



Connecting *the* Americas:

U.S. LATINO VISIONS FOR INCREASED HEMISPHERIC COOPERATION

A project of the Hispanic Council on International Relations, Partners of the Americas,
National Council of La Raza, and the Hispanic Link Journalism Foundation





NEXOS: EXPANDING THE LATINO VOICE IN U.S. FOREIGN AID TO THE AMERICAS*

NEXOS is a collaborative public education campaign that aims to promote the informed participation of Latinos in the shaping of U.S. Foreign Assistance and U.S. Foreign Policy toward the Americas. U.S. foreign policy decisions are directly linked to Latino concerns about immigration, trade, economic prosperity, democracy, and human rights. This nexus between domestic and international concerns makes it important that Latinos expand their involvement in international issues.

HOST ORGANIZATIONS

Hispanic Council on International Relations (HCIR), founded in 1994, is the only nonprofit, non-partisan national organization solely dedicated to representing U.S. Hispanics' concerns on foreign policy issues. The current membership is a mix of U.S. Members of Congress, state and local elected and appointed officials, business leaders, community activists, and distinguished scholars. www.hcir.org

Partners of the Americas was founded in 1964 as the "people to people" component of President John F. Kennedy's Alliance for Progress. As the largest volunteer-based organization in the Western Hemisphere engaged in community development and training, Partners has grown to 60 partnerships linking 45 states and the District of Columbia with 31 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. www.partners.net

*This project is funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

CONNECTING THE AMERICAS

National Council of La Raza (NCLR) is the largest national Hispanic constituency-based organization, serving Hispanic groups throughout the country. Headquartered in Washington, D.C., NCLR annually reaches more than a million Hispanics through a formal network of “affiliates” — more than 250 organizations serving 40 states, Puerto Rico, and the District of Columbia — and a broader network of 25,000 groups and individuals nationwide. www.nclr.org

Hispanic Link Journalism Foundation grew from the success of the Hispanic Link News Service and in 1995 was established to provide Hispanics with opportunities to pursue journalism careers and educate the general population — nationally and internationally — on issues relevant to U.S. Hispanics. The news service was created in 1980. It syndicates articles of interest to Hispanics through the *Los Angeles Times* Syndicate and publishes *Hispanic Link Weekly Report*, a national newsweekly that reports on Hispanic issues.

For more information or to find out how to become involved in NEXOS, please contact:

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CONNECTING THE AMERICAS

INTRODUCTION

On November 17, 2000, the Hispanic Council on International Relations joined with Partners of the Americas, the Hispanic Link Journalism Foundation, and the National Council of La Raza to host a forum entitled: "Local Latino Communities and the Americas: Points of Intersection, Dialogue, and Cooperation."

This forum, hosted by the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations, was part of a series of such dialogues with local community leaders held in various cities, among them Los Angeles, Houston, and Boston. The purpose is to support the mission of HCIR to increase the awareness and involvement of Hispanic Americans in foreign affairs.

Following is a summary of the dialogue that took place at the Chicago forum. It illustrates both current involvement and interests as well as opportunities for expanded participation.

**LOCAL LATINO COMMUNITIES
AND THE AMERICAS:
POINTS OF INTERSECTION, DIALOGUE AND
COOPERATION**

9:30 – 11:30 a.m.

10th Floor

CHICAGO COUNCIL ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 2000

116 SOUTH MICHIGAN AVENUE

Frank Gómez

CHAIRMAN

HISPANIC COUNCIL ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Moderator

Juan Andrade, Ph.D.

