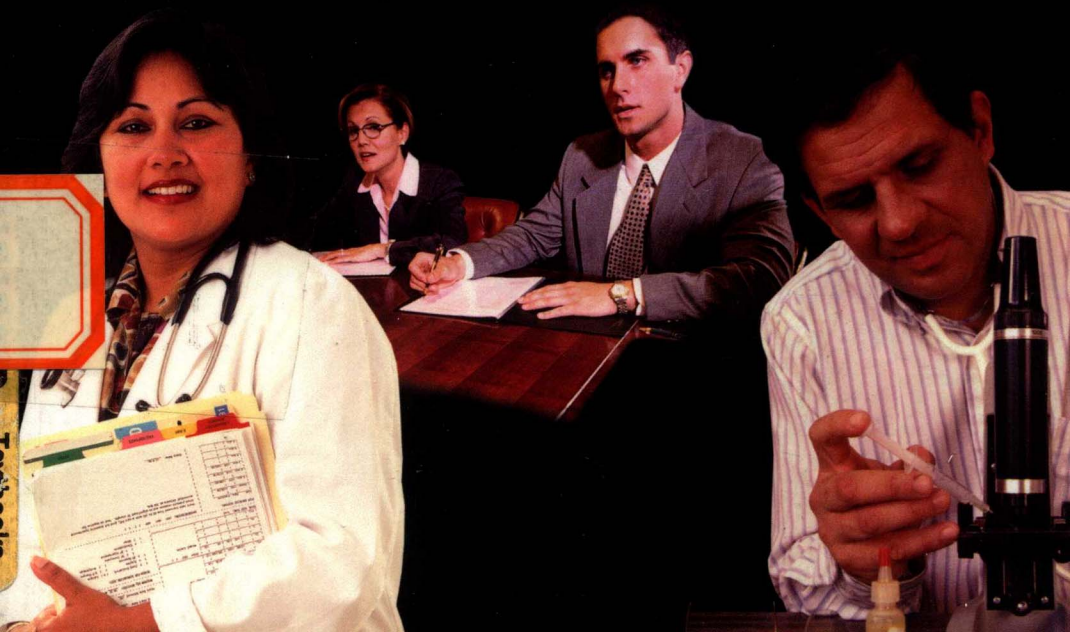


RIGHT BEFORE OUR EYES:

Latinos Past, Present & Future

Robert Montemayor

with Henry Mendoza



RIGHT BEFORE OUR EYES:

Latinos Past, Present & Future

By Robert Montemayor
with Henry Mendoza

SCHOLARG



CUSTOM PUBLISHING

RIGHT BEFORE OUR EYES:
Latinos Past, Present & Future

By Robert Montemayor
with Henry Mendoza

ID# 3094
ISBN: 1-59247-656-2

Printed in The United States of America

Copyright © 2004 by The Tomás Rivera Policy Institute

Published and Distributed by Scholargy Publishing, Inc.

Scholargy, Inc. has obtained the limited right to use the material reproduced herein from the rights holders solely for use in this publication. This publication, or any part hereof, may not be reproduced by any means, or incorporated into any information retrieval system, electronic or mechanical, without written permission.

Information contained in this book has been obtained by Scholargy, Inc. from sources believed to be reliable. However, because of the possibility of human or mechanical error by our sources, Scholargy, Inc., or others, the Publisher does not guarantee the accuracy, adequacy, or completeness of any information and is not responsible for any errors or omissions or the results obtained from use of such information.

The Tomás Rivera Policy Institute asserts a neutral position on the issues contained herein. Interpretations and conclusions presented in TRPI publications are those of the authors and should not be attributed to the Institute, its trustees, officers or other staff members, or to the organizations which support its research.

Scholargy Publishing
1555 W. University Drive, Suite 108
Tempe, AZ 85281
www.scholargy.com

This book is dedicated to
Augustine and Maria Montemayor
and
Henry and Esther Mendoza

Foreword

By Sol Trujillo

This book is about a huge and uniquely American opportunity that is waiting to be unlocked and which can benefit people in all walks of life – business, education, politics, public service and dozens of other parts of our lives here in the United States. That opportunity is to tap into the now robust and powerful and growing Latino population in this country.

Most Americans haven't recognized the dynamism of the Latino market. But the fact is that Latinos are growing exponentially in the United States – faster than any other element of American society. Another fact is that Latinos reflect a positive attitude toward all that is special to America – the work ethic, integrity, diligence, scholarship and more.

