



Irene Gomez-Bethke Papers.

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Irene Gomez-Bethke

Portrait of a non-traditional student

By Leslie Walters

Irene Gomez-Bethke has had a highly colorful, multifaceted and successful career history.

From restaurant management to health care to government service to arts administration, this one-time high school dropout's hard-working determination and intuitive expertise brought her steady growth in job responsibility and performance. Add to that her long-time community activism in politics, civil rights, education and church, and Gomez-Bethke had outpaced many with two and three times her academic credentials.

So why, at middle age in the early 1980s, did this busy grandmother decide to pursue a college degree? A commitment to lifelong learning and an overwhelming thirst to expand her knowledge base initially drove Gomez-Bethke, former Minnesota Human Rights Commissioner and current executive director of Instituto de Arte y Cultura, back to school. Moreover, she "got tired of watching all my colleagues making twice the money I was." Many of those co-workers couldn't touch her organizational and leadership skills, Gomez-Bethke says.

Metropolitan State University will confer a bachelor of arts degree on Gomez-Bethke during commencement ceremonies on June 25. It will be a momentous occasion for both her and the university. She will at last have the "on-paper credentials" certifying her years of experience and expertise. She will also join more than 330 degree candidates, the largest number since Metro State's inception in 1971.



Irene Gomez-Bethke

When Gomez-Bethke decided to return to school, she sought an institution that would address the special needs of older, minority students. "Most Hispanics have a hard time with higher education," she says. "Language and culture have posed major barriers." It's often difficult to find the long-term family support so necessary to complete a degree, she adds. "It's hard to focus on the long-range benefits of education where there's an immediate family crisis that must be taken care of."

"Metro State is the place for people who have had difficulty accessing higher education," said Gomez-Bethke. She cites the university's flexible approach, sensitive faculty and staff, and individualized attention as integral in her academic success. She liked the multicultural representation on the advising staff as well as the affordable tuition. "Economics are another significant barrier for Hispanics thinking about college," she says. Metro State charges by the class rather than the semester.

Metro State, a member of the Minnesota State University System, offers the final two years of a four-year college program. It serves a diverse range of people in the seven-county metropolitan area and offers classes in community sites close to students' home and work. Besides traditional courses, the university offers creative learning strategies such as theory seminars, internships and independent studies, and awards college credit for learning achieved through work and community activities outside the

Student to page 11

lized all the options. Like all Metro State students, she designed her own degree plan. Her background as a painter and costume designer and long-time interest in the arts propelled her toward arts administration. She filled out her remaining requirements and bolstered her previous learning with traditional academic courses in accounting, writing and general business. "More and more, it's very important for nonprofit agencies to function in a businesslike manner," she says. "To be effective and successful, you must be aware of the legal and financial requirements."

While at Metro State, Gomez-Bethke completed two internships that proved most fortuitous for her future. While working as a communications and media relations intern for Minneapolis Mayor Don Fraser, she was appointed liaison to the Minneapolis Arts Commission. This experience strongly aligned her with her first love, the arts. Soon after, she designed an internship with her brainchild, the budding Instituto de Arte and Cultura.

Gomez-Bethke led the group that in the late 1970s saw a need for a structured, year-round organization that would present, promote and preserve the Hispanic culture while educating the public through the fine, cultural and performing arts, and media in the Twin Cities area. This seed of an idea was gaining significant support and momentum when she became a student intern, working on board development and a calendar of events, and hammering out legal requirements. She became the Instituto's first executive director when the volunteer arts organization was officially launched in 1984.

The Minneapolis-based Instituto has been very successful under Gomez-Bethke's leadership. Working closely with local, state and regional organizations, the clearing house for Hispanic artists provides jobs and facilitates arts programs throughout Minnesota. Composer Donna Pena, Teatro de la Esperanza and Los Folkloristas are just some of the more recent nationally-renowned guest performers appearing in Minnesota because of the Instituto's work.

Like most Metro State students, Gomez-Bethke successfully combined a busy home, work and community life with her academic career. Taking three classes a quarter while she maintained her professional consulting and speaking business was not unusual for Gomez-Bethke. But when circumstances dictated that she reorder her priorities, she greatly appreciated the university's flexible approach to lifelong learning. Gomez-Bethke took a hiatus from school to serve as Minnesota's Commissioner of Human Rights in 1983 and 1984.

A self-described Myers-Briggs (a personality test) "ENTJ," Irene Gomez-Bethke literally bursts with experience, enthusiasm, energy and determination. Coupling her soon-to-be-received bachelor's degree with outstanding intuitive leadership and interpersonal skills, it seems she can accomplish anything.

