

National Council of La Raza:



The First 25 Years

The National Council of La Raza:
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By

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Introduction

This brief history chronicles the roots and development of the National Council of La Raza (NCLR) from its beginnings as a regional Mexican American organization committed to providing institutional support to grassroots movements and organizations in the Southwest, to its current status as the largest — and by many measures the most influential — constituency-based national Hispanic organization and one of the most stable Hispanic institutions.

Drawing upon external analyses, internal documents, and the remembrances of many individuals who helped to shape NCLR, the history highlights the formation, growth and development, challenges and vicissitudes, activities and accomplishments of the Council over its first 25 years. It focuses on the Council in relation to major movements within and outside the Hispanic community, and on the “defining moments” and critical decisions which directed and redirected the organization. This first NCLR history prepared by the organization will be expanded in the future.

Themes

The history of the National Council of La Raza can be analyzed and understood in the context of several recurrent themes, which have directed and guided the Council's work from its beginnings. They include the following:

- ❖ **Gradual expansion of the organization's focus and inclusiveness**, like the ripples which result when a pebble is thrown into a pond, creating a series of concentric circles which widen to cover the entire surface of the pond. The Southwest Council of La Raza began life as a regional, male-dominated Mexican American organization, with seven affiliates in three states. It grew gradually to become a national Mexican American organization, then a national Hispanic organization, now representing about 160 organizations serving every Hispanic nationality group in 37 states, Puerto Rico, and the District of Columbia. Its gender representation increased from a single female member of the first Board of Directors to a requirement, stated in the bylaws, that the Board provide for equal representation of men and women — and three of NCLR's eight Board Chairs have been women.
- ❖ **The synergy and strength provided through the combination of a field-based constituency and a national public policy focus.** NCLR's affiliate network provides the foundation for its advocacy work, and its advocacy helps to strengthen and empower Hispanic community-based organizations as agents of positive social change. Without a constituency, NCLR's voice at the national level would lack legitimacy. Ongoing cooperation between field staff and affiliates and national level staff helps assure that national policies and programs proposed by NCLR accurately reflect community needs and priorities. While NCLR serves as a voice for all Hispanics, its primary constituency is Hispanic community-based organizations, and the organization maintains its commitment to advocating for their needs.
- ❖ **Institution building.** The Hispanic community lacks strong, stable institutions to provide services and advocacy. NCLR has



Gene Daniels, Black Star

Estéban Torres, Executive Director of NCLR affiliate TELACU, visits an East Los Angeles family

worked over the years not only to become such an institution, but also to encourage and assist the development of other strong Hispanic institutions at the national, regional, and local levels. Thus NCLR developed and “spun off” the Southwest Voter Registration Education Project and was a founder and long-time secretariat of the Forum of National Hispanic Organizations. Much of NCLR’s capacity-building technical assistance focuses on governance, management, and resource development, and all of it is intended to help its affiliates and other Hispanic organizations obtain the skills, resources, and systems needed to effectively address the special needs of their communities.

- ❖ **Leadership development.** Throughout its existence, the Council has been able to bring together several generations of Hispanic leaders, and to help develop new leaders from among its staff, Board, and affiliates. Some of these have gone on to state or national prominence. Congressmembers Estéban Torres (D-CA) and Ed Pastor (D-AZ) came out of NCLR’s network; Pastor served as NCLR’s Board Chair. California State Assemblywoman Marta Escutia was NCLR’s Legislative Director for three years. Many NCLR staff have gone on to significant jobs in the public, private, and nonprofit sectors; the Council has always viewed itself as a training ground for Hispanic community leaders.
- ❖ **Political non-partisanship.** The Council recognizes that independence from any political party or administration is essential to its primary mission of improving life opportunities for Hispanics. When a national administration serves Hispanics well, NCLR supports and commends its work; when it fails to equitably consider and represent Hispanics, NCLR takes it to task. The “gadfly” role is often unpopular with the party in power, but essential to NCLR’s ability to work pragmatically and professionally with policy makers in any party.

These themes are woven into the fabric of NCLR’s experiences throughout its 25-year history.

Before the Council: Hispanics and Civil Rights

Setting the Stage

The Spanish were the first immigrants to the United States, predating the English first as explorers and then as colonists. As explained in an NCLR report prepared for the centennial of the Statue of Liberty:

Spain financed Christopher Columbus' voyage of discovery in 1492, and October 12, 1492 is still commemorated throughout Latin America as *El Día de La Raza*. Early explorers in the New World included many Spaniards, among them Pánfilo Narváez, who explored what is now Florida in 1528; Hernán Cortés, who sent out maritime expeditions that led to the discovery of the California peninsula in 1536; Hernando de Alarcón, who sailed up the Gulf of California to the mouth of the Colorado River in 1540; Francisco Vázquez de Coronado, who explored Arizona, New Mexico, and beyond around the same time; Juan Cabrillo, who discovered San Diego Bay in 1542; and Chamuscado and Rodríguez, who explored the Rio Grande Valley and New Mexico in 1581.

The Spanish settled Latin America early in the sixteenth century, established what is now St. Augustine, Florida, in 1563, and began to colonize North America around the beginning of the seventeenth century. From these beginnings developed the Hispanic people of the Western Hemisphere....In 1598, New Mexico and Texas were settled and El Paso was founded under the leadership of Juan de Oñate. Santa Fe was established in 1609....Most of the early settlers were *mestizos*, persons of mixed Spanish and Native American descent, sometimes with African blood as well. — *Beyond Ellis Island: Hispanics — Immigrants and Americans*

Thus over the years there emerged a new people, unique to the New World. The Mexican philosopher José Vasconcelos called them *La Raza Cósmica*, "the cosmic race," to reflect the joining of races and cultures. Today's Hispanics — and Hispanic Americans — are the current generations of this people.

Spanish-speaking persons have been in what is now New Mexico since 1590, and had settled communities over much of what is now the American Southwest by the middle of the nineteenth century. The land was ruled by Spain until 1821. But by 1853, the United States had acquired, by purchases and by force — primarily the latter — nearly one million square miles of Mexican territory, or half of all Mexico. — Helen Rowan, *The Mexican American*, a paper prepared for the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1968

Mexicans became Mexican Americans by conquest, through the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo which ended the Mexican War in 1848. These Mexican Americans and their descendants have been called "charter member minorities" because they lived in the Southwest before its acquisition by the United States. Yet more than a century later, they had lost most of their land and many of the rights guaranteed them by the treaty. Non-Mexican Americans knew little about them.

Those who have written the textbooks of the Southwest have for one hundred years suppressed the history of La Raza. — Stan Steiner, *La Raza: The Mexican Americans*

The Chicano Movement

From the 1880s to the 1920s, Mexican Americans in the Southwest formed local organizations called *mutualistas*, mutual-aid societies, some of them primarily social groups, while others were quasi-unions and/or welfare organizations. One of the longest lasting was the Alianza Hispano Americana, established in 1894. Organizations associated with the Catholic Church also grew up to serve Mexican Americans in the Southwest and Midwest. The first of today's national membership organizations, the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), was established in Corpus Christi, Texas, in 1929.

Mexican Americans participated in early civil rights struggles, including the early school and housing desegregation cases, though generally without media coverage or national visibility. In 1954, the Supreme Court established in the Hernandez case:

...that the Equal Protection clause of the 14th Amendment extends to "any identifiable group in the country which may be the subject of prejudice" and that the Mexican Americans constitute such a group. — Helen Rowan, *The Mexican American*

Activist organizations had begun to emerge in larger numbers following World War II. The American G.I. Forum came into being in 1948, also in Corpus Christi, when an Anglo* funeral home refused to bury the body of a Mexican American soldier killed in World War II. Both it and the Community Service Organization (CSO) in Los Angeles carried out large-scale voter registration and get-out-the-vote efforts. In 1958, California Mexican Americans established the Mexican American Political Association (MAPA); in 1960, Texans formed the Political Association of Spanish-Speaking Organizations (PASSO). Both played an active role in the Viva Kennedy movement, which marked the first Presidential election in which Mexican Americans were seen as an important voting bloc.

In the early 1960s, César Chávez began to focus national attention on the plight of farmworkers. Associated with Saul Alinsky's Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF) and CSO in the 1950s, he left CSO in 1962 to form the United Farm Workers Organizing Committee. Dolores Huerta, who had worked with IAF, went with him. The Delano grape strike beginning in September 1965 caught the attention of civil rights activists nationwide.



César Chávez of the United Farm Workers, 1972

* A term used to refer to White non-Hispanics.

Mexican Americans in the U.S. Civil Rights Movement

Hispanics were a part of the broader civil rights movement. Mexican Americans participated in the March on Washington with the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King in 1963, and later — invited by Dr. King, before his death — were a part of the Poor People's Campaign in 1968.

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 began to create tremendous change in the country — but Mexican Americans were only a peripheral part of that change, and, as Herman Gallegos put it:

Unfortunately, the U.S. media never really captured the essence of Hispanic involvement in the civil rights struggle.

One problem was that the Mexican American civil rights movement was geographically concentrated. As Helen Rowan wrote in 1968, in her report for the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights:

The high drama and nationwide visibility of the civil rights movement have tended to obscure the more localized protests of Mexican American groups and the demands of their spokesmen that Mexican Americans achieve the full rights and responsibilities of citizenship and become enabled to participate fully in American economic, political, and social life.

In his role as Chairman of the Cabinet Committee on the Spanish Speaking, Vicente Ximenes, an Equal Employment Opportunity Commissioner, invited large foundations to a meeting to discuss the needs of Hispanics. Just one foundation came to the meeting.

There was no unified voice to raise Mexican American issues nationally, no constituency-based entity to give credibility to the voices of Chicano* leaders, and no funding to support a long-term advocacy effort:

There was no Mexican American organization equivalent of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) or the National Urban League; no Mexican American colleges; and virtually no financial or other help from outside the community itself. It has thus been extremely difficult for the leadership to develop and pursue strategies which would force public agencies and institutions to play greater and more intelligent attention to Mexican American needs and to make changes, where necessary, to meet them. — Helen Rowan, *The Mexican American*

As NCLR President Raúl Yzaguirre remembers it:

Mexican Americans were largely invisible. Repeated efforts to get a focus on our issues just didn't get any response. It became absolutely essential that a united, strong voice be established.

* Another term for Mexican Americans.

Beginnings: 1965-68

In the early 1960s, a group of young Mexican Americans in Washington, D.C., among them Raúl Yzaguirre, became convinced of the need for a Mexican American coordinating body to provide technical assistance and to bring together existing groups into a single united front. They called it NOMAS (National Organization for Mexican American Services). In late 1963 or early 1964, representatives of NOMAS (not including Yzaguirre, who decided he looked too young to be taken seriously) met with Paul Ylvisaker of the Ford Foundation, presenting him a funding proposal. He expressed interest, but “freely admitted” a lack of knowledge about the Mexican American community.

