

# Awards

**Distinctions for three Mexican-Americans.** This past December, President Carlos Salinas de Gortari awarded the *Aguila Azteca* to three Mexican-Americans for their meritorious efforts in defense of Mexico's culture and the rights of their fellow countrymen in the United States.

*Blandina Cárdenas*, with a doctorate in Education, staunch defender of bilingual education and champion of human rights, started her career teaching migrant children in El Río, Texas. Objecting to the conditions under which these children were taught, she became influential in deciding educational policy in the U.S. She is a member of the Commission on Civil Rights of the U.S. Senate and Director of the Office of Minority Concerns of the American Council on Education.

*Antonia Hernández*, a young professional with a major in Migration and Human Rights, has devoted herself to protecting the rights of millions of native-born Mexicans living in the U.S. Her first job as an attorney was at the Los Angeles

Center for Law and Justice. She is currently President and General Counsel for the Mexican-American Legal Defense and Education Fund (MALDEF), the largest organization devoted to protecting the civil rights of minorities of Mexican origin.

*Luis Leal*, professor emeritus of the University of Illinois, has devoted himself to studying Latin American, Mexican and chicano literatures and cultures, and might be described as a Mexican version of the Encyclopedia Britannica. He has made contributions on Ibero-American literature, as a translator, researcher and analyst. His literary production includes 15 books and more than 300 studies. For the last 13 years, he has been visiting professor and researcher at the Center for Chicano Studies in the University of California at Santa Barbara. In December, he celebrated 49 uninterrupted years of intellectual endeavor.

These three distinguished Mexican-Americans have also been awarded numerous distinctions in the U.S. for their outstanding work.

**France decorates a Mexican woman for her cultural role.** At a ceremony in the Ambassador's residence, in January, Mercedes Iturbe received the ribbon of Chevalier of Arts and Letters from French Ambassador to Mexico Alain Riquier, in recognition of her efforts as director of the Mexican Cultural Center in Paris from 1980 to 1990.

A decade of service at the head of the Center brought the cultures of Mexico and France closer together. At the ceremony, the Ambassador explained that the decoration is conferred by the French government on well known French and foreign artists, and other personalities who have contributed significantly to the field of culture in France.

Mercedes Iturbe, now director of the International Cervantes Festival, turned Mexico's Cultural Center into a meeting place for Latin American artists and intellectuals in Paris. **M**

**Raquel Villanueva**  
Circulation Manager.



President Carlos Salinas and prize recipients.