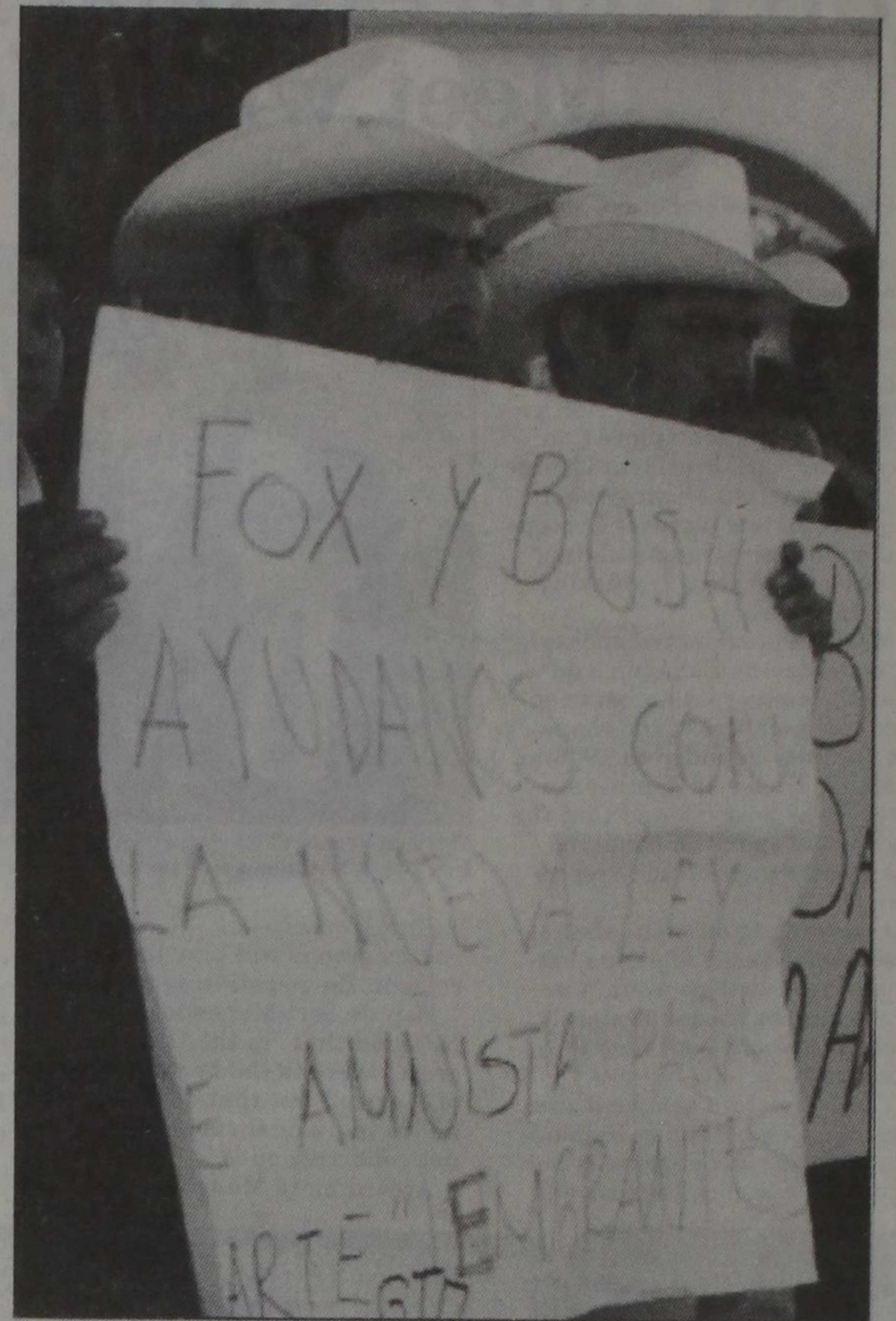
Al cerrarse las nubes de guerra sobre Europa en 1939, la histeria contra los mexicanos disminuyó. La economía de guerra de los Estados Unidos se había puesto a funcionar, y se necesitaba obreros para cosechar los cultivos, trabajar en las minas y trabajar las líneas de producción.

De nuevo se les daba la bienvenida a los mexicanos al norte de la frontera. Los jóvenes, hombres y mujeres, que habían tenido que huir al sur regresaron a la tierra en que nacieron.

Para los hombres, existía un obstáculo final. Tenían que presentarse a la conscripción. Era típico el joven cuya familia fuera repatriada en 1935. Informaba al sargento reclutador que su inglés no era muy bueno por lo que había vivido en el extranjero durante siete años.

"Hijo," replicaba el sargento, "no nos importa el idioma que hables con tal que dispares derecho." Era bueno estar en casa otra vez.

(Francisco E. Balderrama es profesor de Estudios e Historia Chicanos en la California State University-Los Angeles. Raymond Rodriguez es Profesor Emérito de Historia en Long Beach City College. Escribieron conjuntamente el libro "Decade of Betrayal. Mexican Repatriation in the 1930s," publicado por la University of New Mexico Press y ganador del premio Gustavus Myers Center.) (c) 2001 Hispanic Link News Service. Distribuido por Los Angeles Times Syndicate Internacional



Members of a Mexican immigration rights group protest near President Vicente Foxes ranch

Bush-Fox Summit Could Shape Future of Both Nations

By James E. Garcia It's a new day in Mexico.

President Vicente Fox, who took office in December, made history last year by ousting the P-R-I, the roundly corrupt and inept political party that ruled the country for 70 years.

For that, Fox deserves a lot of credit. Yet, as historic as his achievement was, winning office wasn't even close to half the battle. Mexico has some serious problems. And most involve the United States.

This week, President Bush will make a brief stopover in Mexico. It'll be his first foray into foreign diplomacy.

Good for Bush. Mexico may not be the font of the world's critical oil supply or a global military powerhouse, but there are few other countries that promise to impact our nation's future more directly.

Take illegal drugs, for example. Mexico supplies a lot of them, and Americans consume a lot of them. Marijuana, cocaine, heroin. In some cases, Mexico's drug lords are our major suppliers. But who lays down the cash at the retail level? We do. Let's face it, Americans love drugs, illegal or not.

President Bush could go a long way to bettering relations with Mexico by admitting that we're at least as much to blame for drug trafficking as international drug lords.

His first step should be to end the U.S. State Department practice of officially "certifying" whether Mexico is doing enough to curb drug trafficking. Laying all of the blame on Mexico is a little like a coke-head trying to pass moral judgment on his favorite dealer.

On the subject of immigration, Fox made headlines for suggesting that it should someday be just as easy for Mexicans to cross into the U.S. as it is for Americans to enter Mexico. As things stand now, all I need is a driver's license and a copy of my birth certificate, and the Mexican government will issue me, on the spot, a six-month tourist visa to Acapulco. But if you're a Mexican trying to come to the U.S. to break your back picking grapes in California, getting a visa is practically impossible.

Fox is right. It's an unequal system that has to change. Especially since 400 to 500 illegal immigrants die every year trying to cross the U.S.-Mexico border to get jobs. If 500 U.S. tourists were dying annually on trips to Mexico, Americans would be outraged. Dead Mexican immigrants, on the other hand, barely make the news.