However, the meeting contributed to a Ford decision to finance a major study of Mexican Americans. Carried out by the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA), the study led to a number of topical papers and a major report, *The Mexican American People: The Nation's Second Largest Minority*, which was completed in 1968 and published in 1970. The Introduction states that:

This book is part of the current discovery of Mexican Americans in the United States. Even the grant that made our study possible was the first of its kind. No national foundation had ever before given funds for major research on this minority group.



Dr. Julian Samora, NCLR co-founder

Another action of the Ford Foundation had even more direct impact on Mexican Americans, and on the formation of the Council. About 1966, the Rosenberg Foundation hosted a small conference of scholars and community activists to review a new book by Notre Dame Sociology Professor Julian Samora, *La Raza: Forgotten Americans*. Among those attending was Paul Ylvisaker. The cohesiveness shown by the participants apparently helped him decide that the UCLA study should be complemented by a second, less academic and formal investigation. He hired three highly respected Mexican Americans to travel throughout the Southwest to consult with other activists and leaders about what the Ford Foundation might do to help Mexican Americans. They were Dr. Samora; Dr. Ernesto Galarza, a professor, author, and farmworker expert considered the dean of Chicano activism; and Herman Gallegos, an activist from San Francisco highly respected for his strong organizational skills. Asked whether the Foundation wanted any particular focus to their efforts, Gallegos recalls, Ylvisaker said no: “Go out and dream your dreams.”

In 1966-67, the three met with Mexican Americans of varying ages, philosophies, affiliations, and priorities in many locations. Recalls Gallegos:

We found many glaring deficiencies with regard to a lack of institutional support for the Mexican American community.

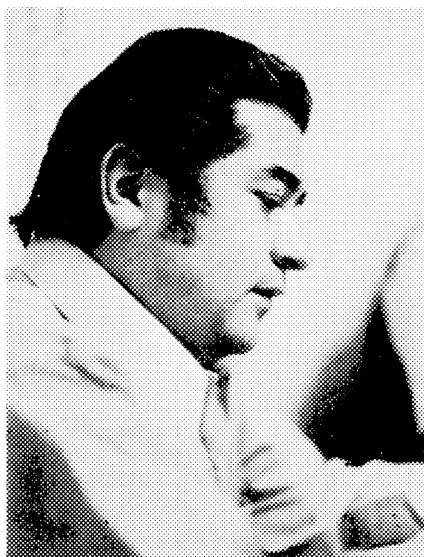
They found many issues of concern, with poverty in the forefront. They found not philosophical splits, but rather a lack of resources to enable Chicanos to pick up the telephone or get together. They found that not a single Chicano civil rights attorney had access to a civil rights advocacy library like that of the NAACP Legal Defense Fund. This finding led to Ford Foundation support for the establishment and operation of the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF), which was founded in 1968. They also saw a clear need for more local, grassroots programmatic and advocacy organizations, a source of ongoing technical assistance to help coordinate and strengthen the work of these local groups, and national advocacy on behalf of Mexican Americans.

The three consultants prepared two documents. The first, entitled *Mexican Americans in the Southwest*, reported on what they found, noting that:

The Mexican American does not yet have an organization capable of informing and mobilizing him even within the [geographical] area clusters, much less within the region.

A second report, completed in May 1967, called for action to address this gap. The authors deliberately did not recommend what Gallegos calls a "casework approach" focusing on social services. Nor did they believe that the solution was a "redemptionist leader," since "charisma is a one-person thing." They felt a need to trust in the whole community. They wanted not competition but cooperation with Anglos and Blacks. The report, Gallegos recalls, presented

...a sense of what could be accomplished by funding an organization that could reach into the *barrios* of the Southwest.



NCLR co-founder and first Executive
Director Herman Gallegos

Unfortunately, by the time the report was completed, Ylvisaker had left the Ford Foundation, and there was no one to respond to their recommendations. However, the Foundation asked Gallegos to stay on as a consultant. He was convinced of the need to show that Mexican American organizations could manage and leverage resources, and to answer a key question: Was it really possible to pull together a council of the diverse Mexican American community, with its differing styles, geographical points of reference, personal political interests, etc.? The UCLA study would say that Chicanos had not previously seen themselves as a part of a "national minority."

Enthusiasm for answering this question was high. Organizational meetings began in 1967. In October of that year, several days of "Cabinet committee" hearings were held in El Paso by the President's Inter-agency Committee on Mexican American Affairs, headed by Ximenes. However, many Mexican American leaders refused to testify, angry that plans for a White House Conference on Mexican Americans had

not gone forward, reportedly because the Administration was unwilling to invite "the full spectrum of independent *barrio* leaders."** Others agreed to testify as individuals about problems facing the community.

At the same time as the hearings, Chicano leaders gathered in El Segundo barrio in El Paso for a "La Raza Unida Conference"*** which became one of the defining organizational meetings for the Council. According to the Civil Rights Commission paper:

* In *La Raza: The Mexican Americans*, Steiner discusses the meeting in some detail in a chapter entitled "Gracias por Nada" ("Thanks for Nothing").

** The name was meant to connote a unified Mexican American community; the political party of the same name was formed later.

There was one common theme stressed at the conference: the urgent need for unity, greater communication, greater group awareness, the development of political strength, the development of clear definitions of purpose and methods of operation, and the need for coalitions with other minority groups to achieve common goals. A direct outgrowth of La Raza Unida Conference was the formation of the Southwest Council of La Raza.

The need was clear. As Alex Zermeño, later Associate Director of the Southwest Council, recalls:

There was that vision that we needed an organization with a broad base, representing community interests, that could influence national policy.

Initial financial support came from the Council of Churches, the United Auto Workers, and a Ford Foundation planning grant; OBECA/Arriba Juntos Center, a San Francisco organization, served as funding agent. The Southwest Council of La Raza (SWCLR) was incorporated in Arizona in February 1968, and by April 1 had received its 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status.

SWCLR established a 26-member Board of Directors, including both representatives of the five Southwestern states — Arizona, California, Colorado, New Mexico, and Texas — and “at large” members. The founding Chairperson was Maclovio Barraza, a tough and tenacious union organizer from Tucson, who was to chair the organization for nine years. He had helped to organize the Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers’ Union, which became a part of the United Steelworkers Union. The founding Board included community activists and academicians, both recognized leaders and young people. Among them was César Chávez, elected but ultimately unable to serve because of the demands of the UFW. Founder Herman Gallegos agreed to serve as the organization’s first Executive Director for a limited time; Dr. Galarza served as a consultant, and Dr. Samora joined the Board. Concerning the role of the three founders, Yzaguirre recalls:

They not only put together the organization, but also had the stature to bring in all the leadership in our community.

In June of 1968, the Southwest Council received a two-year grant from the Ford Foundation to initiate its activities, including a program to begin subgrants to local Chicano organizations. As described in a later document prepared for the Ford Foundation, the Council:

...grew out of a felt need to create local *barrio/colonia* organizations and to support these groups. It represents the only national vehicle they can relate to on a formal or semi-formal basis.

The organization was established. But, outside the community at least, its future was seen as far from secure. The UCLA report expressed concern:

Whether attempts to establish a Southwest super-organization will succeed is uncertain at this writing. The difficulties posed by multiple bases of leadership have diminished the political effectiveness of many other minorities, but they appear to be especially acute among Mexican Americans.



Bernardo Valdez of Denver, one of the Council's original Board members

The Civil Rights Commission paper was more upbeat, ending with the following prediction:

La Raza has become more than a slogan; it has become a way of life for a people who seek to fully realize their personal and group identity and obtain equality of rights and treatment as citizens of the United States.

FOUNDING BOARD MEMBERS SOUTHWEST COUNCIL OF LA RAZA*

Arizona

Maclovio Barraza
Representative, District 78,
United Steelworkers

Tranquilino Madrid
Professor, Roosevelt Junior High
School
Member, New Frontier Club (Political
Education for Mexican Americans)

California

César Chávez
National Director, United Farm
Workers Union (UFW), AFL-CIO
(Invited but unable to serve because of
other responsibilities)

Bert Corona
National President, Mexican American
Political Association (MAPA)

Al Juarez
President, United Mexican-American
Students (UMAS)

Audrey Rojas Kaslow
Supervising Deputy Juvenile Probation
Officer, Los Angeles County

Robert (Olly) Olivas
Businessman
City Council Member, Carpinteria

Mario R. Vázquez
State Chairman, American G.I. Forum
Board Member, Foundation for
Research and Community Development
Drafting Supervisor, Santa Clara Flood
Control and Water District

Colorado

Juan Rosales
Instructor, Central High School
Professor, Department of Education,
Southern Colorado State College
Member, Latin American Education
Foundation

Bernardo Valdez
Manager, Denver Department of Welfare

New Mexico

Alex Mercure
Director, Home Education Livelihood
Program (HELP)

Facundo B. Valdez
Assistant Director, Center for Commu-
nity Action Services, University of New
Mexico

Texas

The Rev. Miguel F. Barragán
Field Representative, Catholic Bishops'
Committee for the Spanish Speaking

The Honorable Albert Peña
County Commissioner, Bexar County

Manuel Ramírez
Representative of the grassroots poor,
Laredo

R.P. (Bob) Sánchez
Attorney
Chairman, McAllen Committee on
Migratory Labor
Chapter Chairman, American G.I. Forum

Carlos Truan
Insurance Representative, New York

Life Insurance Company
Candidate for State Representative

José Uriegas
Instructor, Special Education, Uvalde
High School

Members at Large

Rafael Arvizu
Student Body President
University of Arizona

Armando de Leon
Attorney
Legal Advisor to the State Director of
LULAC, the Phoenix Mexican Chamber
of Commerce, and VESTA (scholarship
program)

The Rev. Leo D. Nieto
United Methodist Minister
Director, Migrant Ministry, Texas Council
of Churches

Joe Salas
Wisconsin student
Active in the organization of migrant
farmworkers

Dr. Julian Samora
Professor of Sociology
University of Notre Dame

Henry Santiestevan
Director, Information Center, Industrial
Union Department (IUD), AFL-CIO
Editor, IUD Magazine

Tony Tinajero
Office of Civil Rights, U.S. Office of
Economic Opportunity

* Names and affiliations in 1968.

The Early Years: 1969-74

Building an Organization

In the summer of 1968, the Southwest Council of La Raza began to help establish and support *barrio* organizations; seven organizations in three states — Arizona, California, and Texas — became its first “affiliates,” Mexican American controlled nonprofit organizations with a formal relationship to the Council. SWCLR provided subgrants to these and other advocacy groups. SWCLR’s priorities were clear: help develop and strengthen local organizations, and support empowerment, voter registration, leadership development, and other forms of advocacy. As Gallegos recalls:

We had the power of research. We had the power of action. We had the power of convening. We had the power of writing. We had the power of media.

Yet it was a difficult time. Many organizations, despairing of progress, believed that violence was inevitable. The leaders of the new Council rejected this belief in a document prepared in 1968 by co-founder Herman Gallegos and then-Board member (later Executive Director) Henry Santiestevan. In “A Call to La Raza for a Personal Pledge to Non-Violence,” they quoted the commitment to non-violence stated by the United Farm Workers Organizing Committee, laid out seven points emphasizing the necessity for change without violence, then wrote:

Many of us have vowed to carry on determined and militant social action based on non-violence to end the subjugation, exploitation and abuse of human rights suffered by La Raza.