PRESIDENT

U S. HISPANIC LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

International Components in Hispanic Leadership

The Honorable Roberto Maldonado

COMMISSIONER

COOK COUNTY, ILLINOIS

Local Government and Foreign Relations

Liza Gross

PRESIDENT AND PUBLISHER

¡ÉXITO! NEWSPAPER

Local Media Influence

Zeke Montes

PRESIDENT

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF HISPANIC PUBLICATIONS

Media as a Bridge to the Hemisphere

FRANK D. GÓMEZ, MODERATOR

SPEAKERS' COMMENTS

Mr. Gómez expressed the appreciation of the organizers for the support of and cooperation with HCIR provided by the MacArthur Foundation, the U.S. Agency for International Development, the Partners of the Americas, and the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations. He called participants' attention to the HCIR timeline in the forum packets, noting that the Council is the only Hispanic organization devoted exclusively to foreign affairs. The April 26, 2000 day-long seminar at the State Department and the evening gala honoring Secretary of State Madeleine Albright were cited as examples of recent activities. In the fall HCIR planned a forum on the Summit of the Americas with United States Permanent Representative to the Organization of American States Luis Lauredo, a founding member of HCIR. Also mentioned were similar forums planned for Miami and Dallas, a spring program on Cuba, telecommunications, and high technology.

Why should local communities be concerned with the Americas? Mr. Gómez indicated that the World Trade Organization conference in Seattle, NAFTA, the Free Trade Area of the Americas, the Mexican elections, natural disasters, and "intermestic" issues such as immigration, drugs, the environment, and others all impact local communities in countless ways. These realities notwithstanding, Latinos traditionally have not been well-represented in organizations (whether local or national) concerned with hemispheric affairs and have been grossly underrepresented in the federal foreign affairs agencies. Attention to Latin America is sporadic, and U.S. economic assistance has been whittled away.

The forum panel, with participants from different walks of life and different perspectives, was ideally suited to explore experiences and opportunities. Dr. Andrade addressed international aspects of Hispanic leadership, while Commissioner Maldonado took up the role of local government. Ms. Gross spoke to the local media, particularly Spanish language media, as key influencers in providing

timely information; and Mr. Montes focused on the media as a bridge to the hemisphere.

PRESENTATION BY
DR. JUAN ANDRADE

Until recently, there was a lack of a democratic tradition in Latin America. In fact, the military remains a powerful institution in many countries. But it is important to keep in mind the similarities and commonalities that we have with the region and to build on the growing prosperity. Our country, including Hispanics, can help nurture and strengthen democratic institutions.

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Our country used to be fixated on East-West relationships, particularly with Western and Eastern Europe. But our new front door will face south; it will no longer be a "back door."
.....

During the last ten years, when my activities have carried me throughout the hemisphere, we've gained what I call a "new front door." Our country used to be fixated on East-West relationships, particularly with Western and Eastern Europe. But our new front door will face south; it will no longer be a "back door." Europe may be an artificial front door, but the real "traffic" in ideas, capital, trade, and technology will increase in a southward direction — to and from our hemispheric neighbors.

Hispanics, in this process, need to be in decision-making positions. We can and must deal with the Americas with more respect and less arrogance. Latinos in key positions are helping to bring about change in our nation's traditional attitude toward Latin America and the Caribbean. It is not up to others to involve us in these processes — it's up to us to get involved. It is time for us to create opportunities to influence policy, to influence decision-making across the board. I believe that as our numbers grow our influence will grow.

And since we are talking numbers, it is important to note that Census 2000 will include Puerto Rico for the first time. This means

that the official number of Latinos will be some 35 or 36 million. By 2040 or 2050 we will have some 100 million Spanish speakers in the United States, and one in four Americans will be of Hispanic heritage.

In terms of economic interests, we will be more dependent on the region. The implications of the demographics and the economics are of enormous consequence. It is important that we have a useful dialogue on a sustained basis, such as this we're having this morning, but with regularity and with more participants in local communities around the country.

PRESENTATION BY

HONORABLE ROBERTO MALDONADO

I am delighted to participate in this panel and thank HCIR for inviting me to share some perspectives on local governance and the Americas. From my perspective, local officials tend to be parochial. When major events or trends occur, we often think we're not involved, that somehow it does not affect us. Nothing could be farther from the truth. I am fond of pointing out, for example, that if Cook County, Illinois (Chicago area) were a state, we would be the 17th largest. Cook County has 5.5 million people and has the 21st largest economy in the world.