At this point virtually no one has stepped forward to unlock the talent and creativity of the Latino population base. Those who figure out how to capitalize on that talent and creativity will make a positive difference in their companies, their communities, their political structures and more. More important, they will make a positive difference for themselves and for this nation which needs to leverage every opportunity today to be competitive on the world stage. This book provides hard facts and data that will serve individuals who want to stay ahead of the curve and create a competitive advantage for themselves and for those around them.

The idea for this book has been percolating in my mind since the early 1980's. As I was "climbing the ladder" in the business world over the past 30 years, I became increasingly disappointed and concerned that Hispanics were not advancing to the top decision making positions in our society. Very few Hispanics were making significant progress toward the upper levels of the policy making positions in institutions such as corporations, government, media, education, the judiciary and the military.

Yet, even in the early 1980s, and then the 1990s, political pundits and national publications were heralding "The Decade of the Hispanic" or "The

Year of the Hispanic”. However, when you looked at our statistical profile – the number of Hispanics that were on Fortune 1000 boards of directors, CEOs, United States senators, governors, Supreme Court justices, school district superintendents, university presidents, generals and admirals in the military, etc. the numbers just were not there. Hispanics were missing in action.

At the same time, Latinos’ contributions in making the United States the undisputed political, military and economic leader among nations have been nothing short of stellar.

Almost 450 years ago, Spanish explorer Pedro Menéndez de Avilés established the first permanent European settlement in the New World in St. Augustine, Florida. This was 40 years before the British arrived at Jamestown.

Latinos have fought and died for this country in every war, earning 42 Medals of Honor and countless other distinctions for courage.

When this nation’s infrastructure was being built, Hispanics were there. The sweat and sometimes the lives of Hispanic workers are woven into the foundations and building blocks of the nation’s railroads, highways, utilities, dams, mines, homes and skyscrapers. Much of the agricultural success of this country is due to the Mexican migrant workers and their families toiling in the fields in extreme conditions.

In business, science, education, medicine, the fine arts, literature, government, the entertainment industry and the sports world, Latinos have left their indelible mark as they helped make this country a better place in which to live. Their influences are ubiquitous, including the names we give to many of our cities and streets, the architecture of our homes, the food we eat, and the many Spanish words that have infiltrated the English language and are part of our daily lexicon.

Yet, despite their substantial contributions to this great country we live in, Latinos continue to be virtually excluded within institutional power structures. While Latinos represent about 14 percent of this nation’s population, they are woefully underrepresented in the top echelons of institutions. For example, there are more than 10,000 board of director seats among the Fortune 1000 companies, yet only slightly more than 200 are

Foreword

occupied by Latinos. It would take more than seven times that number just to reflect the marketplace.

At the same time, the attractiveness of the Hispanic marketplace in this country has grown faster than expectations, representing a huge opportunity for businesses that have the astute insights to capitalize on the phenomenon. In 2004, the United States' estimated 40 million Hispanics are spending nearly \$700 billion on goods and services. If this country's Latinos were a nation, their gross domestic product (GDP) would rank ninth in the world, just below Canada. Even more astounding is the projected growth rate for this economic colossus. By 2008, researchers are predicting that Hispanics' buying power will be about \$1 trillion per year, which would represent an astounding growth rate of over 450 percent since 1990 when Hispanic purchasing totaled \$222 billion. Corporate America cannot afford to ignore this economic tsunami.

It is also important to note the country's labor force will be very dependent on Hispanics. It is projected that by 2020, one out of every six workers in the U.S. will be Hispanic. By 2050, it will be one out of every four. Remember, it is workers who pay into our social security and other support systems of our country. Further, it is projected that U.S. Hispanics, in this same time frame, will comprise about 25 percent of the U.S. population, marking an era in America when no group can claim to be the majority.

I am a person who is very proud of both my country and my heritage. At the same time, I am a free market capitalist. But as I have observed over time this disconnect between the the importance of Latinos in this country and then being excluded from the decision-making processes and structures that govern us, I believe it is time for the "bridging of this gap". Education, information, debate, dialogue and action have always been the most effective ways to create progress – those attributes are the hallmarks of our great democracy.

Now more than ever, it is time for change. This country cannot afford to remain "exclusionary" and "exclusive," particularly as it relates to the most dynamic segment of our country's population.