In offering ourselves to this commitment, we believe that social justice can be peacefully achieved not only for La Raza but for all victims of poverty, deprivations and alienation.

We must respond with a personal commitment to non-violence in the full spirit of its profound significance for all men of all races....

As NCLR would later write in a 1975 proposal to the Ford Foundation:

In a period of great unrest, the SWCLR developed local vehicles to channel energies into positive results.

Then the external environment changed drastically. President Lyndon Johnson declined to run for re-election. Hubert Humphrey lost the election to Richard Nixon. Presidential support for the War on Poverty was over.



*Arabella Martínez, Executive Director of NCLR
affiliate the Spanish-Speaking Unity Council,
Oakland, California*

The Move to "Hard Programs"

Perhaps the single action with the most immediate impact on SWCLR was the passage of the Tax Reform Act of 1969. Among its many provisions, the Act placed "expenditure responsibility" on foundations; while this was in part a reaction to self-dealing by foundation trustees who provided scholarships for their relatives and otherwise benefited personally from foundation funds, it also discouraged advocacy by making foundation staff directly responsible for any inappropriate activity by grantees. The Act also greatly limited voter registration efforts by tax-exempt organizations. Foundation money had been used by the Congress on Racial Equality (CORE) and other groups to mount a massive and extremely effective voter registration effort in Cleveland, which resulted in the election of the city's first Black mayor, Carl Stokes. In an effort to prevent such targeted voter registration in the future, the Act required voter registration projects to work in many states at the same time, forbade them to receive more than 20% of their funding from a single source, and required a special form of tax-exempt status.

Its own freedom of action significantly affected by the Tax Reform Act, the Ford Foundation informed the Southwest Council of La Raza that no more funding could be provided for community organizing and advocacy. To maintain its funding, the Council would have to move to "hard programs" with pre-determined — and pre-approved — measurable objectives.

Faced with the most difficult decision in its brief existence, the organization held a two-day meeting during December 1969 at Asilomar Conference Center in California. After painful debate, the Board voted to change its focus to the required "hard programs" — with an emphasis on housing, economic development, and education. A decision was made to "spin off" voter registration efforts, and Willie Velásquez of the Council staff began to seek separate tax-exempt status for the new organization.

In 1970, Henry Santiestevan, a union organizer and writer for the Industrial Unions Department of the AFL-CIO, replaced Gallegos as the Southwest Council's Executive Director. The Council opened a "national services" office in Washington, D.C., that same year. Over the next two years, the Council began to establish these "hard" programs, with an emphasis on community economic development. Working with a major hotel chain, staff tried to negotiate development of a major hotel in Phoenix. The effort did not come to fruition, but the Council did establish community development and housing efforts.

In 1971, in cooperation with two New Mexico organizations, SWCLR established the first Chicano MESBIC (Minority Enterprise Small Business Investment Corporation), La Raza Investment Corporation (LRIC). After a learning period,

ORIGINAL AFFILIATES: SOUTHWEST COUNCIL OF LA RAZA

The Mexican American Unity Council (MAUC)
Mr. Juan Patlan, Executive Director
San Antonio, Texas
(Established 1967)

Chicanos Por La Causa (CPLC)
Mr. Ronnie López, Executive Director
Phoenix, Arizona
(Established 1969)

The Mexican American Community Programs Foundation, Inc. (MACPF)
Mr. Tony Hernandez, Executive Director
Los Angeles, California
(Established 1968)

The East Los Angeles Community Union (TELACU)
Mr. Estéban Torres, Executive Director
Los Angeles, California
(Incorporated 1968)

The Spanish-Speaking Unity Council (SSUC)
Mrs. Arabella Martínez Springer, Executive Director
Oakland, California
(Established in 1964; obtained tax-exempt status in 1968)

The Mission Development Council (MDC)
Mr. Shone Martínez, Executive Director
San Francisco, California
(Established 1967; incorporated 1968)

OBECA/Arriba Juntos Center
Mr. Lee Soto, Executive Director
San Francisco, California
(Established 1965; obtained tax-exempt status 1967)



*Henry Santiestevan, the Council's
Executive Director, 1970-74*

LRIC was replaced in 1974 by Associated Southwest Investors (ASI), a successful MESBIC which NCLR co-owned for nearly 20 years.

During this period, SWCLR also helped a number of its early affiliates to become community development corporations (CDCs), capable of building housing and developing for-profit enterprises, yet also committed to providing social services in their communities. Siobhan Nicolau, the Council's Program Officer at the Ford Foundation, became an active partner in the development of CDCs. Three affiliates — Chicanos Por La Causa in Phoenix, the Mexican American Unity Council in San Antonio, and the Spanish-Speaking Unity Council in Oakland — “graduated” from subgrant status and began to receive direct Ford Foundation funding in 1972. Also in 1972, the Board voted to include representation from the Executive Directors Advisory Committee, which included the Executive Directors of the Council's affiliates; and Juan Patlan, Executive Director of the Mexican American Unity Council (MAUC) in San Antonio, joined the Board.

The Ford Foundation continued to fund the Council, and some federal funding was received. Another \$10 to \$12 million in solid program funds were “in the hopper” as of mid-1972.

Threats

The Council's hopes for program funding from the federal government ended abruptly in 1972. The Committee to Re-Elect the President demanded that the Council endorse President Nixon's agenda and identify itself more closely with the Administration. If this action was not forthcoming, there would be no program money. The choice was clear, recalls Alex Zermeno: “principles or funding.” To support a candidate for political office would violate the regulations governing tax-exempt organizations and compromise the Council's standing as a non-partisan organization, committed not to a political party but to seeking equity for Mexican Americans by working with both parties.



*Southwest Council of La Raza Legal Counsel Armando de
Leon (center) with Mario Obledo (right) at a 1972
conference on the Administration of Justice and the
Mexican American, Phoenix*

The organization made its choice: it would not endorse the President. Reaction was swift; there would be no program funding. In addition, the Council became a target for efforts to “neutralize” it and destroy its credibility; some of these efforts were made public by New Mexico Senator Joseph Montoya several years later, during the Watergate hearings. It took 43 months for the Southwest Voter Registration Education Project to obtain its tax-exempt status; at one point, calling the Internal Revenue Service to investigate the delay, SWCLR's Legal Counsel Armando de Leon was told that they were “under instructions not to act quickly.”

Despite the lack of federal funding or cooperation, the Council continued its work. In 1972, it began to publish two publications known as *Agenda*, a Council newsletter and what was to become a highly respected “journal of Hispanic issues.” At the end of 1972, the Council became

a national Mexican American organization when the Board voted to change its name to the National Council of La Raza (NCLR), to reflect its commitment to represent and serve all Mexican Americans in all parts of the country. In 1973, the Washington office became NCLR's headquarters; Phoenix became a field office.

The single accomplishment of my career in philanthropy of which I am most proud is the fact that I had the opportunity to support the development of the National Council of La Raza.

— Siobhan Nicolau, President, Hispanic Policy Development Project

During this period, significant Board changes began. The original SWCLR Board had included just one woman, Audrey Rojas Kaslow of California, later a U.S. parole commissioner. In 1970, the 26-member Board included only two women; the number increased to three in 1971. Graciela Olivárez, later head of the Community Services Administration under President Carter, led the fight for equal representation of women on the Board. She lost her seat in 1972, but her cause prevailed. The next year, the Council's bylaws were amended to require approximately equal representation of men and women. Dr. Marta Sotomayor, later NCLR's first female Board Chair, recalls that to free up slots for women, several male Board members — including founder Dr. Julian Samora — resigned.

The organization faced other difficulties and dissension during this period. In 1973 and early 1974, the Ford Foundation made requests which some of NCLR's leadership viewed as threatening its autonomy. There were disagreements among Board members and staff about the organization's focus and direction. The Ford Foundation indicated that its next funding would be a "terminal" — final — grant. Amid this controversy, Executive Director Henry Santiestevan stepped down, determined to keep "the frail craft that was the Council" from sinking and believing that it was time for a new generation of leaders.

The Board set about finding a new Director. Several candidates were identified. One of them was Raúl Yzaguirre, whose involvement with NOMAS had helped set in motion the Ford Foundation studies that led to the establishment of the Council. Having spent some years in Washington, D.C., both as an employee of the Office of Economic Opportunity and as a founder of the first successful Latino* consulting firm, Yzaguirre had just moved his family back to his home in South Texas.



NCLR Board member Graciela Olivárez, who led the campaign to require equal representation of men and women on the Council Board of Directors

* The terms *Latino* and *Hispanic* are used interchangeably in this history.

Yzaguirre had been very interested in the Council from its beginnings and had served as a consultant to Santiestevan. He intended to do some community organizing while investigating the possibilities of developing a political base and running for Congress. The family was in the process of building its “dream house,” and he wasn’t excited about the prospect of moving back to Washington. But he came to meet with the Board at the urging of several close friends who were members. Discovering that the Board was seriously split on the selection of a Director, he left the meeting — but soon learned that he had been chosen as NCLR’s new Director.

In the summer of 1974, Yzaguirre and his family packed up and returned to Washington, for what he expected would be a few years of rebuilding NCLR. He has led the organization ever since.



*Willie Velásquez, Executive Director,
Southwest Voter Registration
Education Project*

Building an Institution: 1974-80

Rebuilding

The new Director had much to do in his first year. Yzaguirre and Santiestevan went together to the Ford Foundation to report on changes in the organization and urge continued funding. A hoped-for Program-Related Investment (PRI) loan for a projected hotel project was not forthcoming, but the Foundation agreed to consider continued core funding.

Meanwhile, Yzaguirre reorganized the staff, and worked with the Board and staff to review NCLR's missions, programs, and priorities. In January 1975, the Board considered the question of constituency, deciding not to seek individual members but to strengthen the affiliate relationship, and to use *Agenda* as a means of widening the NCLR network. NCLR then went about convincing the Ford Foundation to continue funding the organization. In the refunding proposal submitted to the Foundation in 1975, NCLR summarized the community's needs as follows:

We define our basic problems as a lack of consciousness and a lack of power, with the emphasis on the latter....That powerlessness is inextricably tied to our lack of awareness that change is possible, that progress can be made, that we as a people have the capability to change those forces which oppress us.

It then follows that our fundamental goals are to change that reality so that our people can participate equally in a truly pluralistic society where our uniqueness as a people is respected and valued by all people including ourselves.

As to strategies, the proposal defined what was to become the continuing dual focus of NCLR: *programs* assisting a local constituency of community-based organizations and *research, policy analysis, and advocacy* — a focus on “programs and power.” As explained to the Ford Foundation:

We serve our constituency in two fundamental ways: (1) by providing the research/advocacy to impact on the public policy needed to effectuate change... and (2) by providing technical assistance, loans, and, in some cases, sub-grants and other direct services in order to enable affiliated groups to meet their objectives.