It is clear, then, that by economic force alone, Cook County is a world player. Like other cities, Chicago has Sister Cities in other countries. I am a county official, so I like to point out that we have ties also with counties in Ireland and with similar jurisdictions in Italy. We are now creating a special relationship with Puerto Rico, the entire island, since our overall economies are more parallel.

In this regard, County Commission President John Stroger has begun to develop a relationship with Governor Roselló, but has moved cautiously in light of the recent elections. While Governor Roselló is pro-statehood, Governor-elect Calderón is pro-common-

*Data from Puerto Rico were not included in the Census Bureau's 2000 report.

wealth. These kinds of policies and policy shifts in the government must be weighed carefully as we construct stronger relationships.

As Latinos, we have many possibilities of being able to influence policies and decisions. The fact that we will be the nation's largest minority by 2005 — perhaps, according to new projections, by 2003 — should not be lost on anyone. The numbers will provide increased opportunity, but we must seize it and be involved constructively.

I recall that the state government participated recently in what was described as a “humanitarian” visit to Cuba. Unfortunately, the program did not involve local leaders from Chicago. The trip was the initiative of an Ecuadoran American who lost an election. But it doesn't matter. There was a tremendous uproar from the Cuban American community here and elsewhere. Had this invitation been discussed with us here in our community, the problems might have been avoided and the energies directed in perhaps more constructive ways. In the future, therefore, such initiatives must engage local leaders and organizations and they must be given some degree of ownership.

In closing, I would like to recommend that the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations take up Puerto Rico as a policy and trade issue. The future of Puerto Rico is closely tied to the local community in Cook County, given our large Puerto Rican population. Equally important, we should not overlook the largest economy in the Caribbean and the fifth largest trading partner of the United States.

PRESENTATION BY

LIZA GROSS

When I was interviewing for a position at *Hispanic Magazine* in 1989, I was asked what I knew about the Latino community. I responded that I did know about it, but I soon realized I didn't. I knew a lot about Latin Americans in Latin America, but not Latinos in the U.S.

I am pleased to comment about the role of the media as a bridge between the Americas and the Latino communities on the local level. As I am sure you know, *¡Exito!*'s Latin American coverage is far more extensive than that of its parent newspaper, the *Chicago Tribune*. The same applies to *La Opinión* in Los Angeles, *El Diario Las Américas* in Miami and other Spanish-language newspapers. The reasons are obvious: our readers, for the most part, have attachments to the rest of the hemisphere. Many are themselves

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Latino media in the United States are not on the minds of Latin American governments and media. In fact, when we travel to the region or receive visitors from it, they are shocked when they see the quality and reach of our papers.
.....

immigrants. All want to know what is occurring in at least one country in particular and in the region in general. Many remit monies to help their families in the lands of their birth.

It is clear that they will not find the kind of information about the region in the English-language media. So this presents an interesting dichotomy. On the one hand, we in the Spanish-language media have played a positive role. We are the experts because we have the information. On the other, there is a negative factor in that much of what we do is circumstantial, because our information network is not as extensive as it should be. We should not merely re-print wire service stories. We should be contacted and should maintain contact with newsmakers from the region. Latino media in the United States are not on the minds of Latin American governments and media. In fact, when we travel to the region or receive visitors from it, they are shocked when they see the quality and reach of our papers.

So there you have it. We have information that reaches the community and that keeps readers informed on issues of vital importance to them. We're proud of our role, but we must improve the quality of our reporting and our product. Our role is not to affect policy, necessarily, but to inform. We connect two worlds whose importance to one another is growing at an amazing pace.

Visitors from Latin America who want to relate to local communities often do not do a good job because of class issues. They miss opportunities to communicate because of the condescending way in which they look at what they perceive to be a predominantly immigrant, impoverished community. On the other hand, immigrants often look at government with mistrust, so they miss opportunities to reach out to foreign visitors who in many cases represent the government of a given country.