Having run large multi-billion dollar corporations in the U.S. and abroad, I have found that engaging all – rather than just some – employees leads to

greater productivity and results. If only some can aspire to greater heights while others cannot, it becomes limiting and divisive. Whether this exclusionary approach toward Hispanics has happened consciously or not, it is time to put it behind us and welcome this important group into our country's top decision making hierarchies.

It is also evident that the Hispanic youth of our country also need role models to help them understand that when they work and get results, they can realistically achieve any position in this country's institutions – just like everyone else.

This environment can be very inspirational to achieve more, give more and collaborate more. It is extremely difficult today for Hispanic youth to appreciate what is attainable, given the lack of Hispanic role models in the media and other top leadership positions in this country's public and private sectors. We now have the opportunity to change this situation through understanding, education, removal of discriminatory barriers and "inclusive" strategies which will enable a full field of competitors.

Not long ago, when asked by a CEO who wanted to learn more about the Latino community what book he should read to gain insights that could help him, I began a search to identify the right book. I went to a leading book store in Southern California to find one which would meet the criteria. I was enthusiastic about this mission, assuming that since I was in Southern California this would not be a problem.

Upon entering the bookstore I went to the ethnic studies section and was dumbfounded. There was a full section of books related to the African American experiences. There were two bookshelves of both Asian American and Native American and *only six* books regarding Latinos! As I thumbed through a number of these, I noticed that the books each had its own unique focus on a point in history or topic.

This experience convinced me and my wife Corine to decide to initiate or sponsor the authoring of this book. It is obvious to us that there is a need for the authoring of several bodies of work that can be made available to our junior high, high school and collegiate students...or for the businesses of this country that need further understanding of this great unfolding market

Foreword

opportunity...or for the public policy makers who need to better understand the people they represent in setting policies which are important today and in the future.

This book was managed and administered under the leadership of Dr. Harry Pachon, President of The Tomás Rivera Policy Institute (TRPI) and Dr. Loui Olivas, Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs and Professor, W. P. Carey School of Business, Arizona State University. Dr. Olivas and Dr. Pachon have done tremendous work bringing this to fruition, working with our authors, publisher and a whole series of other individuals. I thank them for their dedication to this book. It is important to note that all proceeds from this book will go to TRPI for further studies and additional book authorings.

I would also like to thank Henry Mendoza, one of the authors contributing to the book's completion. He has great passion for the subject given his many experiences in his personal life. Finally, I want to thank Robert Montemayor who did the majority of the research and work on the book. He also has lived the experience described in the book but even more importantly he has created a composite of several topic areas we should all strive to understand better. His passionate dedication and uncompromising approach enabled the beginning of a necessary dialogue and understanding for all. Without question the call to action in the closing chapter is the most important piece he puts forward — as someone once said “words without actions mean nothing.”

Author's Note

We're often told that it is more about the journey than it is about the destination. And maybe it has been so with the writing of this book. The journey has been arduous if for no other reason than the writing was done in a mere six months — nothing short of a massive sprint.

The journey has taxed us and forced us to re-examine ourselves, not only as Latinos but as Americans. And we've arrived at the same conclusion, that we are one and the same — Latinos who are Americans and Americans who are Latinos. We are proud to be both and we are proud to live in a country where we can enjoy the benefits of both, presumably without restrictions, fear or trepidation.

When we started this project, we thought we knew our Latino culture. Between us we have more than 60 years of experience in journalism, business, public relations, and marketing, much of it within the Hispanic community. In retrospect, we only *thought* we knew our community. We confirmed what we thought we knew, but rejoiced in the fact that there is so much potential, so much that can be accomplished and so much that is within everyone's reach.

People like to have a sense of hope. They like to think there's a bright future. Whether you are 14 or 34 or 54, as Americans we like to believe that we can live out our dreams. Some may believe that's too much corn or too much B.S. given the vagaries of our world these days. The fact is that we both grew up with those kinds of dreams with amazingly similar experiences in places like Colton, California and Tahoka, Texas — entirely different parts of the country that turn out to be so different and yet so similar. And that similarity comes from our Latino roots.

Our parents dealt with many more obstacles than we did. They grew up with the racial name calling, the segregated schools, churches, restaurants and theaters, many of the same obstacles that we outline in this book. Yet, they persevered. They held the course.