New NCLR Executive Director Raúl Yzaguirre and Associate Director Eduardo Terrones with staff, 1975

B.J. Smith

By a narrow margin, the NCLR Board had agreed to increase the organization's involvement in public policy. As a result, in 1975, NCLR's National Services component became the Office of Research and Policy Analysis, reflecting the organization's clear commitment to providing a national voice for Mexican Americans. It was about this time, as well, that the focus on Mexican Americans began gradually

to broaden to include other Hispanics. The bylaws and other documents began to refer to "Chicanos and other Hispanics."

In spite of the organization's difficulties, it could point to significant programmatic achievements. In 1974 NCLR had become the successor-in-interest to the National Spanish-Speaking Housing Development Corporation, thus becoming the national Hispanic organization concerned with housing. NCLR had also played the key role in the founding of the Forum of National Hispanic Organizations, the first major effort to bring together the wide array of groups representing Hispanics nationwide, and was serving as its secretariat and first Chair. NCLR was working cooperatively with other major Hispanic organizations such as IMAGE (which represented government employees), LULAC, the American G.I. Forum, SER Jobs for Progress, MALDEF, and the National Economic Development Administration (an organization developed to assist Spanish-speaking businesspersons). In its proposal to the Ford Foundation, NCLR stressed what was to become a defining strategy of the organization: its emphasis on collaboration and cooperation:

We can now state unequivocally that there is no major Chicano organization with whom the Council does not have an active working relationship.

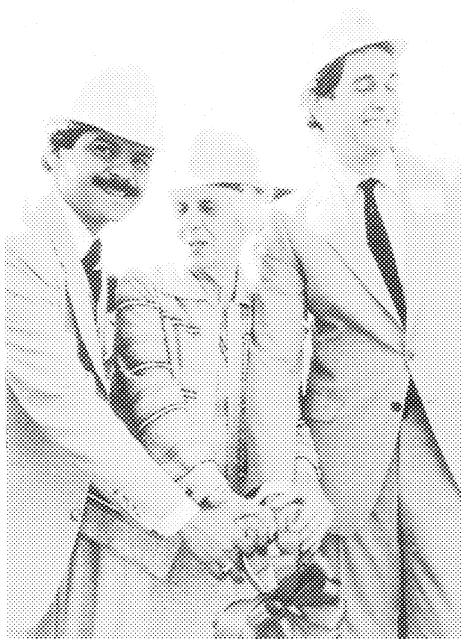
These accomplishments were also presented to the Ford Foundation in its 1975 proposal for refunding. NCLR succeeded in convincing the Foundation to continue providing core funding. The organization also committed itself to seeking federal funds to reduce dependence upon Ford funding, which had ranged from 92% to 98% of total Council funding in the past. In 1975, the Ford share fell to 61% of NCLR's total funding. Beginning in Fiscal Year (FY) 1976 it fell below half and then continued to drop, as Ford's grant size decreased and then stabilized while other funding, public and private, increased rapidly. By 1980, Ford would be providing only about 6% of NCLR funds — although, as unrestricted core monies, they continued to be extremely important to the organization.

Community Development Work

In the middle 1970s, especially after Gerald Ford became President, NCLR began to receive federal grants, first for housing and community development training and technical assistance, and then for employment and training capacity-building. Funding from the Community Services Administration (CSA, successor agency to the War on Poverty's Office of Economic Opportunity) and the Office of Minority Business Enterprise (OMBE, later the Minority Business Development Agency) enabled NCLR to bring together the Western Association of Spanish-Speaking CDCs in a conference held in Scottsdale, Arizona, in August 1975. Over 70 organizations were represented at this networking and capacity-building conference, among them nearly 40 CDCs and other groups interested in becoming involved in physical development.

Following the successful conference, larger housing and community economic development technical assistance grants came from CSA and OMBE, and from the Economic Development Administration. NCLR began to expand its field component, opening an Albuquerque office to carry out rural development efforts, then hiring a consultant and later (in 1978) opening an office in the Lower Rio Grande Valley of South Texas to assist *colonias*, unincorporated communities which often lacked basic infrastructure, and small towns.

R & G Community and Corporate Services - Nyle Leatham



A 1979 groundbreaking for a Chicanos Por La Causa project, Phoenix, with Executive Director Tommy Espinosa, "Miss Lillian" Carter, and CPLC Board Chair Noel Fidel

The Phoenix office expanded, providing housing and community development assistance in Arizona, New Mexico, and California. The late 1970s saw continuing growth in federal funding, including technical assistance grants from the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration of the Department of Justice, and the Department of Labor.

By the end of the decade, NCLR had helped bring more than \$100 million in funding to Hispanic organizations in the Southwest, 70% of it private funding for community development efforts by nonprofit organizations and small cities. The organization filled a critical capacity-building role. As one of the recipients of assistance wrote to the Economic Development Administration, an NCLR funder:

The lack of expertise and technicians to assist rural communities in the State of Arizona, plus the lack [of] necessary funds to hire consultants, has been a contributing factor that deprives many communities of the benefits derived from many Federal Programs. NCLR has certainly been able to fill the gap where help is needed the most. — Jess Vela, Town Manager, San Luis, Arizona

Institutional Growth and Restructuring

NCLR could also point to other accomplishments by 1976. For example, it had pushed successfully for the formation of an Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) Advisory Committee on Hispanic Affairs, of which the NCLR Executive Director was a member, and later the Chair. The Forum of National Hispanic Organizations continued to grow, and hosted a nonpartisan conference designed to influence the platforms of both political parties prior to the 1976 Presidential elections.

Significant organizational changes were also occurring. In 1977, founding Board Chair Maclovio Barraza stepped down, and was replaced by Juan Patlan, Executive Director of the Mexican American Unity Council. That same year, the Board voted to have half its members elected from among representatives nominated by its affiliates, who by now numbered nearly 100. NCLR also clarified its missions, identifying the four types of activities which would continue to focus its work and clearly stating its commitment to advocate on behalf of all Hispanics:

- ❖ Capacity-building assistance to its primary constituency, affiliated community-based organizations, to help them meet the unique needs of their communities;
- ❖ Applied research, policy analysis, and advocacy on behalf of all Hispanics;
- ❖ Public information activities designed to inform Hispanics and educate the broader American public about Hispanic issues, problems, and needs; and
- ❖ Institutionalization of Hispanic concerns, through catalytic special projects and coalition activities, including development of projects that can eventually be spun off as independent entities.

Around this time, having achieved considerable organizational stability, Yzaguirre prepared a paper which explained and operationalized his focus on institution building. In it he defined and described NCLR's "Criteria for Building an Institution," which were:



NCLR Board Chairperson Juan Patlan (center) at 1977 Board meeting with Raúl Yzaguirre (left) and Board member Ruben Valdez (right)

...to be used in the development of NCLR as an institution dedicated to improving the social and economic status of Hispanic Americans.

The criteria included a stable financial base, planning and forecasting, adequate performance, constituency building, the governance board, and visibility. While focusing on NCLR, the paper stressed that the Council was also committed to building other Hispanic institutions. Yzaguirre's thinking was based on the recognition that the Hispanic community lacked some of the institutions which continued to play a critical role in the Black civil rights movement, both as training grounds for leaders and as rallying points for advocacy: locally controlled churches and traditionally Black colleges and universities. As a result, Hispanics looked to community-based and -controlled nonprofit organizations as their advocates and their service providers. Thus the institution-building criteria for NCLR stated that:

We are only as strong as our constituency....The success and life of an umbrella organization must be directly related to the success and life of its local affiliates. Thus a major and continuing concern must be to assist, support, and encourage the birth, development, and growth of such organizations.

By 1978, NCLR had 15 federally funded projects, up from two in 1976. NCLR had also received its first corporate grant — from the Equitable Life Assurance Society of the United States — as well as funding from additional foundations, among them the Carnegie Corporation. Concerned that federal funds might easily dry up again depending upon the political climate in Washington, NCLR became convinced that private-sector resource development must become a major priority. Yzaguirre and the Board decided that NCLR's nonprofit structure — an Executive Director, Associate Director, and numerous component directors — should be replaced by a corporate structure. In early 1978, at a Board meeting held in Mexico City in concert with a border conference with the Mexican government, the NCLR Board adopted a corporate structure. Yzaguirre became President and Chief Executive Officer, and a voting member of the Board. Five major staff offices were defined, to be headed by vice presidents who would be nominated by the President and approved by the Board. They included an Office of Administration and four mission offices:



The Council's founding Chairperson, Maclovio Barraza, with newly elected Board Chairperson Dr. Marta Sotomayor and staff, Mexico City, 1978

- ❖ The Office of Technical Assistance and Constituency Support (TACS), responsible for coordinating capacity-building services to affiliates;

- ❖ The Office of Research, Advocacy, and Legislation (ORAL), which was to serve as NCLR's national policy analysis and advocacy voice;
- ❖ The Office of Special Projects, which would run catalytic projects; and
- ❖ The Office of Public Information, which would publish *Agenda* and be responsible for public education targeting both Hispanic and mainstream media.

At the same Board meeting, NCLR elected its first female Board Chair, Dr. Marta Sotomayor, then with the Alcohol, Drug Abuse, and Mental Health Administration (ADAMHA).

A continuing organizational concern was how to strengthen ties with the affiliate network. In 1978, NCLR tested a new approach: it held its first "affiliate conference" in Washington, D.C. The conference helped to improve communications among members of the NCLR network, while linking community groups with public and private funders and policy makers. It also helped to increase NCLR's visibility.

In February 1979, at an intense meeting in San Diego, the NCLR Board addressed the visibility question and completed NCLR's restructuring by voting unanimously to make the President the organization's primary spokesperson. This action was designed to assure a single, consistent advocacy voice for NCLR. This could not be provided by the Board Chair, since bylaws limited the number of years any one person could serve as Board Chair.

At the same meeting, after considerable debate, NCLR affirmed its role as an advocate for all Hispanics. Yzaguirre argued successfully that NCLR could speak for the entire community only by encouraging affiliation by groups serving any of the Latino subgroups, and that effective advocacy required a unified voice for Hispanics:

If you want to remain a Mexican American organization, you have to understand that we're always going to be a fractured community. We will not only have to compete with Blacks; we'll have to compete with Puerto Ricans and Cubans and Salvadorans. We're always going to be a Balkanized community. We need to emphasize our Hispanic roots and to treasure our differences — we're Mexican Americans, we're Hispanic, we're minority, we're American — and to begin to see all these concentric circles of relationships, not to be so isolated but to begin to define ourselves as a broader coalition.

Organizational Successes

During the Carter years, NCLR more fully established its role as an effective advocate and coalition member. By the late 1970s, more than a dozen Latino organizations had offices in Washington, D.C., and were advocating on behalf of the Hispanic population. NCLR worked closely with them on a wide range of issues, among them bilingual education, voting rights, and employment and training program reform. NCLR also carried out several research projects, including a study of police use of deadly force in Hispanic communities and an analysis of farmworker housing needs and status.