Graduate school is a distinct possibility for the future. But more important, her Metro State diploma will give her greater credibility as a professional and a mentor. "I want to do more in the Hispanic struggle against racism," Gomez-Bethke states. "I will be a good role model for women, young or old, but especially for Hispanics," she concludes.

Student from page 1

classroom.

Gomez-Bethke came to Metro State with only four college credits. An admissions counselor recommended that she explore turning her job and community experience into "competences" or college credit for previous learning. She converted her work for such organizations as Homeward Bound, K-Mart, the Girl Scouts and PTA into almost 100 credits.

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GRATIS

FREE

Gomez-Bethke bolsters professional credibility potential with Metro State degree



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Mayor's intern takes new post

Irene Bethke-Gomez leaves her internship in the Minneapolis mayor's office this week for her own office as State Commissioner of Human Rights.

Urban Corps interns do not ordinarily make such a transition (at least this quickly), but Bethke-Gomez is an extraordinary woman.

Although she had long worked as an active volunteer for non-profit and for-profit organizations, she began her official college studies after her children were on their own.

Working toward her undergraduate degree in business administration at Metropolitan State University, Bethke-Gomez was placed in two consecutive internships in Minneapolis Mayor Donald Fraser's office. The knowledge and skills she acquired in the two positions as well as bi-lingual and bi-cultural skills makes the transition a logical one.

The first internship focused on learning about local government, public relations and expository writing. 'The mayor's office enlightened me as to what the system is and how to work within it. I really became familiar with government administration,' she said.

She also learned at the mayor's office how to stretch depleting resources. 'When Minneapolis has decreasing resources to work with--and meanwhile increasing numbers to serve--the office becomes increasingly creative in making those resources go further.'

An example: Bethke-Gomez worked on the Indo-Chinese Coordinating Committee (during the course of one of the internships). A problem came up when the city's animal control personnel were having trouble with the indo-chinese community. Evidently, the biggest problem was that many of the people were afraid of uniforms.

When the issue was brought to City Council, it was determined that the city conduct a workshop to educate people about the cultural background of the Indo-Chinese.



Irene Bethke-Gomez

'That's a wonderfully creative way of diffusing tension, solving the problem effectively and at a minimum cost to the city,' she said.

Her work with the Indo-Chinese community stems from her involvement prior to her internships with the Cuban Refugee Program. It could be said, however, that it is her commitment to the principles of human rights and cross-cultural understanding that inspires her action.

During the course of two internships, she certainly has become involved, whether as an observer, a researcher or a committee member. She only told me about five of her 'committee-ships.'

Her second internship focused on advocacy and criminal justice.

Bethke-Gomez staffs the Hispanic Advisory Committee, which brought non-partisan participants together, actively working with the issues of the Hispanic community.

'I have come to understand the importance and the value of offering people access to the city. Having access to our city for a community traditionally without that access has been helpful,' she said.

She was appointed to the Police Practices Taskforce in Minneapolis, whose

goal was to improve community relations with the police.

Of all the talents Bethke-Gomez has brought to her internship, she said that the most important was her bi-lingual, bi-cultural skills. Not only has it brought her the capacity to relate to people in a special way, but it has given her the opportunity to help people in the city who are in need of a translator. Since offering her services to the departments within City Hall, she has helped police suspects, trial witnesses and people simply seeking information about the city.

A more literal 'access to the city' was also studied by Bethke-Gomez in work she did for a committee to help people with handicaps and disabilities.

'I gained a sensitive perspective, I believe, on people with physical disabilities. I learned to address issues that were sensitive problems. I talked with people who had these kinds of differences. I learned what 504 means! ('504' refers to legislation which requires public buildings be accessible to handicapped and disabled persons.)

Working with the mayor's staff, particularly her direct supervisor Ele Colborn, 'very strongly contributed to my personal growth', Bethke-Gomez said.

Mayor Fraser's own commitment to human rights--nationally recognized, she noted--has made her position as an aide especially rewarding. 'It has been a privilege to work with someone of the mayor's caliber,' she said.

Bethke-Gomez is a strong supporter of internships.

'My internships have been a good training ground,' she said. 'It's a good way to find out if you are in the field you want to be in.'

'It is especially a way for people of color to get into the system. Internships are a wonderful way of providing them that kind of exposure. It is also a way for departments to understand people of a different culture,' she said.

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because of the ever-increasing cost of living I would probably be interested in these publications. Almost half of the titles are FREE. At that price I can see my inflation fell to -3.3 per cent last month.

I'm glad Mr. Sabo is watching out for us and making sure we get as much free information as possible. Who cares if it is already available for free at any local library. Forget Frenzel. I'm for Martin Olav Sabo because he cares. He sends me all that free stuff. As he told me in his letter, "If I may be of further

CACCC to meet May 18, 7:30 p.m.