It is critically important that together we work to overcome these barriers and to counter the stereotypes. Our media are handicapped by the perceptions I just mentioned, and by the same token, misperceptions between local communities and regional figures get in the way of good communications and understanding.

I would like to see something akin to *The Economist* for the Hispanic community, that is, with advertisements, job listings, correspondent reports from other countries, profiles on economic and social issues. Such a publication, if widely disseminated, would help to bring people closer together.

PRESENTATION BY ZEKE MONTES

I am deeply honored by the invitation extended to me to address you this morning. Today I will focus on five key areas and show you how the Latinos have grown in the United States, and the importance of creating relationships in media across Latin America that will benefit our community.

1. TECHNOLOGY

We are experiencing an incredible time in the history of the world. The events and advancements of the past century are humbling. What is becoming increasingly clear is that the once unimaginable is possible. This new century holds enormous promise for all of us.

As a child I can recall watching Flash Gordon on Saturday mornings. I was fascinated with the James Bond gadgets, and became a Star Trek addict. I was also fascinated with a program my kids used

to watch, The Jetsons. I thought to myself, "What a fun fantasy, wouldn't it be great if people could see one another when they spoke on the phone, communicate instantly wherever they are, travel from planet to planet, send documents instantly?"

Well it is not a fantasy any longer. We are living it NOW! What's more amazing is that we've come to take for granted all the blessings technology has given us.

I don't believe that our ancestors ever imagined that the "zero" of the Maya would one day end being half of the digital language, which consists of "1's" and "0's" and drives the transfer of data around the world at light speed.

The unimaginable is possible. We have email!

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In the print industry we are all concerned on how we can make the transition for our readers: from paper to web page; from subscription home delivery to download-

ing information to e-book tablets able to hold millions of pages; from print ad sales to Internet banners. Now anyone in the world can read my publication because of new translation software that instantly transforms the articles into the preferred language.

Our world is getting smaller, and it is imperative to change with the times and look to how we can create strength while making sure our Hispanic community does not get left out.

2. LATINO GROWTH

I recall the reports forecasting the 1980s as the decade of the Hispanics. Then it was supposed to be the 1990s. The problem with the forecast was that the experts had not yet come to understand the magnitude of Hispanic growth, once viewed more like a passing fad. It's become increasingly clear that Latino growth and

participation in America's development began well before the American Revolution and will expand significantly into the next century. We are not talking about a fad — we are talking about a fundamental change in American culture.

We all know that the Hispanic community is young and fast - growing, but it is difficult to fathom the magnitude of that growth. Over the last decade the Hispanic population
grew seven times faster than the nation's population as a whole.

It's become increasingly clear that Latino growth and participation in America's development began well before the American Revolution and will expand significantly into the next century. We are not talking about a fad - we are talking about a fundamental change in American culture.
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A recent census projection indicates that Hispanics will be the largest minority population by 2005, and that by 2050, 96.5

million Americans will be of Hispanic descent. Our purchasing power went from \$211 billion in 1990 to \$348 billion in 1997, and is estimated to be growing by \$1 billion every three weeks.

Latinos are now an undeniable political force to be reckoned with, and that power will continue to grow with each election. The trial we are having with our presidential election is due to the power of the immigrants becoming citizens and exercising their new right to vote.

With this increased visibility comes increased responsibility. In a world in which we take note that salsa outsells catsup, and nachos have become more popular than hot dogs at baseball games, we have to remember that the changes that are occurring go much deeper.

3. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

There's an old Mexican proverb that says, "*El que no siembra, no levanta,*" or, he who does not sow does not harvest. We Latinos have been sowing our way through the United States with hard

work, contributing to our communities, and are beginning to harvest not only for our families here but helping our families in Latin America. Latinos contribute by: a) sending money to their homelands, b) consuming enormous amounts of products from the region, and c) traveling to the region and spending tourism dollars.