In 1979, Yzaguirre became the first Hispanic to win the Rockefeller Public Service Award, presented by the Trustees of Princeton University. In announcing his selection, the University issued the following summary statement which also described NCLR's importance:

A leader in founding and strengthening the National Council of La Raza as an effective nationwide coalition of Hispanic organizations encompassing Chicanos, Puerto Ricans, and other Hispanics, he has involved the broadest possible group of national and local leaders in both defining problems and developing solutions. He has played a key role in initiating dialogue between Hispanic and Black groups to identify issues affecting the lives of all minorities and poor people in the United States. Yzaguirre, brave and angry enough to have come up through the ranks in the movement's chaotic days and yet wise and statesmanlike enough to convert emotion into constructive action, has orchestrated the fragmented energies of many local groups into a unified and powerful movement embracing the concerns of the national community of Hispanic Americans.

During this period, NCLR perfected its role as a non-partisan Hispanic advocate. It was NCLR's responsibility, its leadership believed, to represent the interests of Hispanics. This meant supporting legislation and executive actions beneficial to Hispanics, regardless of which political party was sponsoring them, and opposing policies and programs which were deemed harmful to Hispanics, even if they were supported by public officials who considered themselves "friends."

Some political appointees in the Carter Administration — and in other administrations, before and since — recognized the value of this role. Alex Mercure, Assistant Secretary of Agriculture for Rural Development during most of the Carter years, made it clear that he felt the community would be best served if he pushed from the inside while NCLR pushed from the outside. Other appointees, Hispanic and non-Hispanic, were not always so understanding about criticism directed at the Administration. Periodically, NCLR would state its opposition to some action by the Carter Administration, such as immigration policy or the excesses of the Border Patrol. To retaliate, the next time the White House held a briefing for Hispanic leaders,

Yzaguirre's name would be notably absent from the invitees. Sometimes a complaint from Mercure — to the effect that he would feel uncomfortable participating in a briefing which excluded so influential an organization as NCLR — would result in a last-minute invitation to Yzaguirre to attend the briefing.

The NCLR Board and staff became increasingly convinced in the late 1970s of the importance of expanding NCLR's advocacy role — and beginning to fill the Hispanic data gap. While the Roybal Amendment, Public Law 94-311, directed federal agencies to collect, tabulate, and report data using an Hispanic identifier, the law had no enforcement mechanism, and information about Hispanics — their socioeconomic status, level of services received from publicly funded agencies and organizations, criminal behavior and criminal victimization, health status, etc. — was inconsistently collected and rarely reported. As a result, NCLR often found itself arguing an advocacy



Alex Mercure, original Council Board member; later Assistant Secretary of Agriculture for Rural Development

position without “hard facts” to support it. Convinced that fact-based policy analyses presenting an Hispanic perspective would provide a major boost to NCLR’s advocacy efforts, the organization began to seek funding to establish a Policy Center. After several small grants, NCLR obtained a multi-year commitment from the Rockefeller Foundation in the fall of 1980, and the NCLR Policy Analysis Center was born, under the direction of ORAL Vice President Emily Gantz McKay.

By FY 1980, NCLR was in a major growth curve. Its budget had increased to more than \$4 million, including major grants for research and technical assistance from the Department of Labor. It had nearly 90 staff, and operated 24 different projects, 21 of them publicly funded; 78% of NCLR’s budget came from the public sector. Private funding had also increased, and with this diversification the Ford Foundation was providing less than 6% of the total budget. The NCLR Board had elected a new Chairperson, Gilbert R. Vázquez of Los Angeles, a certified public accountant who was a member of the Los Angeles Olympics Organizing Committee.

In 1980, NCLR had 125 affiliates, served through Washington, D.C. and six field offices — in Albuquerque, Chicago, Dallas, South Texas, Phoenix, and San Francisco. Concerned that NCLR had become “reactive rather than proactive,” the Board adopted a policy statement strengthening and refining its affiliate structure and asserting its commitment to helping create and support emerging groups to assure a strong programmatic and advocacy voice for Hispanics — a critical role during its early years. Because such organizations would need funding, negotiations were under way with the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation for a seed grant program to assist developing community-based organizations.

Nonetheless, the organization’s leadership was concerned about the future; since 1978 NCLR had emphasized the need to strengthen quality control and increase private-sector funding, on the assumption that a weak economy or changes in the political climate could cause federal funds to dry up. NCLR also began to provide intensive two- and three-day resource development seminars to its affiliates and other Hispanic community-based organizations nationwide. Increasingly, they emphasized the importance of a diversified funding base and a need for foundation and corporate fund raising. Most NCLR affiliates were largely dependent upon federal grants, obtained directly or as pass-through funds administered by state or local government. A very few had United Way money, and even fewer had significant foundation or corporate funds. More and more organizations were seeking affiliation, however. Hispanic CDCs in the Southwest were developing housing and industrial parks, often with NCLR assistance, and there were other signs of Hispanic growth and empowerment at the community level.

Then in November 1980, Ronald Reagan defeated President Jimmy Carter, and the relationship between government and nonprofit organizations changed radically.

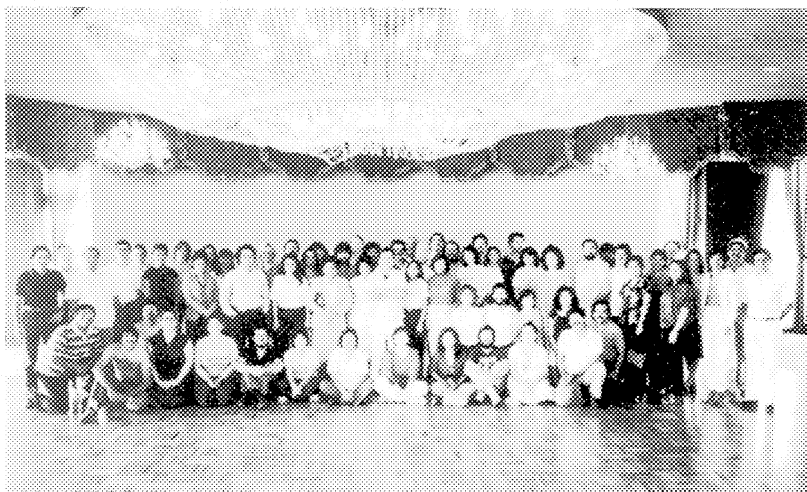


*Gilbert R. Vázquez, NCLR Board Chair,
1980-84*

Challenges and New Directions: 1981-90

Challenges

In 1981, NCLR's funding reached a new high of about \$5 million. In May 1981, the Congress approved massive budget cuts and the block granting of nine groups of major categorical programs, including anti-poverty funds. As FY 1982 began, NCLR had 99 staff; by May



The NCLR staff, 1981

1982, that number had been reduced to 85, as federal grants ended, sometimes with less than 30 days' notice. The cuts were not generally directed specifically at NCLR; whole programs were eliminated, including almost all direct funding for community-based nonprofit organizations and the technical assistance funds to strengthen them. Less than a year later, in FY 1983, NCLR was down to 32 staff and a budget of \$1.7 million, virtually all of it from foundations and corporations. Most hard-hit were NCLR's large-scale technical assistance efforts, since most were federally funded. The number of affiliates fell to 74, and about a dozen of these had no staff; some 50 groups had closed their doors. However, NCLR expected to survive because it had anticipated the possibility of the federal cuts. As explained in a staff report prepared for a Board retreat held in October 1983:

Fortunately, NCLR began five years ago to diversify its funding sources, focusing on increasing corporate and foundation resources. Although at present these private-sector sources cannot make up for the massive federal cuts, increased private funds have been generated. NCLR has been able to continue critical operations....

NCLR's financial difficulties were made more difficult by the establishment in 1981 of a for-profit subsidiary, La Raza Production Center (LRPC). Founded to provide high-quality Hispanic-focused English and bilingual television programming for both public and network television, LRPC was a programmatic success but a financial failure. Established just before NCLR began to lose its federal funding, LRPC became a major drain on the organization, leaving NCLR with a large deficit when it finally ceased operations in 1986.

The organization faced significant financial challenges until about 1987. Yzaguirre remembers this as "the most difficult period of my life." Tony Salazar, who joined the Board during this period and later became Chair, remembers the concern felt by many Board members, and their commitment to assuring that the organization continue its work.

Rebuilding and New Directions

NCLR took immediate action to help assure its survival. Costs were cut, and positions consolidated. McKay added the position of Executive Vice President to her role as Vice President for Research, Advocacy, and Legislation. Arnoldo Resendez, Vice President for Technical Assistance and Constituency Support, took over responsibility for Special Projects as well as conference oversight. Public Information staffing was eliminated, and *Agenda* ceased publication. Field offices in Albuquerque, Chicago, and later Dallas closed; the South Texas office closed briefly but would re-open in 1983 with private funding. The San Francisco office would move to Los Angeles about the same time; without federal funding, there was no advantage in maintaining offices in federal regional office cities.

In 1982, after more than a year of planning, NCLR established a Corporate Advisory Council (which later became the Corporate Board of Advisors, or CBA), designed to:

...counsel and assist the NCLR in planning, design, and implementation of institutional development strategies.

The Corporate Board's six charter members included Coca-Cola U.S.A., The Equitable, Gulf Oil, G.D. Searle, General Motors, and Time, Incorporated. Donald Rumsfeld, CEO of G.D. Searle, played a particularly important role in recruiting the initial members, and James (Jimmy) Lee, then Chairman and CEO of Gulf Oil, became the first Chairperson. Each corporation named both a member and a liaison staff member. The member companies became not only funders but valued advisors, assisting NCLR in many ways, including in its advocacy work. Members also found their involvement with NCLR important, as Jimmy Lee explained:

From a personal standpoint, I am much more knowledgeable on Hispanic issues than I was before I was associated with the Council. That has spilled over into the corporation. There are some mutual issues that we share which have been enhanced from our working together.

Recognizing the importance of rebuilding the affiliate network, in late 1983 the Board and staff initiated a survey of affiliate needs. The results were used to reaffirm NCLR's commitment to providing capacity-building assistance to the affiliates, adopt new guidelines with clearer application procedures and responsibilities for both NCLR and the community-based organizations, and establish three categories of affiliates:

- ❖ **Charter affiliates**, which NCLR would help to establish and which would bear the Council name;



Hispanic publications, 1981, including NCLR's Agenda: A Journal of Hispanic Issues

FOUNDING MEMBERS, NCLR CORPORATE BOARD OF ADVISORS

Mr. James E. Lee
Chairman
Gulf Oil Corporation
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
(Now a part of CBA member Chevron, U.S.A.)

Mr. Donald Rumsfeld
President and Chief Executive Officer
G.D. Searle & Company
Skokie, Illinois
(Current CBA member is The NutraSweet Company)

Mr. Randall Proctor
Senior Vice President
Equitable Life Assurance Society of the United States
New York, New York
(now The Equitable)

Mr. Ralph Davidson
Chairman of the Board
Time, Incorporated
New York, New York
(Now Time Warner Incorporated)

Mr. John McNulty
Vice President for Public Relations
General Motors Corporation
Detroit, Michigan

Mr. Brian G. Dyson
President and Chief Executive Officer
Coca-Cola U.S.A.
Atlanta, Georgia

- ❖ **Regular affiliates**, Hispanic-controlled community-based organizations; and
- ❖ **Associate affiliates**, Hispanic components within larger organizations that were not Hispanic-controlled (like the Hispanic Caucus of New Detroit, an urban coalition), or entities which served a broader population but had a special concern with Hispanics.