Author's Note

They constantly pushed us. And they reminded us that, while America was a wonderful place to live, it also had its gauntlet of challenges, particularly for a couple of Mexican Americans like us.

As kids, we thought how difficult will it be? Things won't always be so racially oriented, or discriminatory or unfair. Many years later we learned the universal lesson – who said life was fair?

We both pursued careers in journalism because we thought we could right the wrongs. We thought we would write about injustices and educate people to make them go away. We thought we could effect needed changes in society. We thought we could make a difference. Sometimes we did. Most of the time we didn't.

There are some Latinos who may read this book and say, "So what? There's nothing new here." And for many – the *veteranos* of our community — that may be the case. But for a great many, who don't traffic on a daily basis with the issues that confront Hispanics, so much of what is in this book is new and is worth reading and is worth fully understanding.

Not everyone has a firm understanding of the Hispanic communities of America – not even Hispanics themselves. With few exceptions, the sons and daughters of our friends, to name a few, have no context of what it is to be a Hispanic in America. They have little connection with our rich, storied past, no sense of context in terms of the sacrifices that were made so they would not have to suffer the indignities that many – and that includes us – have had to suffer to scratch out a living in this country. They need to know the stories so they need to read the stories. This book is as much for them as anyone.

We also would implore those Latinos who are in midst of budding careers, or who are just starting families to take a more active approach to how they live their lives in this country. Take nothing for granted. Leave nothing to chance. Ask questions when you are not promoted. Ask questions when your child is not bringing home good grades. If you don't ask, you don't receive. And as we like to say, what's the worst anyone can say in asking questions? It is your right to ask, even when you are not satisfied with the first answer, or even second answer. This book is as much for you as anyone because it's your

careers or your children's careers that could be on the line in the near future.

And to those who may say, "So what? There's nothing new here." We say, "Hey, chill out." Both of us have been exactly where you've been. Yeah, it's hard to keep the embers of activism burning over 20, 30 or 40 years. It's hard to read anything that we haven't already read, said or written before. All this falls into the category of been-there, done-that, thought-that.

With all due respect to all you *veteranos/veteranas*, we recognize that many out there have logged your time organizing, politicking, raising money for good causes, recognizing terrific role models, *being* terrific role models and pushing for the very goals that we advocate in this book. Many of you may feel that you've spent a lifetime pounding away at rock-hard issues that have made you weary, perhaps a bit jaded. We would say just two words to you, *y que* (so what)?

Again, no disrespect — we would ask you to set aside your cynicism. The issues that we rallied around 20, 30, or 40 years ago continue to stare at us: exclusion from leadership posts within the public and private sectors, continued challenges in education, abject poverty, equal rights that are not so equal, homeownership barriers borne of discrimination, a glaring lack of health care, and the list goes on. We're not telling you anything you don't already know. We would only tell you that the war over these issues is not over. There might not be anything new for you in this book, but your participation is still valuable. Your experience is needed. Your leadership and places as role models are needed by the hopeful generations of Hispanics that follow behind you. Regardless, you need to read this book just to catch up with the numbers.

So it has been about the journey, and we would be remiss if we didn't thank a few people who have made the trek more plausible:

First, we'd like to thank our wives, Virginia Lujano and Kris Mendoza, for their patience, support, input and love. For all the long hours, all the pots of coffee, all the encouragement, all the prodding, all the editing and readings, all the frank critiques, all the smiles when we most needed a smile — thank you.

We'd also like to give huge thanks Sol and Corine Trujillo, who commissioned this project and who have shown great courage and an undying

Author's Note

fire in dealing with mammoth issues. Sol and Corine gave birth to this project when, one day while shopping at a local bookstore, they were appalled at the lack of books dealing with Hispanics. Why are we so marginalized, Sol and Corine wondered? Why so little literature about a culture with more than 500 years of history in the Western Hemisphere? The more they thought about it, the more they burned over the issue.

Sol and Corine Trujillo set out with a conception to do a mass media book on Hispanics, a literary work that would pack the latest information on Hispanics with a bit of editorial moxy and edge and, most important, a proposed set of recommendations. To his credit, Sol left us to our own devices to write the book as we thought it should be written. To be sure, he prodded and coached wherever he could. But he always left the manuscript in our hands. For that, we are most grateful.