In Chicago and throughout the U.S., clubs and organizations exist for the sole purpose of helping towns in Latin America to improve the quality of life. They are organized by ties to a country or state in Mexico, for example, and are now coalescing and increasing their political and economic power.

I am heading a pilgrimage to Mexico City on December 9. In promoting the trip, I discovered that our group will become the bridge to help train future priests (who are badly needed in Chicago where there are only 16 Hispanic priests). Part of our mission is to promote Hispanic understanding among Anglo religious leaders, and for them to address our Hispanic communities both here and in Mexico.

I've joined fellow Hispanics to help raise money for disaster victims, and twice have led medical missions to Mexico. Like me there are many. But on a national level, I am part of two coalitions: the National Hispanic Leadership Agenda and Hispanic Association on Corporate Responsibility. We promote economic empowerment, inclusion, equality, partnerships, market reciprocity, collective advancement, unity, collaboration, mutual support, *confianza*, and respect. Together we have the capacity to affect decision-making and to strengthen communities.

Corporate America is an economic giant — the big Goliath. Hispanic organizations do not have the power or resources to influence this global force alone. It is only through the strong Hispanic Association on Corporate Responsibility (HACR) partnerships that a unified voice for Hispanic America can be heard. HACR increases the presence and impact of Hispanics with Corporate America through strategic alliances with the most influential Hispanic Organizations. HACR also has the potential to harness the buying power of the growing Hispanic community through promoting

unity among different Hispanic subgroups and sectors. Through these partnerships we can shape a larger Hispanic Economic Agenda.

For the Hispanic community, diversity is both an asset and a challenge. HACR's strength is its ability to fashion a national network for the community to share knowledge, ideas, economic models, labor practices, and support for common goals.

Why do I mention this?

4. NAHP PUBLICATION GROWTH

I mentioned the previous because the important bridge, the glue to bring communities together, is better communication among coalitions of all kinds. The National Association of Hispanic Publications (NAHP) represents 192 publications across the country, reaching 58 markets in 30 states with a circulation of over 10 million copies. Our publications are used weekly by 50% of U.S. Latino households. We reflect our community's interests and its growth. So as the population grows, our member publications increase. Our membership has increased dramatically in the last two years.

A national survey we do annually reveals that one of the biggest interests of readers is news from back home. They are interested in the politics, economy, music,

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Publishers are the best ambassadors for businesses to Latin America. There are countless examples of how many of our newspapers help businesses network with their counterparts in the Americas.
.....

social affairs — everything. Publishers are the best ambassadors for businesses to Latin America. There are countless examples of how many of our newspapers help businesses network with their counterparts in the Americas.

5. PUBLICATIONS IN MEXICO: A BRIDGE TO AMERICA

We have relationships in the USA with black publishers and members of the National Newspaper Association (mostly Anglo), but more important are our ties with Mexican publishers. There are concerns there about freedom of speech stemming from the threat of reduced advertising revenues resulting from support of one political party or another. By forming coalitions and addressing these and other issues we can have enormous influence on outcomes.

We're also asking how we can meet our responsibility as media in being part of the strategy for a successful America. How many people can we help by working together? How many more children can benefit from increased communication? How can we help the Hispanic community nationally and locally?

In Latin America we are mostly a Spanish-speaking community that remains committed to the family dream. We can use our ties to the Americas to strengthen communities through hard work, faith in a higher being, and looking beyond family to the community and getting involved to help each other reach our goals. We need to have *pasión, valor y ganas* to help everyone in Latin America achieve the American Dream.