There were other positive program results during this period. Responding to the expressed need for an Hispanic voter registration effort in the Midwest, NCLR had obtained foundation funding to set the foundation for a Midwest Hispanic Voter Registration and Education Project. The planning phase was completed in 1982; although NCLR did not continue to play a lead role, the project became operational soon after. During the late 1970s NCLR had begun Project SOMOS, an initiative funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) which explored the roots of Chicano activism through relevant literature. The project identified a number of books and stories for possible production. In 1982, one of these, *The Ballad of Gregorio Cortez*, aired on PBS' *The American Playhouse* and was subsequently released as a movie. Star Edward James Olmos told NCLR:

I'll forever be grateful to all of you for your commitment to our culture and to the art of film making.

During this period of financial challenges, NCLR's Policy Analysis Center began to grow and gain credibility. Charles Kamasaki, formerly in NCLR's South Texas office, joined the Center staff, and Marta Escutia, a young lawyer from Los Angeles, later became Legislative Director. The Board provided regular direction regarding issue priorities and closely followed NCLR's advocacy activities through the ORAL Committee. Education was consistently the top-priority national advocacy issue. NCLR's advocacy now had a factual base provided through the analyses in "backgrounders" — major analyses of key issue areas such as education, voting rights, and civil rights enforcement — and in shorter issue briefs, issue updates, and testimony. As reported to the Board in 1983:

After nearly three years, the policy analysis component has demonstrated its capability and credibility through the preparation and dissemination of several dozen major policy analyses, in subjects ranging from Black and Hispanic perspectives on immigration to an analysis of proposals for a subminimum wage for youth....The Council is routinely contacted by Congressional staff members and by policy makers at the national, state, and local levels for information about such issues, and information is provided regularly to the NCLR network of Board members, affiliates, Hispanic community leaders, and public officials.



Jimmy Lee, Gulf Oil Chairman and CEO, and first Chair of the NCLR Corporate Board of Advisors, with Raúl Yzaguirre, 1983

NCLR's public policy role became

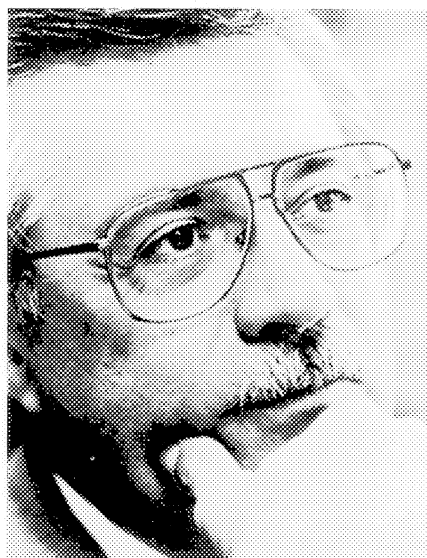
increasingly important, as other Hispanic advocates left the scene. As the 1983 report to the Board explained:

When the Policy Analysis Project began three years ago, NCLR was one of perhaps a dozen Hispanic organizations with Washington, D.C., offices. Although none of the other organizations attempted to provide systematic policy analyses in more than a few issue areas, the combined resources of all the Hispanic groups were considerable. Today, after a major recession and dramatic reductions in federal funding to minority organizations, many of these groups no longer have Washington offices, some have disappeared entirely, and few have significant resources for policy analysis. There is no other organization with a full-time staff member working solely on elementary and secondary education issues; no Hispanic group exists to take the lead on housing issues.

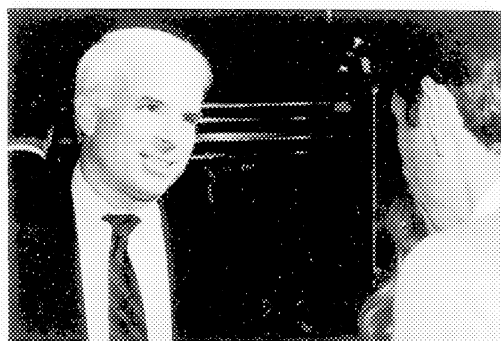
NCLR was helping to shape education policy such as bilingual education and education programs for the disadvantaged, working in cooperation with other organizations, especially the National Association for Bilingual Education (NABE), which became an NCLR affiliate. After NCLR and NABE played a key role in drafting the Bilingual Education Act for reauthorization, commendations came from Senators Edward Kennedy (D-MA) and John McCain (R-AZ), and from Congressman Estéban Torres (D-CA). Hartford School Superintendent Hernán LaFontaine summarized the importance of NCLR's education policy analysis and advocacy:

The National Council of La Raza continues to exercise aggressive leadership in analyzing carefully the critical issues in education which affect the Hispanic community throughout the nation.

Whether the focus is bilingual education or the quality of instruction in schools that are predominantly Hispanic, the Council provides valuable data in carefully designed approaches to address the variety of problems we face as a community.



Ed Pastor, NCLR Board Chair 1984-87, now a Congressman from Arizona



Award winner Senator John McCain of Arizona at the NCLR Congressional Awards Dinner, 1988

NCLR's policy work sometimes led to field-based programs. For example, NCLR's research and analysis concerning the points in the educational pipeline at which Hispanics are most vulnerable led to the establishment of a national initiative, Project EXCEL (Excellence in Community Educational Leadership). EXCEL provided six community-based models to address these points of vulnerability; NCLR affiliates began to demonstrate these models with the monitoring and technical assistance of EXCEL staff.

NCLR's Board structure continued to evolve. The bylaws were amended in 1984 to require numerical Board representation of the major Hispanic subgroups and regional representation of the Hispanic community based on 1980 Census figures. In 1984, Maricopa

County Supervisor Ed Pastor became Board Chairperson. A future Congressman, he provided strong support for the Policy Analysis Center.

In 1985, in an evaluation commissioned by the Rockefeller Foundation, the Policy Analysis Center's major funder, the Brookings Institution, concluded that:

In sum, La Raza's policy analysis effort fills a critically important need, the organization has excellent leadership, the staff has gained a reputation for accuracy and informed judgment among potential allies in Washington, and the group is at least as effective as — and perhaps more effective than — any other Hispanic organization in Washington.

NCLR played a major role in helping to shape immigration policy, including the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) of 1986, which NCLR opposed because of its employer sanctions provisions, but which also established a legalization program. NCLR played a critical role in the development of the regulations and in the implementation of legalization, working closely with other individuals and organizations. Congressman Charles Schumer (D-NY) recalled NCLR's role:

The National Council of La Raza played a pivotal role in shaping the immigration bill. They were smart, savvy, and tough.

NCLR's Policy Analysis effort became so popular that at one point, several funders and Board members suggested that NCLR consider dropping its capacity-building mission and focus all its efforts on public policy. Yzaguirre strongly opposed this move, arguing successfully that NCLR's national policy analysis and advocacy complement its field-based capacity building:

The two work together. Unless we have a constituency, we can't really be effective in public policy. But unless we have a public policy orientation that frames the issues, that feeds back the information to our community, where people can feel some sense of power, some sense of an ability to make a difference, we don't have anything. They are mutually supportive.

NCLR worked to rebuild the affiliate network, and its own field offices. In 1981, NCLR had begun to assist in the establishment of "charter affiliates" which would share NCLR's name; the first, the Gulf Coast Council of La Raza, was incorporated in Corpus Christi in 1981, and — in spite of the recession and federal cutbacks — had used an NCLR Mott seed grant to begin operations. Assistance to affiliates was expanded as NCLR obtained private, largely corporate funding for its core capacity-building efforts; by mid-1985 it had helped generate more than \$17 million in funding for Hispanic community-based organizations. NCLR's most population training seminar taught groups how to write effective private-sector proposals and solicit funds from foundations and corporations.



Then-Senator Al Gore at NCLR's 1987 Annual Conference, with NCLR Board member Dr. Maria Luisa Garza and Board Chair Rita DiMartino

By the mid-1980s, the NCLR Annual Conference had become a major means of linking affiliates with potential funders, encouraging information sharing, and helping them obtain new information and skills, as well as increasing the visibility of both NCLR and the Hispanic community. The conference continued to grow throughout the 1980s, with growing corporate sponsorship.

During the 1980s, NCLR also became heavily involved in efforts to increase Hispanic hiring, contracting, and other involvement with major corporations. Yzaguirre worked with the Community Relations Service of the Department of Justice to address the Coors boycott as a community dispute. Bringing together the leaders of other major Hispanic organizations, NCLR played a key role in obtaining a comprehensive agreement with the Coors Brewing Company, providing large-scale financial benefits for the community in terms of hiring, contracting, professional services, contributions, advertising, and other areas. This experience led NCLR to take the lead in the establishment of the Hispanic Association on Corporate Responsibility (HACR), which Yzaguirre chaired during its early years. HACR has become the major instrument for negotiating Hispanic agreements with and access to the varied resources of major corporations.

Private funding, especially from corporations, continued to increase, the CBA grew in size and involvement, and NCLR's staff and programs continued to grow. NCLR's funding from the Ford Foundation also increased in amount and diversity, as the organization received project as well as core funding. Several other large foundations began supporting NCLR's policy analysis and education program efforts.

On Capitol Hill and in the community, NCLR was increasingly recognized as a pan-Hispanic organization. Its advocacy efforts covered all Hispanic subgroups, sometimes focusing on the needs of a particular subgroup and other times addressing the common concerns of Hispanics. For example, as part of its immigration advocacy, NCLR worked long and hard for passage of the Moakley-DeConcini bill, which eventually gave temporary legal status to Salvadoran and Nicaraguan refugees. Its employment policy analysis and advocacy focused on the underserving of all Hispanics — and especially of young drop-outs — in federally funded employment and training efforts, especially the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA). Board leadership reflected this pan-Hispanic focus; in 1987, the Board elected its first Puerto Rican Chairperson, Rita DiMartino of AT&T, who also served as U.S. Ambassador to UNICEF during much of the 1980s. Ms. DiMartino provided invaluable contacts with the Reagan and Bush Administrations and with the private sector. Yzaguirre summarizes NCLR's growth this way:

We went from being a Mexican American, male-dominated, South-western organization to being representative of all subgroups, both genders, and all regions. We expanded the circle of inclusion, bit by bit. It's a process of expanding your consciousness.



