

Awards

In February, Mexican president, Carlos Salinas de Gortari awarded the Mexican Order of the Aztec Eagle of Mexican-Americans Gloria Molina and Raúl Yzaguirre, for their long and ardent defence of our culture and the right of Mexican-Americans in the United States.

The government created the Mexican Order of the Aztec Eagle in 1933, with the aim of rewarding foreigners for services rendered to Mexico or mankind as a whole. These two recently-decorated celebrities bring the number of people of Mexican origin awarded this prize for different social activities to eight.

Gloria Molina was born in Montebello, California on May 31, 1948 and from a very early age, showed concern for the living conditions of the Mexican community. She began her political career during the Kennedy Administration, while still studying at university, taking part in the Chicano movement and the student activism that characterized this period.

She was named assistant director of the White House during the Carter Administration. In 1982, she was appointed to the State Assembly for District 56, a position never before held by a Hispanic woman. She currently works as supervisor for the First District of Los Angeles and also belongs to the steering committees of organizations such as the National Association of Latino

Elected Officials and the Mexican-American Legal Defense and Education Fund.

Raúl Yzaguirre was born in Rio Grande, Texas, in 1939. Since the age of fifteen, he has worked tirelessly for human and civil rights of the Hispanic community, constantly fostering closer relations between Mexico and Mexican-Americans. He began his defence of civil rights by organizing the American G.I. Forum Juniors (a Mexican-American veterans' association) and since 1974, has directed the *Consejo Nacional de la Raza* (National Race Council), of which he is president.

Yzaguirre obtained a degree in science from the George Washington University in Washington, D.C. As part of his commitment to the Hispanic community, he founded the National Organization for Services to Mexican-Americans and Interstate Associates, the first Hispanic research association.

On several occasions, Yzaguirre has received recognition for his work, such as the Rockefeller Prize, awarded by Princeton University. He is an expert on immigration-related topics, an advocate of the promotion of Spanish in US schools, as well as a member of different governing bodies involved in the struggle to assure human and civil rights for Hispanics.

It should be mentioned that the Aztec Eagle was also awarded to Henry Cisneros, an outstanding public figure, ex-mayor of San Antonio, Texas and a fervent representative of the interests of the Mexican-American and Latin communities in the United States.

On receiving the news that he would be awarded the Aztec Eagle in October 1992, Cisneros showed great satisfaction and pride. Nevertheless, his recent appointment as Minister for Housing and Urban Development within the Clinton Administration, prevents him from receiving such decorations from foreign governments. ❧



President Salinas (middle) with Gloria Molina and Raúl Yzaguirre.

Raquel Villanueva
Staff Writer.