The Camden Area Community Concerns Council (CACCC) will meet on Tuesday, May 18, 7:30 p.m. at Folwell park. All interested persons in the area are invited to attend.

A varied program will be offered. Irene Gomez deBethke, a representative from Mayor Fraser's office will talk as will a speaker from Northwestern Bell who will discuss the telephone system and answer questions from the audience.

Also, a representative from a University of Minnesota graduate school class will be on hand to discuss their involvement with the city's Task Force on unemployment which has plans for an unemployment resource program specifically for the Camden area. (See article on page 1).

Refreshments will be served.

Davies

Continued from page 1B

commission, established by the 1990 Legislature, replaces an advisory group that has been appointed by the governor.

Perpich does not favor the new commission and said yesterday that it will not improve the quality of judges that he has selected.

*Davies, 58, has been a professor at William Mitchell College of Law since 1969. His appointment, effective Sunday, brings the number of judges on the appeals court to 15. Perpich has appointed every one.

A 16th member, state Sen. Randolph Peterson, DFL-Wyoming, is expected to be appointed by Perpich later this year and would join the court in December.

In addition, the governor will name a new chief justice of the Supreme Court to replace Peter Popovich, who reaches retirement age later this year.

Davies was in the Senate from 1958 until his defeat in 1982. A DFLer, he was chairman of the Judiciary Committee for nine years and also was Senate president. Perpich was in the Senate from 1962 until he became lieutenant governor in 1970.

As head of the Judiciary Committee, Davies was a driving force in the adoption of no-fault automobile insurance and was closely connected with laws dealing with protection of privacy, the Equal Rights Amendment, sentencing guidelines, mental commitment, drunken driving, and crime victim reparation. He is considered a preeminent student of the Minnesota Constitution.

Davies is a graduate of the University of Minnesota and its law school. He has been on the Minnesota Commission on Uniform State Laws for 21 years.

Appointed to district benches were:

■ Gabriel D. Giancola, 60, Fridley, to a new seat in Elk River. He is a partner in the firm Barna, Guzy, Merrill, Hynes & Giancola Ltd. and a graduate of William Mitchell College of Law.

■ William R. Howard, 44, St. Louis Park, to a new seat in Hennepin County. He has been manager of the workers' compensation section of the Minnesota attorney general's office since 1984. He is a graduate of the University of Minnesota and its law school.

■ Lucy Ann Wieland, 39, Minneapolis, to a new seat in Hennepin County. She has been a partner in the firm of Colich & Wieland since 1984. She is a graduate of Stanford University and William Mitchell College of Law.

■ E. Anne McKinsey, 43, Minneapolis, to fill the Hennepin County District judgeship being vacated by Harold Odland, who is taking disability retirement. She has been a member of the firm Robins, Kaplan, Miller & Ciresi since 1983. She is a graduate of the University of Minnesota and the Washington College of Law.

■ Salvador Rosas, 39, St. Paul, to fill the Ramsey County District Court vacancy created by the resignation of Miera. Miera was suspended for a year by the Minnesota Supreme Court in 1988 for making improper sexual advances to his court reporter.

Rosas has worked at the Neighborhood Justice Center since 1984, first as an attorney and then as executive director. He is a graduate of DePaul University and the University of Minnesota Law School.

■ Patrice K. Sutherland, 36, Inver Grove Heights, to a new Dakota County seat in Hastings. She is

worked at the law firm of Sutherland & Strandemo since 1980, and is a graduate of the University of Minnesota and the William Mitchell College of Law.

Paul V. Rieke, 45, Burnsville, was reappointed as chief judge of the state Workers' Compensation Court of Appeals. He was on the court from 1979 to 1985 and from 1987 to the present.

Perpich also announced seven appointments to the new Commission on Judicial Selection.

Besides Bransford, he named Tom Tinkham, incoming president of the Minnesota State Bar Association; Kim Buechel Mesun, incoming president, Minnesota Women Lawyers Inc.; Roger Van Heel, president, Minnesota County Attorneys Association; Cindy Daly, chairwoman, State Public Defenders Association; Beverly McKinnell, president, League of Women Voters, and Jim Ketcham, board chairman, Common Cause of Minnesota.

The Supreme Court also will name two permanent members to the commission.

Miera gets his wish, applauds choice of successor

By Paul Gustafson
Staff Writer

Justice Center's Salvador Rosas named to bench

Alberto Miera got his wish and two opponents running for his Ramsey County District Court seat had their campaigns derailed Wednesday when Gov. Rudy Perpich appointed Salvador Rosas to succeed the controversial Miera.

Rosas, 39, is director of the Neighborhood Justice Center in St. Paul.