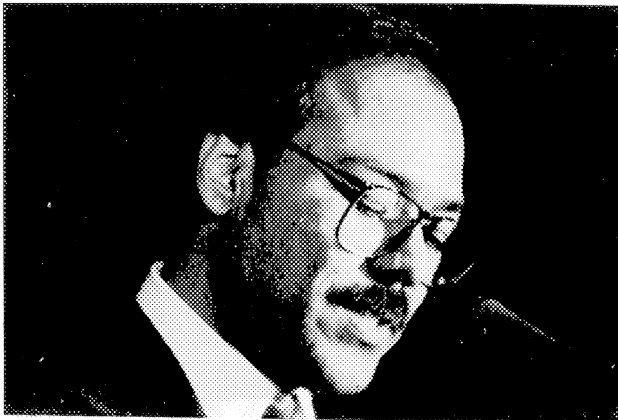
President George Bush addresses NCLR's 1990 Annual Conference, as Raúl Yzaguirre and former Board Chair Rita DiMartino look on

Toni Breier, Mariposa Communications

In late 1987, the organization commissioned an external management review by the Management Assistance Group. The resulting report to the Board in April 1988 led to considerable internal discussion and some restructuring.

In the latter years of the Reagan Administration, federal funding once more appeared possible; two technical assistance grants were in the final stages of negotiation. However, as had happened before with both Democratic and Republican administrations, a conflict arose between politics and principle. When Edwin Meese was nominated for Attorney General, NCLR was warned not to testify against him if it wanted its pending grants to go through. Although NCLR had not planned to testify, Yzaguirre and Board Chair Pastor agreed that NCLR could not give the impression of putting funding ahead of its advocacy positions; NCLR testified against Meese — and the projects were not funded.

NCLR did receive federal funding in the late 1980s to help support its capacity-building efforts. At the 1987 Affiliate Caucus, NCLR's affiliates had asked that the organization become involved in addressing the growing AIDS epidemic. After holding a consultation to investigate program needs and community concerns, NCLR successfully competed for five-year funding from HHS' Centers for Disease Control to establish an NCLR AIDS Center, beginning the project in the fall of 1988. In 1989 and again in 1990, NCLR helped coordinate "think tank" forums addressing AIDS in Puerto Rico and among the Puerto Rican population on the mainland.



Tony Salazar, NCLR Board Chair, 1990-92

In 1990, NCLR's affiliate network totalled 113, there were 50 staff, the budget had increased to nearly \$4.4 million, and the organization had more than 90 separate funding sources. In that year, Tony Salazar, a partner at McCormack, Baron, & Associates, one of the nation's largest developers of low- and moderate-income housing, became Board Chair. The Board adopted a five-year strategic plan described the organization's vision and goals, and mapped out strategies and tasks for achieving them. One of the principles adopted was that NCLR would not allow itself to be more than one-third federally funded. Never again, the Board agreed, would NCLR

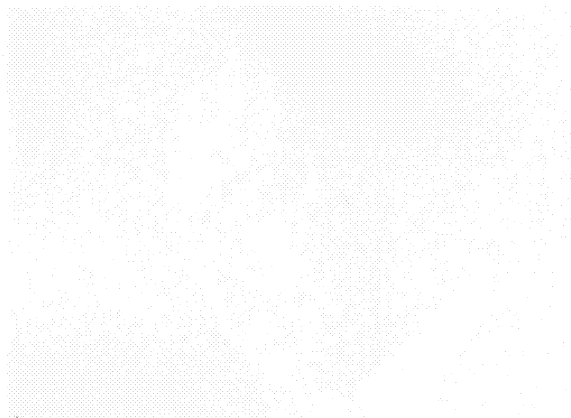
be dependent on any single funding source or type of funder. Goals addressed issues of governance, management, and programming. Among the major programmatic goals were the following:

- ❖ To make NCLR highly visible and respected nationally, in the Hispanic community, corporate and government circles, and the mainstream media, as an organization known for its excellence, integrity, and political independence, so that it has the capacity to carry out its basic goals.
- ❖ To fully establish NCLR and its Policy Analysis Center as the most effective, influential and respected Hispanic organization in the country, serving both as the primary Hispanic "think tank" and as a voice for Hispanics in Washington.
- ❖ To establish the Council as the national umbrella for an expanded affiliate network of 150 organizations, with strong representation from all regions and Hispanic subgroups.
- ❖ To fully establish NCLR's Annual Conference as the premier Hispanic event of the year.

- ❖ To initiate systematic strategic planning for programmatic and public policy initiatives which will lead to measurable macro-level changes in the status of the Hispanic community with regard to specific critical problems within the Hispanic community, such as education and housing.

At the end of 1990, the organization established a new component, the Office of Institutional Development (O.I.D.), believing it was time for NCLR to take advantage of its improved financial and organizational stability to begin to systematically document and “institutionalize” its systems and procedures. A number of key staff had been with the organization for nearly a decade or more, and their contacts, knowledge of institutional history and culture, products and approaches to critical tasks needed to be recorded so they would be available to other personnel then and in the future.

NCLR was ready for a new decade of institutional and programmatic growth.



Emerging into Prominence: 1991-93

The 1990s have been a period of growth, institutional strengthening, and increasing visibility. In the past several years, NCLR has emerged as a respected, powerful constituency-based Hispanic organization, and has met many of the goals established in its five-year plan.

Visibility

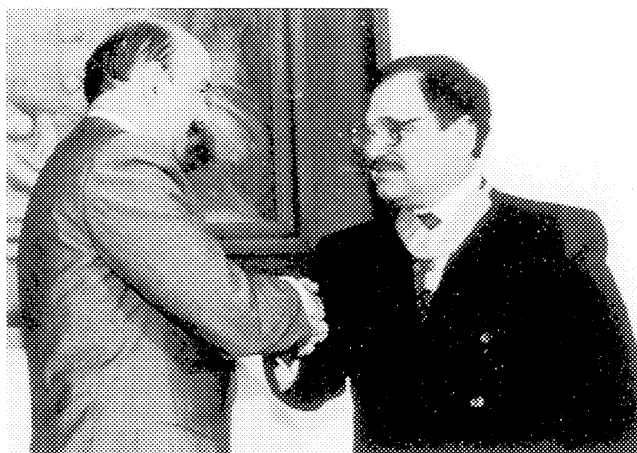
NCLR's credibility and visibility have increased rapidly in the 1990s. The NCLR President is viewed as the preeminent spokesperson for Hispanics by many public policy makers, corporations, the independent sector, and the media. His election in 1992 as the first minority Chairman of the Independent Sector — a national coalition of 850 foundations, corporations, and national nonprofit organizations — exemplifies and increases his visibility.

In the 1990s, we know we stand on plateaus of achievement higher than those that most of our parents ever were allowed to reach. More of us than ever before have attained the upper reaches of power in the United States. And we have founded, and firmly established, more effective institutions of our own than we've ever had in our history — institutions such as the National Council of La Raza.

— Henry Santiestevan

Media coverage has increased geometrically; NCLR's press conferences are well attended, its press releases often become wire service stories, and its President and issue spokespersons are contacted for comments on a wide range of issues — from health reform and immigration to the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and tax reform. A sign of NCLR's growing prominence and name recognition is that many newspapers, including *The Washington Post*, no longer attach a qualifying descriptive phrase when NCLR is mentioned or quoted; they assume readers will be familiar with the organization. NCLR receives almost routine coverage in major newspapers; in February and March of 1993, NCLR spokespersons were quoted eight times in *The Post*. NCLR staff receive national visibility on network broadcasts including *CBS' Nightwatch*, *NBC's Today Show*, *ABC Evening News*, *ABC's Good Morning America*, *Fox Morning News* and *CNN & Co.*; NCLR events and spokespersons appeared on C-SPAN nine times in 1992.

NCLR's Annual Conference provides a major focus for NCLR's visibility efforts, and also calls media attention to the accomplishments and strengths of the Latino community. It has become the Hispanic event of the year in terms of its professionalism; the high quality of its workshops, general assemblies, and meal events; the variety and quality of its entertainment; the size and attractiveness of its exhibit area; and its success in highlighting Hispanic leaders and achievers. About 8,000 people attended the 1992 conference in Los Angeles, the exhibit area held nearly 200 booths, national press coverage was extensive, and the conference made a significant profit. The conference attracts extremely varied participants from every sector and part of the country.



Raúl Yzaguirre receives the Order of the Aztec Eagle, Mexico's highest award to a non-citizen, from President Carlos Salinas de Gortari, Mexico City, 1993

Public Policy Role

NCLR is increasingly able to affect public policies and specific programs. In the past two years, NCLR policy analysis and advocacy materially and substantively influenced outcomes of public policy debates in civil rights, higher education, housing, voting rights, job training, and immigration.

NCLR plays many different roles in important advocacy efforts. NCLR can provide a Latino perspective on major legislation involving a number of major interest groups. In addition to working with ad hoc coalitions on specific issues, NCLR is a part of many ongoing entities, such as the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights. In its work with multi-ethnic coalitions, NCLR has often taken a lead in assuring that Hispanic interests are seriously and equitably addressed. In other cases, NCLR is a dominant player and leader of a multi-ethnic coalition. In the debate over the extension of the language assistance provisions of the Voting Rights Act, NCLR led a coalition of Hispanics, Asian/Pacific Islanders, and American Indians which succeeded in obtaining expansion as well as preservation of highly controversial voting rights protections.

NCLR works closely with other Hispanic organizations on issues of mutual concern. Over the years, the vehicles for cooperation among Hispanic nonprofit groups have changed, but NCLR has supported and played a lead role in them all — from the Forum of National Hispanic Organizations to the National Hispanic Leadership Conference, and its successor group, the National Hispanic Leadership Agenda. NCLR also works in groups established to address a specific issue area or policy, such as the National Hispanic AIDS Coalition.

NCLR is increasingly referred to in the media as the “major” or “key” Hispanic organization involved in public policy. The *Albuquerque Tribune* has called NCLR “the leading Hispanic think tank in the country.” The *Baltimore Sun* routinely refers to NCLR as “the principal Latino advocacy group.” One Fortune 500 Executive has called NCLR “the single most important Hispanic organization in the country.” And in its review of the influence of Latino advocates in Washington, *Hispanic Business* magazine concluded that NCLR is, “by all accounts the most effective” Hispanic organization.



U.S. Congressman Estéban Torres
of California

In 1990, NCLR developed a new standard for assessing the effectiveness of its programmatic and advocacy activities — achieving “macro-level” impact which measurably improves Hispanic opportunities or status. NCLR’s work in civil rights enforcement exemplifies this new focus.

In July 1991, NCLR issued a report called *The Empty Promise*, which documented that EEOC is not serving the Hispanic community equitably. Largely as a result of NCLR’s findings, the Civil Rights Act of 1991 included a new provision, sponsored by Rep. Jose Serrano (D-NY), that requires the EEOC to im-

There are relatively few organizations in Washington that have a national view of Latinos in this society and the political skills to work on these issues.

— Kirke Wilson, Executive Director,
Rosenberg Foundation, San Francisco

prove its outreach and public information activities targeted to Hispanics and other underserved communities. In addition, NCLR has implemented a Know Your Rights Campaign designed to develop messages and outreach materials which increase Hispanics' awareness of and motivation to pursue civil rights enforcement remedies. In addition, NCLR successfully advocated for the establishment of a grants program in the Office of Special Counsel within the Department of Justice to conduct community-based public education activities addressing discrimination related to employer sanctions. NCLR has begun searching for enforcement tools and processes that can either overcome existing barriers or bypass the current complaint-driven system. One such new tool is employment "testing," which — in part due to NCLR advocacy — was used by the General Accounting Office in its study of discrimination related to employer sanctions.