Bush can do something about this. A fair and humane system for allowing Mexicans workers to be hired by American employers not only makes good economic sense, but it would begin to show that Americans respect the contribution that Mexican laborers make to our nation's economic success.

The movement of labor, of course, is the human component of our economic trade policy with Mexico. Here, Bush and Fox must act together to reopen the North American Free Trade Agreement to include labor rights, as well as environment protections.

Too many U.S. companies have moved to Mexico to cut costs and escape our labor and environmental laws. Fox and Bush, both of whom are self-described compassionate conservatives, can go a long way to proving what's in their hearts by expanding the cross-border efforts to protect Mexicans from labor abuses and environmental hazards.

It is new day in Mexico. But this week's summit between Bush and Fox could herald whether there's a better tomorrow in store for both nations.

70th Anniversary of First Depression Raid: A Million Repatriates Encounter Hostility, Hardship on Return to Mexico

By Francisco E. Balderrama and Raymond Rodriguez

During the Great Depression of the 1930s, the U.S. government deported a million Mexicans and Mexican Americans. It all started with an INS raid on Olvera Street in Los Angeles on Feb. 26, 1931.

Many repatriates arrived at the border in dire condition. Malnutrition and death rode every train and caravan. On one train from the Midwest, 25 children and elderly passengers died. Conditions at the border were abominable. One journalist described women picking up beans spilled from torn gunny-sacks to feed their starving families. Food, shelter and medical care were not to be had at any price.

Transportation to the interior was irregular. Families often waited weeks or months for trains to appear. For those who ventured south in their own trucks or cars, maps were provided showing where to get food, water and gasoline. The treacherous mountain and desert roads took a toll. Grave sites and discarded household goods marked the route south. No one knew what to expect once they reached their destinations.

Initially, the Mexican government welcomed the repatriates' return. It believed that with the skills they had acquired in the United States, they would help Mexico become a

more modern nation. Those with agricultural skills were promised land, seeds and farm implements if they settled in areas the government wanted to develop.

However, Mexico simply didn't have enough land or the fiscal resources needed to resettle the hundreds of thousands returning home.

Repatriates who had some savings bought small shops or started their own businesses. Those with cars converted them into taxis, those with trucks rented them out to carry heavy loads. But for most, life assumed a demeaning harshness. Since Mexico was also caught in the throes of the depression, jobs were scarce. And most residents resented the competition of the gringados, or "Americanized" Mexicans, for the few jobs available.

As the number of repatriates increased, the resentment against them reached its highest pitch. Those who had stayed behind in Mexico opposed the government's efforts to resettle the repatriates. They decried the fact that after enriching the U.S. economy, they had allowed themselves to be kicked out. Now the (ITALIC)babosos(END ITALIC), stupid fools, expected to be welcomed back with open arms.

While working in the United States, they had remitted millions of dollars to their families.

Now, due to their own dire circumstances, many moved in with relatives until they could get back on their feet.

This placed a particular hardship on the returning women. Their manner of dress, use of cosmetics and general deportment were sources of conflict. The "hussies" simply did not know their place. Mothers-in-law viewed their returning sons' wives with disgust.

The children fared worse. Most could not speak Spanish fluently. Often they were demoted to lower grades in school and treated like dunces. Their style of dress was ridiculed, along with their speech and American ways.

The pochos, or U.S.-born children, responded in English to the taunts, further infuriating their tormentors.

Many of the pochos found it impossible to adjust to the new lifestyle. Mexico might be all right for their parents, but it was not their home. Emilia Castañeda de Valenciana, who returned to Los Angeles as an adult during World War II, recalls, "My dad was pretty proud that we were U.S. citizens. He'd tell people we don't belong in that country. Why should I deny that I was an American citizen?" She expressed the sentiments of many of her peers. Their one sustaining hope was that when they came of age,

they would return to the United States.

As war clouds gathered over Europe in 1939, the anti-Mexican hysteria abated. The U.S. wartime economy was gearing up, and the United States needed workers to harvest the crops, work the mines and staff the product lines. Mexicans once again were welcomed north of the border. Young men and women who had been driven south returned to the land of their birth.

For the males, there was one final hurdle. They had to register for the draft. Typical was the young man whose family had been repatriated in 1935. He informed the recruiting sergeant that his English was not too good because he had been out of the country for seven years.

"Son," the sergeant replied, "we don't care what language you speak if you can shoot straight." It was good to be home again.

(Francisco E. Balderrama is a professor of Chicano Studies and History at California State University-Los Angeles. Raymond Rodriguez is Professor Emeritus of History at Long Beach City College. They co-authored the book "Decade of Betrayal. Mexican Repatriation in the 1930s," published by the University of New Mexico Press and winner of the Gustavus Myers Center Award.) (c)2001, Hispanic Link News Service. Distributed by Los Angeles Times Syndicate International

Latino Directors In the Spotlight

By Hector Saldaña

The Guadalupe Cultural Arts Center's 24th annual CineFestival challenges the notion that Texas-based Latino filmmakers don't rate with their counterparts on the East and West coasts.

"Texas filmmaking has been overlooked for a long time," said award-winning Austin documentary filmmaker Hector Galan, whose latest film, "Accordion Dreams," premieres March 2 at CineFestival. The nation's oldest Latino film festival opens Thursday.

Texas' film scene is vast, diverse and unappreciated, said UCLA film professor Chon Noriega, author of "Shot in America: Television, the State and the Rise of Chicano Cinema." He says there is a growing presence of Texas-based filmmakers and videographers.

"Most of them are unknown to the rest of the country," said Noriega.

His duties at the UCLA Department of Film and Television include archiving and restoring important but little-known

works by Texas filmmakers.

Texas' growing numbers of Hispanic filmmakers was first recognized two years ago, when the Corporation for Public Broadcasting "was trying to mollify Latino filmmakers," Noriega said.

A series of community forums aimed at getting funds to Latino film professionals, sponsored by the corporation and headed by actor and activist Edward James Olmos, drew only a handful of Latinos in the major film centers. The session in San Antonio drew hundreds.

Noriega called that an indicator of the depth of Texas Latino filmmaking, which tends to be regional and niche oriented. "There is a bias for the two coasts," he said. "There is a presumption that the exciting, quality filmmakers are in Los Angeles. That's not true."

To further drive home its homegrown agenda this year, CineFestival is celebrating the work of pioneering Chicano filmmaker Efrain Gutierrez, the first Mexican-American to make a feature-length film, who is

making a comeback after a 20-year absence.

The message is clear: "Chicano cinema started here," said organizer Ray Santesteban, Guadalupe media arts director. He is staging his third film festival at the West Side arts center.

Santesteban chose to open his festival -- which runs Thursday-Sunday and March 2-4 -- with local filmmaker Jim Mendiola's "Come and Take it Day."

"Latino film is such a small cannon," said Mendiola, adding that most "only focus on the California experience."

"Everything I ever want to do is going to be about San Antonio," he said. "It's way neglected. This is about history and who tells it."

Galan, who has found success in public television, said he never tires of promoting the Texas-Latino experience. That Texas connection is part of the legacy of CineFestival, which has roots extending back to the more radical political climate of La Raza Unida.

"I remember when it was just called the Chicano Film Festival. It means a lot to be here," Galan said.

