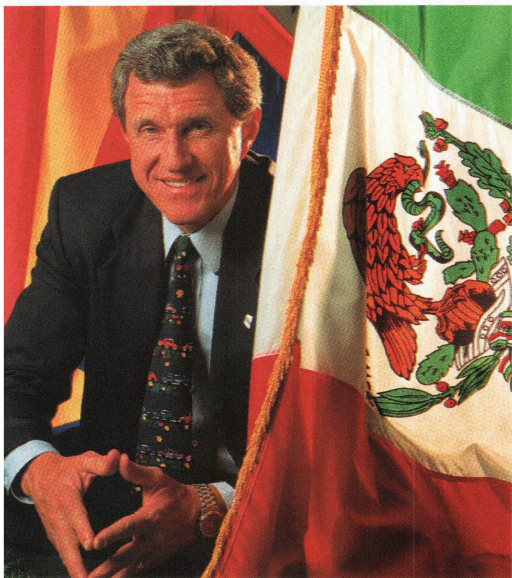


Strengthening Ties With Mexico

by Cynthia Scanlon

photography by Daniel Watts

It's no secret that we live in a global economy. Countries all over the world are pairing up in unprecedented numbers for economic, social and cultural gain. One such international partnership involves Arizona and Sonora, Mexico. Following are profiles of three executives who have a serious stake in seeing the relationship between the two regions continue to be warm and profitable.



Larry Bonine, Director, Arizona Department of Transportation

Larry Bonine spends his days dealing with mountains of paperwork and traveling the state evangelizing his beliefs about the importance of free trade through unencumbered transportation.

As co-chairman of the transportation committee for the Arizona-Mexico Commission, Bonine would like to

enhance the free flow of transportation between the two regions by highway, railroad and air. He also hopes to improve the border crossings between the two countries.

"The governor is passionate about Mexico and making NAFTA a success, as am I," he says. "Mexico is so big in agricultural wealth and we need it. I hope to bring commerce up through Nogales into America, and I'd like to see us be as seamless as Canada."

Carol Colombo, Partner, Colombo & Bonacci

As the new president of the Arizona-Mexico Commission, Carol Colombo wants to continue the Commission's tradition of being a model of bi-national planning and unification.

"I hope to build on the accomplishments of the past, which include education and environmental cooperation between the two sides," she

says. To accomplish this, Colombo plans to move forward in implementing the various economic development initiatives that have resulted from the Arizona-Sonora Economic Plan.

As a founding partner of the law firm, Colombo & Bonacci, Colombo brings to the Commission her in-depth experience of international law, which includes joint venture transactions with clients in Latin America, Europe and the Pacific Rim.



Jess Valenzuela Jr., Chairman, Southwest Harvard Group

When the word entrepreneur was being defined, Jess Valenzuela Jr. was one of the names kept in mind as a working example. You'd think that being chairman and chief operating officer of Southwest Harvard Group, an asset management company, would take up all of his time. But Jess has always liked challenges and going the extra mile. So he is also a partner in a

company that manufactures wire and cable for CSI, formerly AT&T, and a partner in a medical research business.

"I have a high level of ambition," Valenzuela explains.

He also has an interest in international affairs, which will benefit him as the secretary-treasurer of the Arizona-Mexico Commission. "I speak fluent English, Spanish and German," he says. "Phoenix is not an international Mecca, and that's why I wanted to get involved with the Commission."