In carrying out its public policy work, NCLR continues to maintain its non-partisan stance. During the 1992 Presidential campaign, NCLR became extremely concerned about the lack of meaningful attention paid to Hispanics by either major party candidate, documented this neglect, and published a report called *Not Invited to the Party*. The report received extensive media coverage — and generated press releases in response from both major parties. As a

leading member of the National Hispanic Leadership Agenda, NCLR contributed to the preparation of a report card on the Clinton Administration's early days, focusing on the Administration's poor record of Hispanic appointments. NCLR has supported the Administration's proposed Earned Income Tax Credit for low-income workers, but criticized its handling of the Zoe Baird case involving the hiring of undocumented workers. NCLR's policy positions reflect its continuing priority: assuring public policies and programs which equitably benefit and serve Hispanics.

I have watched with pride over the years as NCLR has become not just the principal national Hispanic organization, but an important American institution.

— U.S. Congressman Estéban Torres

Affiliate Services

The NCLR affiliate network continues to grow; in July 1993 it totaled 158, with more than a dozen applications awaiting Board review and approval. These groups serve 37 states, Puerto Rico, and the District of Columbia. NCLR has affiliates who serve all the major Hispanic nationality groups; many serve mixed Hispanic populations.

NCLR's constituency remains of paramount importance to the organization. As Yzaguirre explains:

NCLR's affiliate network, which serves more than two million Hispanics annually, gives us clout in Washington; it gives us an ability to speak for our community. Our affiliates help us to understand what is happening in our community. It's not only the power, but the direction that comes from the network that is enormously important. It makes us much more effective in understanding and articulating the issues.

NCLR continues to expand and improve its services to affiliates. In 1991, responding to the expressed needs of Midwest affiliates, NCLR reopened its Chicago office. Over the past several years, NCLR has increased its use of "issue networks" to link and assist affiliates with a common interest — such as community development, education, AIDS, health, and elderly. All NCLR mission components are now involved in providing capacity-building assistance. NCLR has

successfully continued and expanded its national-emphasis projects in education, employment and training, health (including AIDS), and housing. Affiliates can benefit from several types of programmatic and organizational assistance.

In early 1993, with funding from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, NCLR began a new national-emphasis project designed to help its affiliates establish and strengthen leadership development efforts. As explained in the letter to potential Leadership Network members:

The NCLR Initiative's special focus will be on leadership efforts which not only develop the skills of *individuals*, but also benefit the *community*—NCLR will help to develop, strengthen, and expand programs which not only prepare individuals to play leadership roles within the Hispanic community and the broader society, but also assure that in assuming these roles they represent not simply themselves, but a particular neighborhood, community, or community-based organization.

NCLR is now a Census information center, which gives it access to extensive data including the 1990 Census tapes; this information is made available to affiliates. In 1992, the Policy Analysis Center began assisting affiliates in six locations to establish local policy centers, with an emphasis on using Census data for policy analysis and advocacy and working on education reform. At the 1993 NCLR Annual Conference, the Midwest affiliates led by the policy center

at the Guadalupe Center, Inc., in Kansas City, Missouri, presented a status report on Hispanics in the Midwest.

One of the downsides [to the community development movement] beginning in the late '70s was that the CDCs were not sufficiently socially inclined. The need to be bottom-line, profit-oriented took away to some degree from the activism of the organizations. Through this whole era of the '80s and the "I" generation, NCLR never lost its activism or its focus: that it represented the Hispanic community as a whole...that it attacked the issues.

— Tommy Espinosa, former Executive Director,
NCLR affiliate Chicanos Por La Causa, Phoenix

We attribute our expansion and growth over the last couple of years to the partnership and training we have received from NCLR. It has enhanced our capacity to seek and approach new funders, both public and private, in order to better serve the Hispanic community of Lorain, Ohio.

— Nelson Ramírez, Executive Director,
NCLR affiliate El Centro de Servicios Sociales

NCLR also seeks to measurably improve Hispanic housing status. NCLR provides ongoing technical assistance to nonprofit housing developers and will soon begin a new regional initiative to strengthen Hispanic community development corporations. A research project is now under way to analyze the number of Hispanics eligible for and participating in the major housing assistance programs and the barriers limiting such participation. In addition, in an effort linking national and field-

based efforts, NCLR is working with the Federal National Mortgage Association (Fannie Mae) on a \$20 million pilot program to make home ownership possible for Hispanic families. In early July 1993, NCLR, Fannie Mae, and First Interstate Bank announced a partnership to implement this agreement in Phoenix in cooperation with NCLR's affiliates.

NCLR's community development efforts have come full circle. In the fall, with Ford Foundation funding, NCLR will begin the implementation phase of the Southwest Initiative, a multi-year, multi-million dollar effort which will provide financial and capacity-building assistance to Hispanic CDCs in the Southwest, and establish NCLR as a national intermediary organization in the community development field.

Organizational Strength and Stability

NCLR's financial strength and stability are increasing each year. The organization has more than 100 different funders, public and private, a positive fund balance, and a growing annual budget in spite of the nation's slow economic growth. Several new efforts will help increase its long-term financial stability: seeking funds to purchase a building as its Washington, D.C., headquarters; beginning a feasibility study for an endowment fund; and experimenting with strategies for developing a base of individual contributors.

NCLR has successfully completed several major institutional development tasks, including a total revamping of the Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual, and has begun collecting, updating, and beginning to prepare for publication a large number of NCLR training materials and self-help manuals designed for Board members and staff of Hispanic community-based organizations.

NCLR's Board of Directors continues to include 26 elected members, representing the major Hispanic nationality groups and reflecting the geographic distribution of the Hispanic populations; the current membership includes Mexican Americans, Puerto Ricans, Cubans, and

NCLR BOARD CHAIRPERSONS

1968 - 1976	Maclovio Barraza , union organizer, United Steelworkers of America, Tucson
1976 - 1977	Juan Patlan , then Executive Director of the Mexican American Unity Council of San Antonio, a community development corporation and one of NCLR's original affiliates
1977 - 1980	Dr. Marta Sotomayor , then an official of the Alcohol, Drug Abuse, and Mental Health Administration (ADAMHA), Department of Health and Human Services; now President of the National Hispanic Council on Aging, Washington, D.C.
1980 - 1984	Gilbert R. Vásquez , President, Vásquez and Company, Certified Public Accountant, Los Angeles
1984 - 1987	The Honorable Ed Pastor , then Maricopa County Supervisor, now member of Congress, Phoenix
1987 - 1990	Rita DiMartino , Director of Federal Government Affairs, AT&T, Washington, D.C.; then Ambassador to UNICEF
1990 - 1992	Tony Salazar , Senior Vice President, McCormack, Baron & Associates, Los Angeles
1992 - Present	Dr. Audrey Alvarado , Director of Affirmative Action, University of Colorado at Denver

Central and South Americans. Half its members must either represent affiliates (35%) or have an identified constituency (15%), and there must be equal representation of men and women. Dr. Audrey Alvarado, Director of Affirmative Action at the University of Colorado at Denver and former Director of the Latin American Research and Service Agency (LARASA), became Chairperson in 1992. Under her leadership, the Board is increasing its involvement in resource development, preparing its own Board development objectives, and reporting progress annually.

The Corporate Board of Advisors has been re-chartered, and has expanded its membership to 23 major corporations. CBA support of NCLR's conference and programs has increased, and some members have become significantly involved in programs. At NCLR's 1993 Congressional Awards Dinner, Steve Reinemund, CBA member and President and CEO of Frito-Lay, Inc., the dinner's sponsor, explained the relationship:

We all represent a team — a team of people making an honest and sincere effort to ensure that full opportunity is provided for everyone. We are all here tonight because of our commitment to the Hispanic community.

NCLR continues to "fine tune" its structure to meet new institutional needs and take advantage of new opportunities. In January 1993, the Office of Special and International Projects was replaced by an Office of Development and Special Events (DASE), which is responsible for all resource development, the conference, and special events, and is headed by Vice President Norma Y. López. Each mission office is headed by a senior vice president: Emily Gantz McKay at the Office of Institutional Development; Charles Kamasaki at the Office of Research, Advocacy, and Legislation; and Dr. René F. Cárdenas, who joined NCLR in 1992, at the Office of Technical Assistance and Constituency Support.

NCLR's survival over 25 years "of change and uncertainty," says Chairperson Audrey Alvarado, is:

...a statement of survival, of the tenacity of the peoples we call Hispanic, those of Spanish, Mexican, Cuban, Puerto Rican, and Central and South American descent.

The NCLR staff reflects the diversity of the community it serves. As of July 1993, about 35% are Mexican American, about 10% each Salvadoran, Anglo, Puerto Rican, and Cuban, and the rest a wide range of ethnicities (some representing two nationality groups), among them Bolivian, Guatemalan, Asian, Spanish, Argentinean, Paraguayan, Chilean, Dominican, Peruvian, Caribbean, and African American.

NCLR is the preeminent national Hispanic organization, and I am proud to have been its first Puerto Rican Board member and its first Puerto Rican Chairperson. The Council truly represents the entire Hispanic community.

— Rita DiMartino,
Director of Federal Government Affairs, AT&T



NCLR Board Chair Dr. Audrey Alvarado presents award to Congressman Jose Serrano of New York at NCLR's 1993 Congressional Awards Dinner

The Future

In the future, NCLR must build upon the accomplishments and lessons of its past. Experience has taught that new approaches must often overcome initial opposition, and that it takes time to develop and refine strategies to become effective. Asked what he hopes will be his legacy to the organization, Yzaguirre responds:

...to build an institution, to cement it into the ground, give it roots,
give it stability — a national, solid, strong Hispanic institution.

As a financially and programmatically stable organization, NCLR expects to continue to work towards its goal of eliminating poverty and discrimination and opening up life opportunities for Hispanics. It will address its ongoing missions of providing capacity-building services to its network of community-based organizations; carrying out applied research, public policy analysis, and advocacy on behalf of all Hispanics; improving public understanding and media images of Hispanics; and working in coalition and as a catalyst to meet special community needs. There will be new programs and directions as well, reflecting the changing demographics of the U.S., such as work on Black-Hispanic relations and on diversity and multiculturalism. NCLR will work for positive change in cooperation with its affiliates, with the Congress and the executive branch, and with allies and friends in the public, private, and independent sectors. The linkages between field assistance and national public policy work will continue to strengthen and expand.

Board Chair Alvarado remembers NCLR's past and looks to its future:

We take pride in and honor the foresight of our founders, who allowed themselves to dream of a national organization designed for and by Hispanics. Their legacy, deep and long-lasting, has assured our historical and current presence will not be ignored.... On this, our 25th birthday, we reaffirm our commitment to apply our energies, talents and resources to continue the legacy of our founders.

With the help of its friends and allies, NCLR believes that "the best is yet to come"* — for NCLR, and for the Hispanic community.

* A song with that title was written and recorded by singer Miguel Tomas for NCLR's 25th Anniversary Conference in Detroit in July 1993.

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