At one time, Sol was chairman, president and CEO of US West and, most recently, he was CEO of Orange SA, one of the largest telecommunications companies in Europe. He understands corporate America. He knows how to navigate the political waters of both national parties. Quite simply, he knows how to play the game. This book is his vision as much as anyone's. It is his spirit upon that gave flight to this project.

We'd like to thank the entire staff at The Tomás Rivera Policy Institute, including Harry Pachon, Kathryn Grady, Andrea Gutierrez, Stephanie Lomibao and Robert Esqueda, for all their support and guidance.

A special round of thanks goes to our man at Arizona State University, Loui Olivas, who kept us on schedule and kept us laughing all through the project. Tireless, punctual, absorbed with the details and all the while maintaining a sense of levity – you can't ask for much more. As Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs and Professor, W.P. Carey School of Business, ASU is extremely lucky to have him. And we give another strong round of thanks to Reid Boates, our literary agent/editor who became an honorary Hispanic during the project. Always upbeat, always positive, Reid urged us on every step of the way. His emails always ended with his signature, "Onward."

We not only give strong thanks to our parents but we also would like to

dedicate our work to them. Without their undying love and support, we might not have made it this far. They were unflinching in their demands of us. The lessons were often tough, but it was about tough love from parents who never heard of the term. At the end of the day, they taught us well.

To Augustine and Maria Montemayor and Henry and Esther Mendoza, we dedicate this book to you.

Every good story usually has a bit of irony. This book project is no different. The project actually started with a telephone call from the late *Los Angeles Times* columnist and our close friend Frank Del Olmo in September of 2003. Frank had called to say that he had received a call from Harry Pachon, president of The Tomás Rivera Policy Institute, who had asked him to consider writing a book on the impact of Hispanics on America. Frank had passed on the book because he wanted to concentrate on the 2004 elections. Instead, Frank recommended to Pachon that we do the book. Frank then called both of us to give us the heads up.

I remember asking Frank, “So, what do you think?” Del Olmo’s response: “Robert, it shouldn’t be that hard. It’s nothing that you guys don’t already know. You’ll be fine. It should be fun.” Frank had a special way of understating things. As usual, no work worth doing is ever that easy. But we do owe a good bit of gratitude to Frank for his decision.

As it turned out, Frank del Olmo passed away in February while working at the *Los Angeles Times*. As a result of his untimely death, Frank’s wife Magdalena del Olmo convinced the *Times* to publish a book of Frank’s best editorials.

The irony? *Right Before Our Eyes* and Frank’s book, *Frank del Olmo Commentaries on His Times* will both be released in September. None of us three had ever written a book. We’re sure Frank would say he planned it that way.

RIGHT BEFORE OUR EYES:

Latinos Past, Present & Future

RIGHT BEFORE OUR EYES:
Latinos Past, Present & Future

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter One	
Right Before Our Eyes	1
Chapter Two	
A Proud History with Bittersweet Results	13
Chapter Three	
An Untold Story of Duty and Honor: Latinos in the Military	27
Chapter Four	
At \$1.33 Million Per Minute, America Cares	61
Chapter Five	
Hispanic Purchasing Power on the Rise	98
Chapter Six	
An American Dream Without a Home	125
Chapter Seven	
Media: Shaping the Images	137
Chapter Eight	
A Call to Action	145

CHAPTER ONE

Right Before Our Eyes

- *Latinos are the largest and the youngest ethnic minority in the United States.*
- *At approximately 40 million today, Hispanics account for 13.7 percent of the U.S. population.*
- *By 2050, one of every four Americans will be Hispanic, a number that will exceed 100 million.*
- *In 2020, one out of six workers in the U.S. will be Latino; in 2050, it will be one out of every four.*
- *Hispanics will spend \$700 billion this year, or a rate of \$1.33 million per minute.*
- *In 2025, U.S. Hispanic consumer spending power will surpass \$3 trillion, which would rank them as the world's fourth largest economy behind the U.S., Japan, and China.*
- *Hispanics possess 6 to 8 million votes poised for the 2004 presidential election; they are expected to represent the critical swing vote in six states.*

All of this has the ring of power, the kind of power that sparks market trends, affects the economy, and has politicians pandering for votes. This power is an illusion. Given these numbers, Latinos should be in the executive's seat of private corporations, in the judge's chair in courtrooms, in the legislator's seat at the local, state, or federal level. With this kind of power, we should be welcomed into the American mainstream of thought and policy. But we are not.