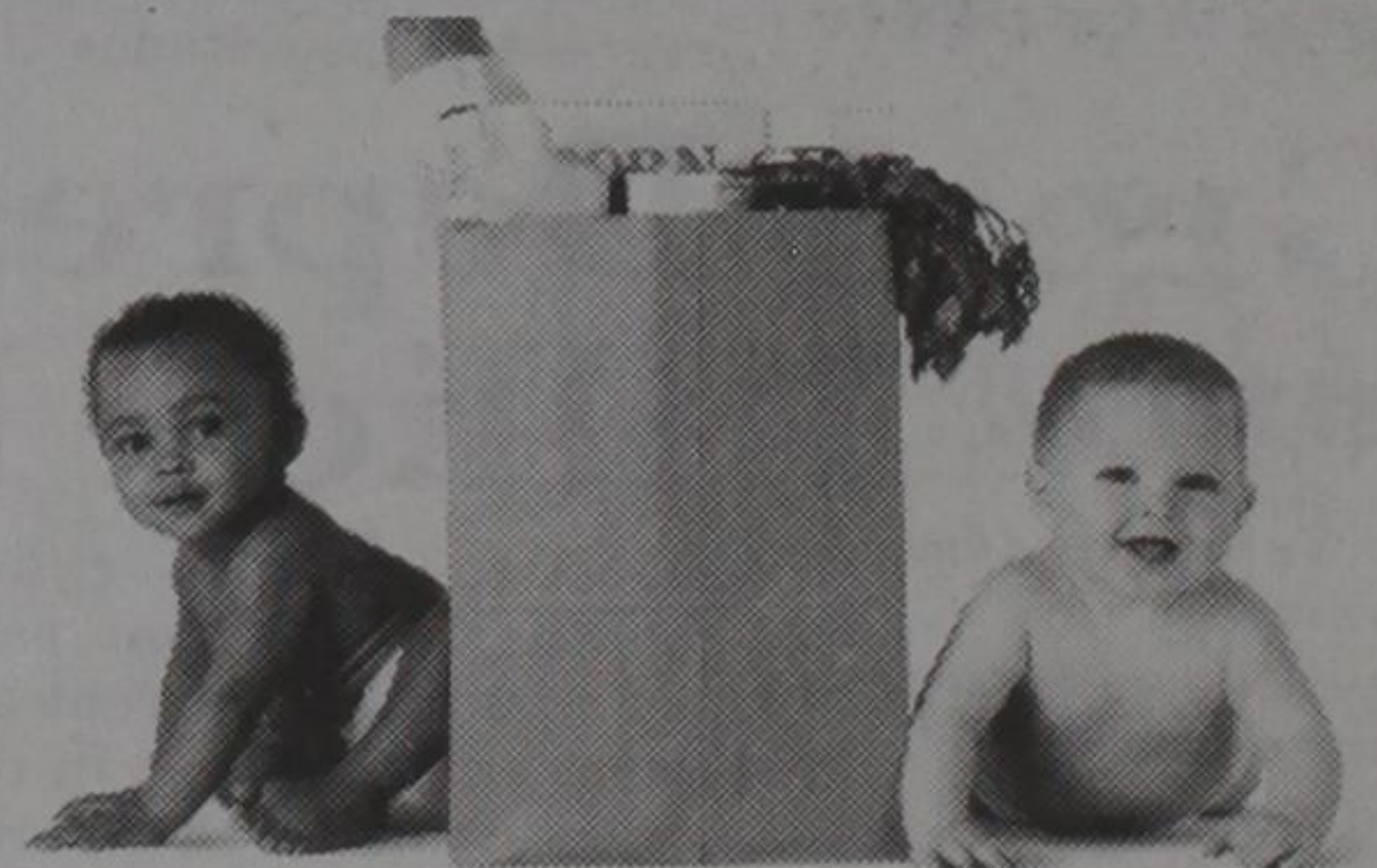
First-time filmmaker Marcy Garriott said she, too, is thrilled to be at "such a revered festival."

Her documentary feature film, "Split Decision," about deported boxing contender Jesus Chavez, is a good fit. "Split Decision" has garnered the festival's Premio Mesquite Award for best documentary.

"We were hoping to be at this CineFestival all along," said Garriott, who plans to "stay in the Latino realm" for future projects.

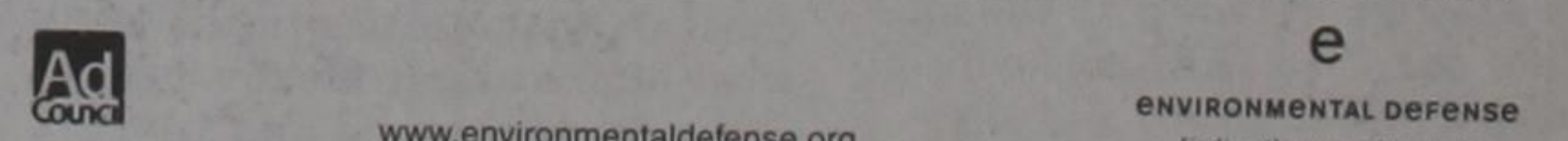
Renegade filmmaker Gutierrez, who made a splash in the '70s with "Please Don't Bury Me Alive," is still not satisfied with the state of Latino film.

"I feel honored (for the retrospective at CineFestival)," he said. "But I'm still disappointed that there isn't more new stuff from Tejano filmmakers. I wish there were more feature films out there. But I'm excited for all the young cats. That's a buzz."