DISCUSSION PERIOD

The lively period of questions and answers illustrated vividly the keen interest of participants in foreign affairs and in increased involvement in inter-American affairs. Among the topics discussed at some length were:

- ▶ The Puerto Rican Island of Vieques, particularly the manner in which United States Navy bombing practice is perceived in Latin America. The consensus appeared to be that it greatly harms America's standing in the region because of the lack of Puerto Rican representation in the Congress and the use of mainland power to impose its will.
- ▶ The class issue drew many observations. The role of Hispanic Chambers of Commerce was raised as a positive factor in international relations. Liza Gross mentioned that when regional dignitaries go to Chicago they pay "social visits" but don't really get into issues and promote a substantive dialogue. She reiterated that Hispanic Americans must work harder to shed stereotypes that raise barriers to effective communication.
- ▶ On business issues, Mr. Montes mentioned that Overseas Private Investment Corporation President George Muñoz, a Chicagoan, went to Mexico to explore how to help develop small businesses. He added that the Governor of Illinois visited Mexico to promote economic ties. Government, non-governmental organizations, media, and others, he said, can help unite to address issues.
- ▶ Much discussion followed about the ties of local ethnic-based groups with local communities in Mexico and other countries. Also, the fact that Mexicans in the United States can vote in Mexican elections was raised as an important factor in relations between the two countries. Hispanic Americans, Dr. Andrade noted, can help guide their Mexican friends on political issues.
- ▶ The political nature of development drew several observations. One view expressed was that development programs often disre-

gard local needs and the political impact of foreign assistance. It is useful to consider various models of development in the region and elsewhere. Fundamental change has not taken place in societal and political structures, for instance, in El Salvador and other countries, despite massive amounts of economic aid and encouragement.

- D Illinois Governor Ryan's visit to Mexico, mentioned in the panel presentation, drew the question about how to assure that such relationships are not used for self-serving purposes and how to avoid becoming pawns in influence games and policy formulation. Commissioner Maldonado mentioned the role that the Latino community, including many in the labor movement, played in the NAFTA debates several years ago. Several speakers mentioned organizations and universities that have or are promoting ties with Cuba.
- D A priest mentioned that the role of the Catholic Church must be borne in mind, inasmuch as it is a critically important institution and a "majority" religion in Latin America and a "minority" religion in the United States.

CONCLUSION

The panel and the ensuing discussion demonstrated the keen interest in the Americas among participants and revealed many points of “Intersection, Dialogue, and Cooperation.” Many participants, however, despite being from the same metropolitan area, were unaware — or insufficiently aware — of the activities of the various groups functioning in the arena of inter-American affairs. Consequently, there emerged a consensus at the end of discussion on the need for representatives of the organizations to come together from time to time to share information and perhaps coordinate activities that relate to common agendas.

It was suggested that the United States Hispanic Leadership Conference, held in Chicago in the fall, be used as an opportunity to bring together participants and others interested in the subject. Dr. Andrade agreed that his conference would be open to this proposal. The conference regularly includes a seminar on international relations, and related topics could be incorporated into the agenda.

The Chicago Council on Foreign Relations, with active Hispanic members, could also play a role in sustaining a local dialogue and increased Hispanic involvement.

The Chicago affiliate of the Partners of the Americas is linked to Sao Paulo, Brazil. Therefore, its focus is on a single city rather than on the region as a whole. Nonetheless, its members have broad interests in the Americas and considerable expertise. It, too, is a resource that should be considered when planning events to involve Hispanic Americans.

ABOUT THE SPEAKERS

FRANK GÓMEZ

CHAIRMAN OF THE HISPANIC COUNCIL ON
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

A former career Foreign Service Officer, Frank Gómez was Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs. While at State, he founded and was president of the Hispanic Employees Council and founder-president of the Coalition of Federal Hispanic Employee Organizations. In 1982 he was a founder of the National Association of Hispanic Journalists. He was a principal force behind the creation of the National Hispanic Leadership Agenda. He has served on many boards, including the National Hispanic Quincentennial Commission, where he led efforts to publish and was co-editor of a seminal work, *Hispanic Presence in the United States*. Mr. Gómez holds an MPA from George Washington University, completed a graduate fellowship at Princeton University's Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs, and completed Northwestern University's Kellogg Graduate School of Management's Advanced Executive Program.