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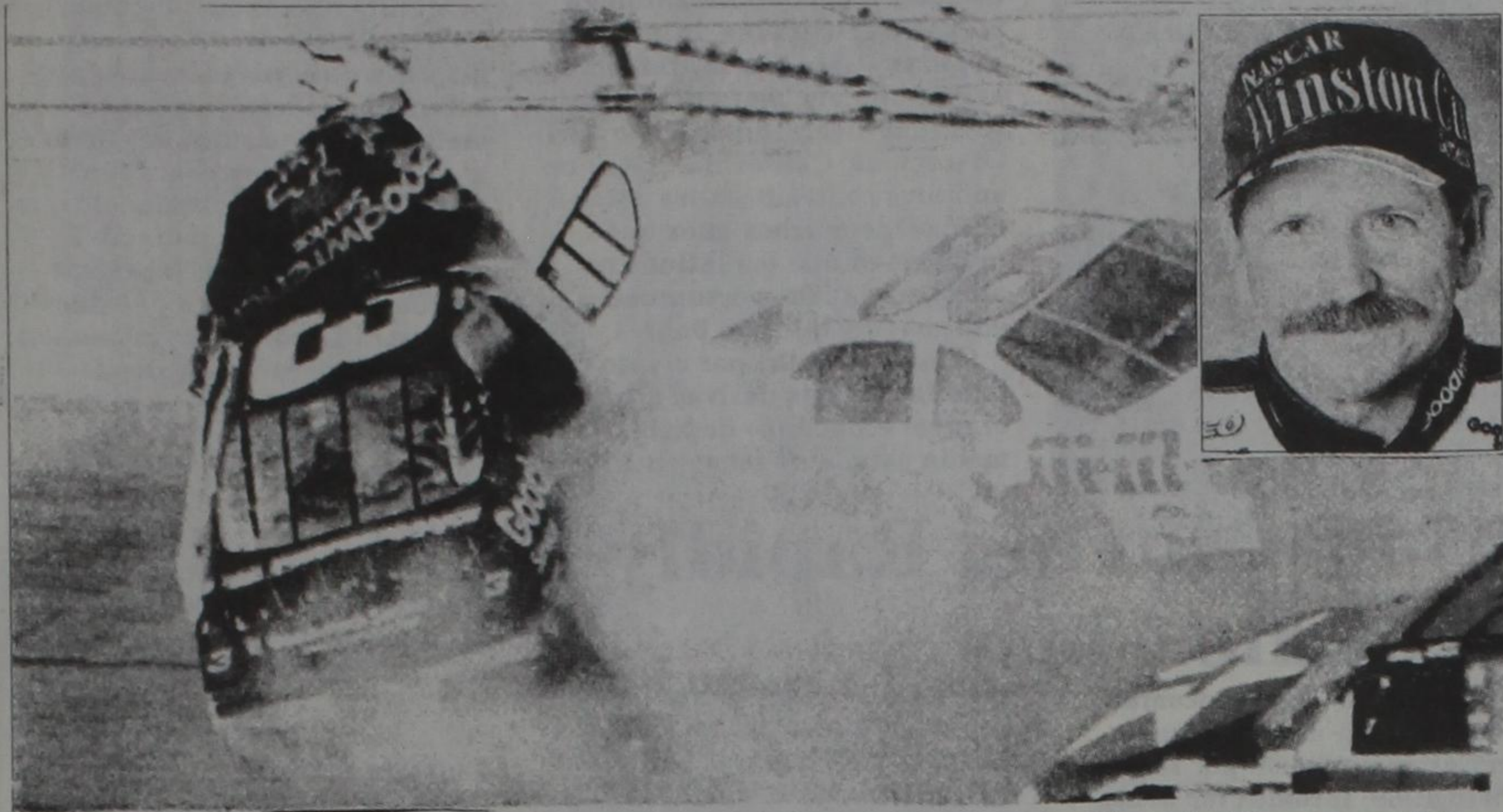


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Earnhardt Family Holds Private Funeral



Dale Earnhardt was buried in his hometown Wednesday in a private service, even as his team prepared to return his car to the track.

Earnhardt was laid to rest in Kannapolis, about 25 miles north of Charlotte, with only immediate family members attending, an Earnhardt company employee said, speaking on condition of anonymity. The exact location of the site was not disclosed.

A memorial service for the seven-time Winston Cup champion is planned for Thursday in Charlotte and will be televised live on Fox Sports Net.

Earnhardt, 49, was killed Sunday on the last turn of the last lap in the Daytona 500. He slammed into the concrete wall after making contact with Sterling Marlin at the head of a tight pack of five cars fighting for position.

While his family said goodbye, his team at Richard Childress Racing was planning to enter his car in Sunday's Rockingham

400 at North Carolina Speedway in Rockingham.

Kevin Harvick, a Busch Grand National driver for RCR, will take over Earnhardt's car for the rest of the season, a team source said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

The 25-year-old Harvick, the Busch Series' Rookie of the Year last season, will drive Earnhardt's Chevrolet and use his crew. Kevin Hamlin, Earnhardt's crew chief, will head Harvick's team.

The car will not use the No. 3 or the black-and-silver scheme that was Earnhardt's trademark. Details of the number and colors Harvick will use were still being worked out, the team source said.

Harvick was scheduled to move up to Winston Cup racing next season as the third car in Childress' garage. Mike Skinner also drives a Cup car for RCR.

Meanwhile, NASCAR and the rest of the Winston Cup teams are still working out how to honor Earnhardt this weekend.

There had been speculation that the three cars Earnhardt owned -- driven by Dale Earnhardt Jr., Steve Park and Daytona winner Michael Waltrip -- would be painted black this weekend. But a spokesman for Dale Earnhardt Inc., said that was unlikely.

Instead, the cars will sport a decal designed by Motorsports Designs in High Point.

John McKenzie, president of Motorsports Designs, said Childress chose a design that will be used exclusively on Childress' two cars and the three DEI cars.

The round decal will be black with a No. 3 in the center, McKenzie said. The top of it will say "In Memory Of" and Dale Earnhardt's name, which will be a copy of his signature, will be in the middle of the 3. The bottom will say 1951-2001.

"It's a fairly simple design, but it's what Richard Childress wanted," McKenzie said. "It

goes along with the simple looks of the cars and is in the standard black."

A second decal, with the same information but in a different shape, will be made available to all the other Winston Cup teams.

A spokesman for Joe Gibbs Racing said drivers Bobby Labonte and Tony Stewart want to honor Earnhardt but are waiting to see what develops with the decals.

"We've talked about and I'm sure all the teams want to honor him in some way," Tim Sullivan said. "We're just waiting to see what the appropriate way to do that is."

NASCAR said it would not require the Winston Cup teams to do anything to honor Earn-

hardt.

"We are in the discussion stage of trying to put something together as a tribute that is consistent with what DEI and RCR would want," spokeswoman Danielle Humphrey said.

Others have their own ideas. Driver Ward Burton suggested painting the pace car black and adding the No. 3 to it. Tommy Baldwin, his crew chief, said he liked the idea of leaving the first stall in the garage empty all season. The first stall traditionally goes to the reigning Winston Cup champion.

Baldwin also urged NASCAR to retire the No. 3.

"I know it is not something that NASCAR typically does, but nobody will ever be able to fill the shoes that drove that

car," Baldwin said.

Elsewhere in North Carolina on Wednesday, the minister who prayed with Earnhardt right before the Daytona 500 spoke about the driver's last words to him.

The Rev. Max Helton stood at the side of Earnhardt's car and led a prayer, as he had done on most race day Sundays for the past 13 years.

"We held hands through his window," said Helton, a Presbyterian minister and founder of Motor Racing Outreach.

"He says, 'Just pray that I'll be wise in putting the car at the right place at the right time ... and be able to drive with wisdom.' And we did pray about that. And we did pray for safety."

Dominican Author Julia Alvarez Turns to Film Featuring All-Star Cast

Dominican author Julia Alvarez lives for what she calls "art inspiring art." When she found out that her critically-acclaimed, best-selling novel, "In the Time of Butterflies," gave birth to a ballet set to traditional Dominican music, Alvarez felt like a proud parent.

"That really is what I think art is about -- it's a kind of a way in which we take care of each other and sing our songs about being a human being on this globe," she said from her office at Middlebury College in Vermont.

From that same novel, a film has sprung. It will star Salma Hayek, Edward James Olmos and Marc Anthony, and will be directed by Rodrigo Garcia, son of Colombian writer Gabriel Garcia Marquez.

The film, currently in post-

production with Hayek's company, Ventanarosa, is expected to air on cable TV's Showtime this fall.

The attention Alvarez's work has garnered by artists, critics and readers alike is not only because she is one of a few Dominican voices in the literary world, but her artistic style of prose and poetry showcases a talent for rich storytelling rooted in fine literature.

"You can't talk about Latino literature and not mention Julia Alvarez," said Puerto Rican author Esmeralda Santiago. "Her poetry is absolutely wonderful."

Alvarez weaves fiction and history into a beautiful braid hanging down the backbone of each Maribal sister in "In the Time of Butterflies," and of 19th century Dominican poet Salomé

Ureña, the heroine in her latest novel, "In the Name of Salomé."

In "How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents" and "Yo!" she uses fiction to explore her own bicultural identity issues caused by her family's escape to New York in 1960 from Rafael Trujillo's dictatorship in the Dominican Republic.

In addition to writing four novels and a number of poem and essay collections, Alvarez is a writer in residence at Middlebury College in Vermont, her alma mater.

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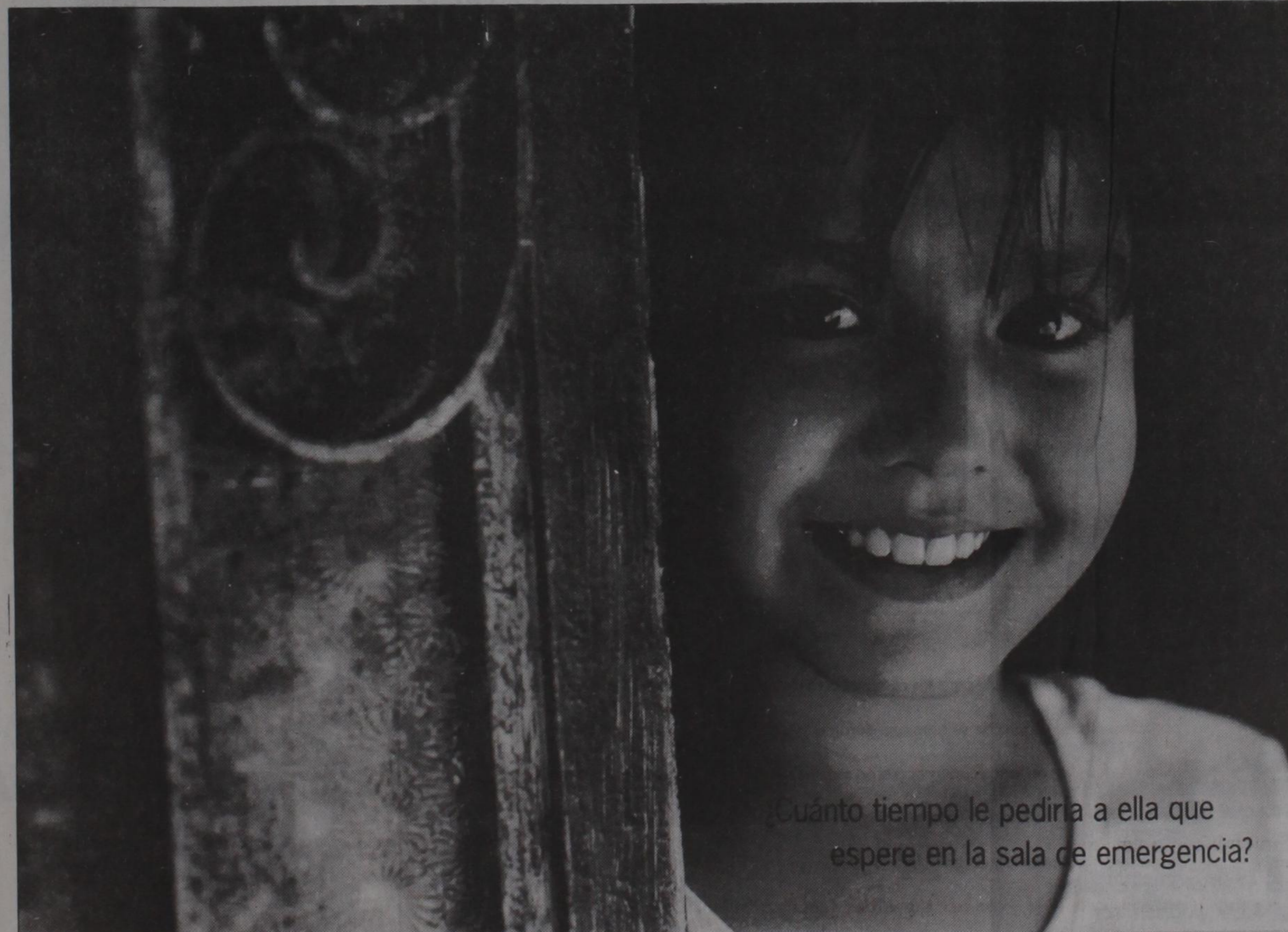
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Texas Legislator Promotes Food Stamps for Immigrants

El Paso, Texas - El Paso state legislator Norma Chavez is promoting a bill that would reestablish the food stamp program - modified with the 1996 Welfare reform - for legal immigrants.

"These people, members of the least protected group in society, have been cast into extreme poverty with the federal regulations from the last decade."

Norma Chavez, Texas state legislator Chavez told EFE that she will be meeting with congressmen from various Texas districts during the next month to ask for their support of the bill, which would grant food stamps to some 30,000 immigrants throughout the state.

Chavez said that the majority of those who would benefit from the measure, if it is approved, are those immigrants over the age of 60 or under 18 and the handicapped.

The welfare reform withdrew food stamps from permanent residents who arrived to the United States after August 1996.

"These people, members of the least protected group in society, have been cast into extreme poverty with the federal regulations from the last decade," the legislator complained.

She said that the food stamps constitute about 20 percent of the income of poor immigrant families who live in so-called "colonies" on Texas's southern border.

Chavez presented her bill on Monday before the Texas House of Representatives' Human Services Committee, which will analyze the bill's viability.

According to Chavez, the implementation of the state law would cost Texas some \$18 million per year.

The Democratic legislator said that former Gov. George W. Bush presented a similar version of the bill last year, but the measure was rejected.

Felicia Escobar, coordinator of the National Council of La Raza (NCLR) in Texas, said that many immigrants have "no way out" of their current situation, since, due to many social-economic barriers, they can not request U.S. citizenship and thus receive federal aid.

Chavez said that federal lawmakers from Massachusetts and Pennsylvania are proposing similar measures to bring back the food stamp program for legal residents. "It will be interesting to see President Bush's answer to this proposal," Chavez said.

For Chavez, it is important that Texas, a state with a high concentration of immigrants, become a leader in issues that benefit the entire population.

"We're going to be sending the correct message to Washington," she said. She did not specify when the state legislature will debate and vote on this bill.

"If the United States has enough money to send to other countries, it should also have enough money to feed those who live in this country," Chavez said. "No one should be denied food," she added.



U.S.-Born Latinos Moving Rapidly into Middle Class

By Cynthia L. Oroscó

Latino households considered middle-class grew 80 percent over the last two decades -- from 1.5 million to 2.7 million, according to a survey by the Tomás Rivera Policy Institute, based in Claremont, Calif. Its findings contradict long-held stereotypes: that Latinos ignore educational opportunities and are poor.

Forty-two percent of native-born Latino households reached middle-class status in 1998 -- earning \$40,000 or more annually. This increase is three times the rate for non-Hispanic whites. With growing numbers graduating from college, Latinos generally achieve economic parity by the end of the third or fourth generation.

Because of the impact of the arrival of recent immigrants on Latino earnings and educational attainment, especially among Mexican-Americans, the study's authors suggest that Latino subgroups should be treated individually in collection of data.