DR. JUAN ANDRADE

PRESIDENT OF THE U.S. HISPANIC LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

Dr. Andrade has worked in Guatemala, Nicaragua, Panama, Colombia, Paraguay, Bolivia, Mexico, Guyana, Suriname, and Haiti with key leaders in promoting democracy; and has held Q&A sessions via satellite for journalists, academicians, and political leaders in Venezuela, Uruguay and Peru. He was a political commentator on WLS-TV, the ABC affiliate in Chicago, providing commentary on current political issues two to three days per week for six years, and was one of the few Hispanics in the nation doing commentary on English-language radio and television.

He still makes occasional appearances on both English and Spanish television as a political analyst. Dr. Andrade has earned a doctorate, an Honorary Doctorate of Humanities, two master's, and a bachelor's degree. He is currently a Graduate School Fellow in a Master of Arts degree program at Loyola University in Chicago, which will be his sixth college degree.

HONORABLE ROBERTO MALDONADO

COMMISSIONER OF COOK COUNTY

Roberto Maldonado, the first Puerto Rican elected to the County Board, is serving his second term as Commissioner of the 8th District. In December 1999, he was appointed Committeeman of the 26th Ward. A champion of senior health issues, Commissioner Maldonado is the Chairman of the Committee on Aging of the National Association of County Officials. His signature legislation is the Cook County Prescription Assistance Coverage for the Elderly program (also known as Cook County P.A.C.E), originally introduced before the County Board in 1998. He also established a Senior Registry, the first-ever database created to track the number of seniors in need of prescription assistance. He is Chairman of the Real Estate Committee of the Forest Preserve District of Cook County, and is the founder and Chief Executive Officer of Chicago-based National Mortgage & Loan Services, Inc., the only Hispanic-owned mortgage banking firm in the Midwest.

LIZA GROSS

PRESIDENT AND PUBLISHER OF ¡ÉXITO! NEWSPAPER

Ms. Gross, a native of Argentina, has 19 years of experience in the field of journalism and communications. She worked as a reporter and editor at the Latin American Desk of *The Associated Press* in New York City, was Managing Editor of *Hispanic Magazine*, and Executive Editor of *Times of the Americas*, a Washington, D.C.-based bimonthly covering Latin America and the Caribbean. Under her stewardship, *Éxito* has won several national awards for news writing and photography. She was

an instructor and editor for the Latin American Journalism Program, an educational initiative of Florida International University. In this capacity, Ms. Gross traveled extensively throughout Latin America, and edited the Spanish-language journalism textbook series of the program. Her articles have appeared in numerous publications in the U.S. and Latin America, including *The Washington Post*, *The Washington Post Sunday Magazine*, *AMERICAS* magazine, *The Washington Report on the Hemisphere*, *El País* (Colombia) and *Punto* (Mexico). She holds a B.A. in History with a minor in journalism from the City University of New York, and a master's degree in Public Affairs Reporting from Ohio State University.

EZEQUIEL "ZEKE" MONTES

PRESIDENT OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF HISPANIC PUBLICATIONS

Mr. Montes was born in Mexico City in 1948 and immigrated to Chicago with his parents at the age of one year old. He was educated in Chicago and is proud to have served in the Army during the Vietnam War from 1969 through 1971. For the past fifteen years he has worked hard to develop his family business, Tele Guía de Chicago, which provides television programming, entertainment and consumer information to the Hispanic community. He has been district chair for the Chippewa District of the Boy Scouts, has sat on the board of the Norwegian American Hospital for 13 years, headed two medical missions to Mexico, and has been involved with five local chambers in different positions at various times. Currently a member and having held office in the organization Mexicanos Unidos del D.F., he has helped with relief during several natural disasters in Mexico. He chairs various committees of the National Association of Hispanic Publications (NAHP) and has organized its annual convention for the past nine years. He is presently president of the NAHP, which has 196 publisher members representing publications with a total combined weekly circulation exceeding 10 million copies.