"There is a need to disaggregate Hispanics by native-born, immigrant and by different backgrounds because of the variance," said Rodolfo de la Garza, TRPI vice president of research and a professor at the University of Texas at Austin. He added that for political reasons, it is seen as favorable to aggregate the communities because of the strength in numbers.

Of the Latino subgroups surveyed, those of Cuban origin had the highest median household incomes in 1998, followed by those from Central and

South America. While incomes for both native- and foreign-born Latinos grew on par from 1979 to 1989, incomes for households led by native-born Latinos rose \$4,000 from 1989 to 1998. Incomes for foreign-born Latinos, many of whom arrive with less education and fewer marketable skills, dropped about the same amount during that period.

Stephen Trejo, one of the survey's authors, said incomes among the U.S. Cuban community are higher than the other groups because Cubans came over here with a strong educational foundation and they received assistance from the federal government. Trejo, an associate professor of economics at the University of Texas at Austin, added that Cuban families also invest more money in their children's education. Unlike Mexicans and Central Americans, who send billions of dollars to their countries of origin annually, Cubans have been restricted from doing so.

Part of the growth of middle-class U.S. Latino households is due to the fact that more individuals are pursuing educational opportunities. Latinos spent about the same proportion of their income on education as non-Hispanic whites in 1998, the study found. Despite this, an educational, and hence an earnings, gap persists between Latinos and their white counterparts. In 1998, non-Hispanic white men with a college education earned about \$15,000 more than native-born Latinos and about \$20,000 more than African-American men.

However, earnings for na-

Latinos Nacidos en Los EEUU Rapidamente Alcanzan La Clase Media

Cynthia L. Oroscó

Las familias latinas consideradas de clase media aumentaron en 80 por ciento en las últimas dos décadas -- de 1.5 a 2.7 millones, según una encuesta del Instituto de Políticas Tomás Rivera en Claremont, California. Estos resultados contradicen los estereotipos de muchos años que mantienen que los latinos no aprovechan las oportunidades de educación y que son pobres.

Cuarenta y dos por ciento de familias latinas nativas alcanzó el nivel económico de la clase media estadounidense en 1998 --

al ganar \$40,000 o más anuales. Este aumento supera tres veces el aumento alcanzado entre la población blanca no-hispana.

Con números cada vez mayores de egresados de la universidad, los latinos generalmente logran paridad económica al cierre de su tercera o cuarta generación. Dado el impacto que ocasiona la llegada de inmigrantes recientes en las cifras de ganancia y niveles de educación para la población latina, en particular para los mexicano-americanos, los autores del estudio sugieren que los subgrupos de latinos deben tratarse individualmente en la recolección de datos.

"Hay que desegregar el grupo hispano entre los nacidos aquí, los inmigrantes y por los diferentes antecedentes ya que existen variaciones," explicó Rodolfo de la Garza, vice-presidente de investigaciones del Instituto y profesor de la Universidad de Texas en Austin. Anadió que por razones políticas, está visto favorablemente el agregar las comunidades por razones de la fuerza de los números en conjunto.

De los subgrupos latinos que se estudiaron, los de origen cubano tenían el ingreso promedio por casa más alto en 1998, seguidos por los de América Central y Sur. Mientras que aumentaron los ingresos paralelamente entre los latinos nacidos aquí y los que nacieron en el extranjero entre 1979 y 1989, para los nacidos aquí los ingresos aumentaron \$4,000 de 1989 a 1998.

Para los latinos nacidos en el extranjero, muchos de los que llegan con menos educación y habilidades laborales, se vio una disminución de prácticamente la misma cantidad durante ese periodo.

Uno de los autores de la encuesta, Stephen Trejo, dijo que el ingreso de la comunidad cubana en los Estados Unidos es más alto que el de otros grupos porque los cubanos llegaron con una base fuerte de educación y recibieron ayuda del gobierno federal. Trejo, profesor asociado de economía de la Universidad de Texas en Austin, anadió que además las familias cubanas invierten más dinero en la educación de sus hijos, a diferencia de los mexicanos y centroamericanos que envían billones de dólares anuales a sus países de origen, por lo que esta posibilidad les ha sido restringida.

Parte del aumento en las familias latinas de los Estados Unidos que alcanzan la clase media se debe a que existen más individuos que se aprovechan de las oportunidades para la educación. En 1998, los latinos gastaron la misma proporción de su ingreso para la educación que la que gastaron personas blancas, no hispanas, según informa el estudio.

A pesar de este hecho, sigue persistiendo una brecha entre los latinos y su contraparte de la población blanca, no hispana, en términos de la educación y por ende el ingreso.

En 1998 el hombre blanco, no-hispano, profesional ganaba aproximadamente \$15,000 más que el latino nacido en los Estados Unidos, y \$20,000 más que el hombre negro.

No obstante, el ingreso para las latinas nacidas aquí que tienen títulos universitarios es casi igual al de las mujeres blancas y negras, no-hispanas. La encuesta concluyó que al entrar a la fuerza laboral en grandes números, las latinas serán el impulso para el aumento continuo de la clase media latina.

Esta información que subraya el aumento en los ingresos de la clase media latina es importante aunquitaron para la inflación y se presentan en términos del valor del dólar de 1998.

(Cynthia L. Oroscó es corresponsal con Hispanic Link News Service en Washington D.C. Comuníquese con ella por correo electrónico a: [cynthia\(AT\)SIGN/hispaniclink.org](mailto:cynthia(AT)SIGN/hispaniclink.org))
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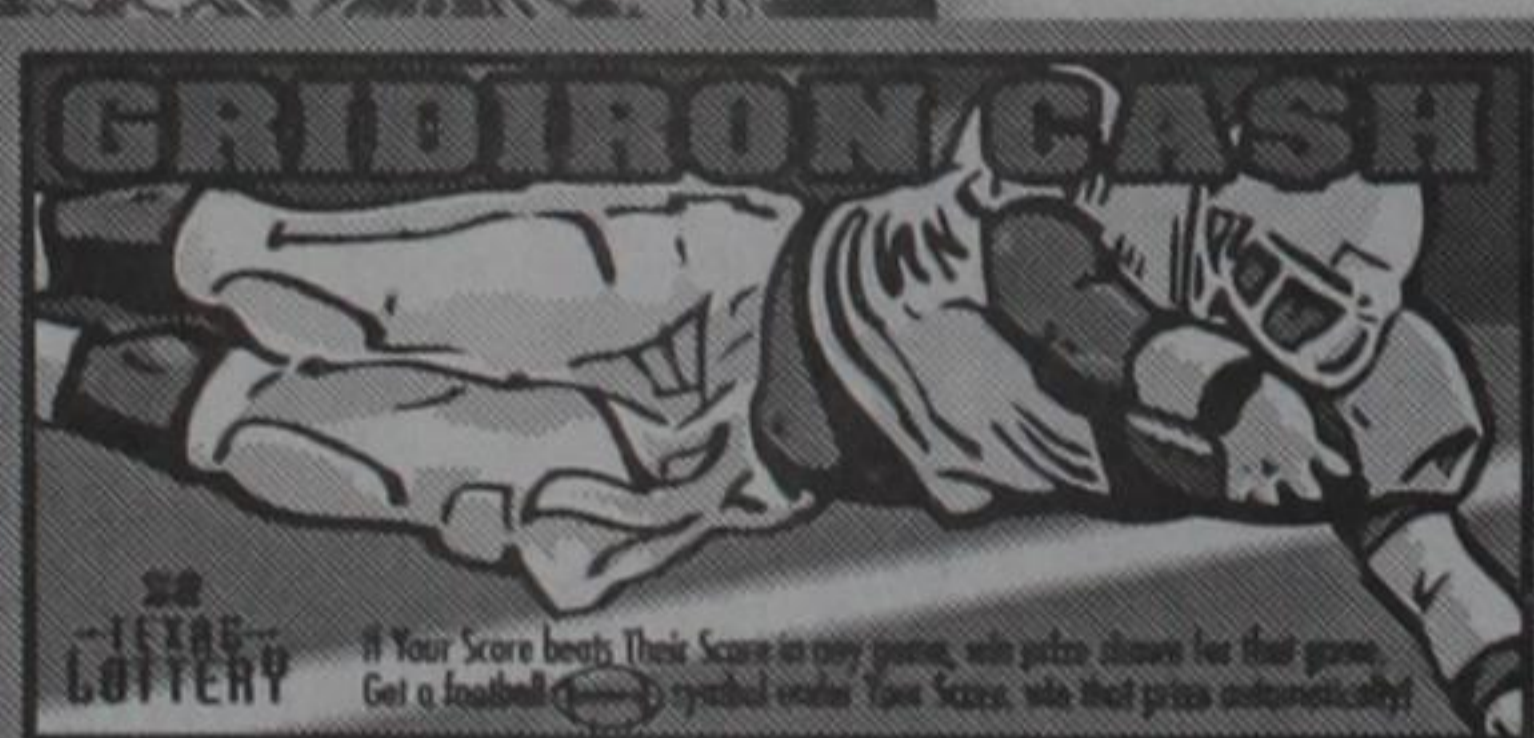
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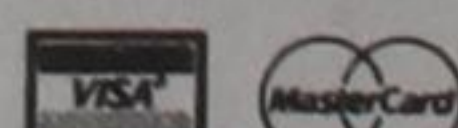
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LULAC 263 Annual Banquet - Great Success



Council 263 of the League of United Latin American Citizens chose Arnett-Benson Neighborhood President Natalia Salazar to receive its Community Leader of the Year Award



Cipriano Aguilar was selected to receive the Special Achievement Award. The award goes to an individual who has a distinguished history in community activities and in supporting LULAC projects.

LULAC Council 263 Congratulates all the Recipients Job Well Done!

Felicidades A Todos Los Participantes!



Edward and Mary Quirino received the council's Honor Roll as 20 year members. The recognition is based on performance and a minimum of 20 years of service.



Miss Fiestas del Llano 2000 attend the banquet and poses with the keynote speaker - Dr. Robert Ordoñez.

Robert Lugo, district director of LULAC was chose to receive the Council Member of the Year Award during LULAC Annual Banquet that was held last weekend.



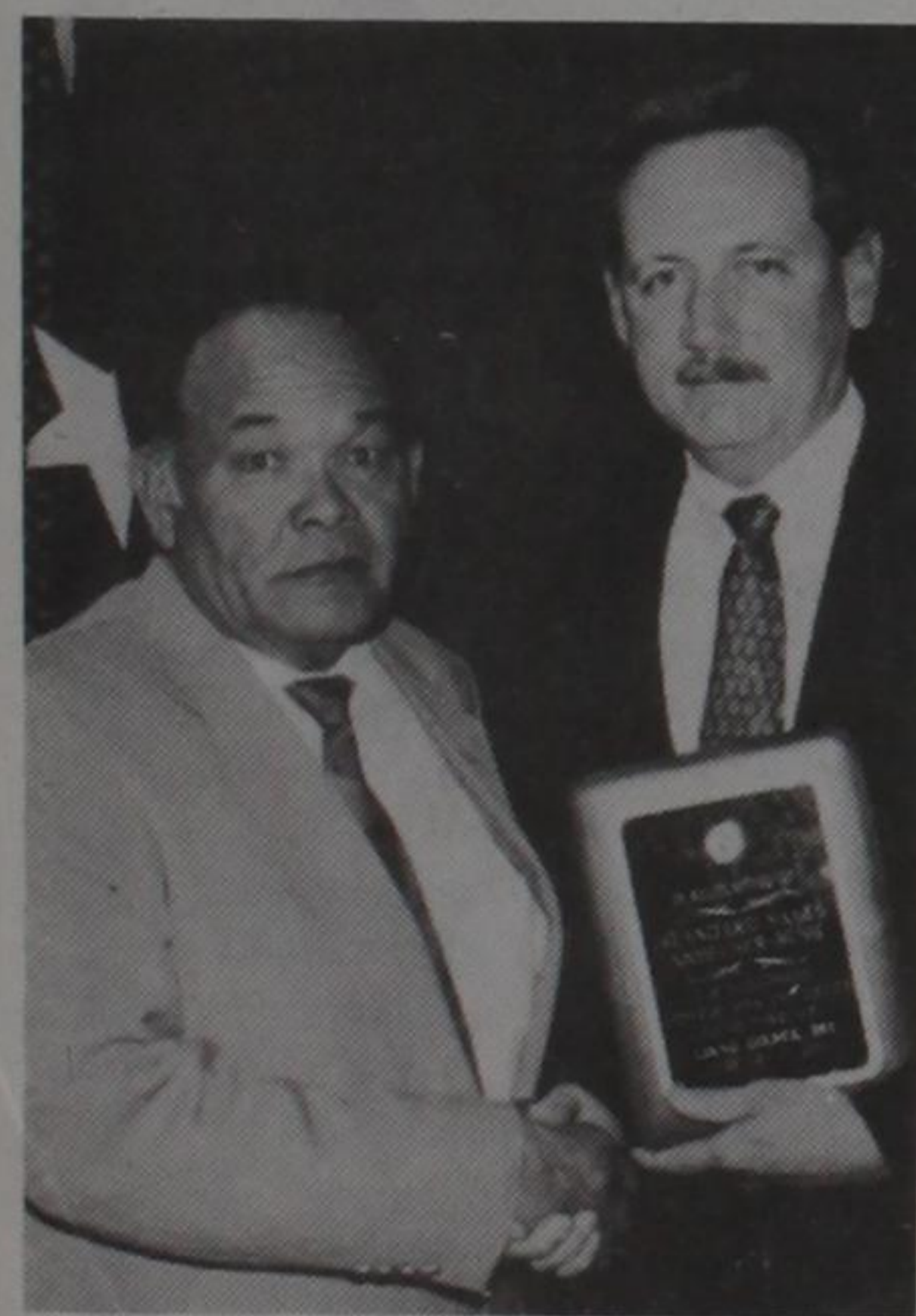
Dr. Robert Ordoñez was the keynote speaker for the event.

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A-Rod Arrives, Intent on Earning the Rangers' Money

Pitchers and catchers are sprinkled like Waffle Houses throughout Florida, but spring training officially got under way here Wednesday afternoon when the Texas Rangers conducted the annual Disgruntled Ex-Seattle Mariner Superstar Spring News Conference.

A year ago, the Cincinnati Reds had the honors with Ken Griffey Jr. Wednesday, it was the Rangers' turn to place a makeshift podium atop a Grapefruit League dugout, hook up a sound system and showcase their newly acquired franchise player to the public on his first day in camp.

Alex Rodriguez and Andres Galarraga are two of the biggest bats in a potent Rangers lineup.

Alex Rodriguez arrived in camp about 10:40 a.m., changed into his uniform and reached the field by about 11, took part in conditioning drills, scooped up some ground balls and, when it was all finished, stepped behind the microphone to talk about it.

"Boy, I tell you, it still hasn't hit me," said Rodriguez, who, of course, has \$252 million reasons to forget about Seattle. "When I was out there catching ground balls, I felt like I was dreaming. It's been a very short winter, and it was a great learning experience. Until the umpire says 'Play ball,' it's not going to sink in."

Rodriguez was as smooth off the field as he is on during what has become baseball's newest rite of spring. They begin the Indianapolis 500 by waving a checkered flag. They begin spring training by waving an ex-Mariner.

On an eventful day in the sleepy town of Port Charlotte, Rangers general manager Doug Melvin revealed that he has begun preliminary talks with the agent of Ivan Rodriguez on a contract that would keep the catcher in Texas for life (Pudge has two years and \$19 million left on his current deal), manager Johnny Oates said he still can't get over his good fortune and A-Rod stepped onto the field for the first time as a Ranger. It was anything but business

as usual. Charlotte County policemen were on traffic control in front of the stadium, and the Rangers estimated about 300 fans showed up to watch the morning workout -- about three times as many as normal, according to Texas official John Blake.

"Driving up today, I was nervous as heck," Rodriguez said. "I feel like I'm a rookie again. I want to learn. I want to get to know my new teammates."

Many of them know Rodriguez, and, of course, those who don't know of him.

"He's not a prima donna," starting pitcher Rick Helling said. "He isn't going to come in here saying, 'Yeah, I'm the greatest. Look at all the money I'm making.' He's not like that. He works his tail off. He constantly tries to get better."

Said third baseman Ken Caminiti, who also signed with the Rangers as a free agent this winter: "He's going to go through a lot this year. It's going to be hard for him. I don't feel sorry for him by any means. Everything he does is going to be magnified."

"But I'm happy for him. I wouldn't want to be in his shoes, but the kid holds himself better than most young kids I've seen."

That's evident to anyone who spends any amount of time with Rodriguez -- whether it's one minute, one month or one season. And it was a large part of agent Scott Boras' pitch on the free-agent market this winter. Not only does Rodriguez excel in all areas of the game -- 41 home runs, 132 RBI and a .316 average last season in addition to covering more ground than a John Deere -- but he is intelligent and articulate, and maybe best of all, he's just 25.

"I'm almost embarrassed and ashamed of this contract," Rodriguez said. "I've always been an underdog trying to show everybody that I'm (good enough). Now I've got this 252 tag over my head."

It wasn't the only time Rodriguez expressed embarrassment over his riches.

"The Mariners gave me my first million when I was 17 years old (when they made him their No. 1 draft choice)," Rodriguez said. "I thought I was the most overpaid kid in the world. I had the opportunity to buy my first (Jeep) Cherokee and buy my mom a new house."

"I don't know, Michael Jordan or Bill Gates or Alexander the Great, I don't think anybody is worth that kind of money. But that's the market we're in."

The Rangers have maintained all along that A-Rod eventually will pay for himself through increased revenue, and so far, so good. The Rangers have sold close to the equivalent of 3,000 new full-season tickets this winter, guaranteeing them a base of at least 19,000 or 20,000 -- and possibly more -- after last year's 17,000.

In the immediate days after the Rangers signed Rodriguez, Caminiti, first baseman Andres Galarraga and reliever Mark Petkovsek, they averaged a sale of 100 full-season tickets a day.

On the first day individual game tickets went on sale, Feb. 3, the Rangers sold nearly 150,000 -- 50,000 more than they sold on the first day individual tickets went on sale in 2000. And opening day sold out

in one day for the only time in club history, excluding 1994, when they opened the new ballpark.

The Rangers have taken their shots for delivering such a large package to Rodriguez, and if labor negotiations explode into a work stoppage this winter, A-Rod undoubtedly will become the poster child for everything that's wrong in the game.

But neither the Rangers nor Rodriguez appear affected by the zingers -- at least, not publicly.

"You're always concerned when you do contracts," Melvin said. "We knew it was going to be big. Everyone had speculated that it was going to be a \$200 million contract. It went a little further than that."

Yeah, a little. But then, what's another \$52 million among friends?

"If he's worth \$20 million a year for his physical skills, he's worth another \$5 million to the franchise," Melvin said.

Rodriguez shifted into historian gear when someone asked him about the possibility of his mug being placed on a baseball wanted poster if things get ugly this winter.

"They said the same thing about Babe Ruth at the start of the century," Rodriguez said. "Baseball has never been healthier than it is right now. Over 73 million people saw us play last year. Revenues went from under \$1 billion to \$3 billion."

"If owners were losing money,

salaries wouldn't escalate this much."

Rodriguez declined to offer many thoughts on the storm clouds gathering over the impending negotiations, making sure instead to stay specific to his own situation. He acknowledged the expectations and the microscope that are sure to follow him this season, casually discussing them the way most people go over their to-do lists.

"It's almost like all this anticipation and everyone's waiting for you to drop the ball," he said. "There's been three or four years of anticipation for 2001 ... it's almost like when I was 16 years old and everyone was saying that I was going to be a No. 1 (draft) pick."

To that end, Rodriguez said his workouts this winter were so extensive that he even broke down and fine-tuned his swing.

"I want to make more contact," said Rodriguez, who struck out a respectable 121 times in 554 at-bats in 2001. "I want to drive the ball a lot better, drive in more runs, steal more bases. I want to stay inside the ball better and make more consistent contact."

Rodriguez also has specific thoughts for his new team -- once he gets to know everybody, of course.

"I want this to be the most prepared and hardest-working team in baseball," he said. "If we do that, things will take care of themselves."

The most uncertainty, of

course, lies in the pitching staff. Rick Helling and Kenny Rogers are the top two starters, and after that, Darren Oliver, Ryan Glynn and Doug Davis will fill out the final three spots in an order to be determined. Meanwhile, Tim Lincecum will take a test run as the Rangers closer with John Wetteland on the shelf facing retirement, so there are questions at the end of games as well as at the beginning.

But there's no arguing the night-and-day difference in the Rangers' lineup this year as compared to last.

"I told one of my coaches this morning that in a five-day span we had Pudge and Rusty Greer (show up to start working out) the first day, Caminiti the next day, Galarraga the next day, A-Rod today, and I've still got one package left under the tree," Oates said.

That's first baseman Rafael Palmeiro, who is expected before the Rangers begin their first full-squad workouts on Friday.

As for I-Rod, the 1999 American League Most Valuable Player and the Rangers' nine-time Gold Glove catcher, his contract pretty much became outdated before the ink was even dry on A-Rod's pact.

"I've talked to Pudge and his representative," Melvin acknowledged. "Those deals don't get done overnight. We hope to keep him here for his whole career."

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