Rather than face an uphill election fight, Miera decided to resign effective this fall and urged Perpich to appoint a Hispanic lawyer rather than allow the seat to be filled by election.

Miera and some of the judges he has fought with on other issues agree on Rosas' appointment.

"I think this is a great appointment. ... Sal will be a terrific addition to our bench. He's a well-respected trial attorney, and I think he's a real good person," said Ramsey County Chief Judge Joanne Smith.

Miera, who also was an attorney at the Neighborhood Justice Center,

said Rosas "is an excellent choice. ... I can't imagine a better choice regardless of ethnic background." Miera said he will leave the district court bench Oct. 6, a month earlier than he had planned.

Rosas said the appointment "is a great honor for me, my family and the Hispanic community. I'm looking forward to being as productive as possible. I'm looking forward to hitting the ground running."

The appointment was a heavy blow to Miera's would-be opponents in an election for the six-year judgeship — Assistant Ramsey County Attorney Clayton Robinson and St. Paul attorney Dan Dobson.

Although disappointed that the governor did not allow the election to go forward, Robinson said he applauds the selection of Rosas "because he's a good lawyer and because it's a good demonstration of attaining the governor's goal of cultural diversity on the bench."

Robinson said he is evaluating whether to run for the seat being vacated by retiring Ramsey County District Judge James Lynch or challenge one of the sitting Ramsey County judges who must stand for election this fall.

Dobson said he plans to join what had been a two-way race between two assistant St. Paul City attorneys, Walt Bowser and Ed Starr, for Lynch's seat.

"It's unfortunate the voters of Ramsey County won't have an opportunity to decide ... but we did succeed in forcing the resignation of Judge Miera, and we hope to continue to process of reform by running for Judge Lynch's seat," Dobson said.

Losing its staff to Perpich judicial appointments has become almost a tradition at the tiny Neighborhood Justice Center, established in 1972 by minority community leaders to serve the poor in Ramsey County.

Besides Miera, former Justice Center

attorneys who now occupy judicial posts include Ramsey County District Judge Edward Wilson and Hennepin County District Judges Isabel Gomez-Edwards and Michael Davis.

Hennepin County District Judge Pamela Alexander was a clerk at the center, and Manuel Cervantes, a former center community worker, is a judge with the state Workers Compensation Court of Appeals.

Justice Center director Stephen Cooper left in 1987 to become the state's Human Rights commissioner.

Cooper said Rosas, who succeeded him as director, "is very hard-working and well-respected. It would be hard to find an attorney more widely respected by the community, but also by the bench and other attorneys."

"He grew up in large family where the father was deported for being undocumented. He was pretty much on his own — he's kind of a success story that warms your heart," Cooper said.

Rosas graduated from DePaul University and received his law degree from the University of Minnesota in 1976. Before joining the Justice Center, he worked for Centro Legal, representing Hispanic community members in civil legal matters.

Miera became embroiled in controversy in 1986 when his former court reporter, Neil Johnson, charged that the judge repeatedly tried to start a sexual relationship with him and forcibly kissed him on the mouth.

In March 1987, a Wright County jury found that Miera had committed battery against Johnson and awarded Johnson \$375,000. That was later reduced to \$125,000 by a Wright County judge. Johnson lost in his attempt

to recover damages from Miera for sexual harassment.

A month later, Miera's fellow Ramsey County judges voted to ask the Minnesota Supreme Court to suspend Miera. Although the justices denied the suspension request, they referred it to a three-judge panel that did recommend he be suspended.

Miera, however, blasted his colleagues for seeking the suspension and embarked on a 58-day fast to protest their actions. He ended the fast July 7, 1988, two days after he was suspended for one year by the Supreme Court.

The court also criticized Miera's colleagues for asking for his suspension.

Master of Arts in

Week of Sept. 2nd, 1992

Hispanic Heritage Celebration in Minnesota



Los actos de reconocimiento de 1990 fueron presididos por el entonces Gobernador Rudy Perpich y su distinguida esposa Lola.

In 1978, Instituto de Arte y Cultura as a catalyst, inaugurated the Minnesota Hispanic Heritage celebration. This on-going program came about in response to the community need to address the racism and negative image of Hispanics portrayed by the media. The first Minnesota Hispanic heritage celebration was a successful, well-coordinated event because Instituto collaborated with many Hispanic and non-Hispanic agencies to honor the contributions of outstanding Hispanic men and women who contribute daily to the quality of life in our nation.

This legacy of volunteers among community and professional staff continues to produce a high quality event event to the present date. Instituto celebrates the Hispanic Cultural Diversity by focusing upon the rich tradition of music, dances, films, and arts of Mexico, Central and South America and the Caribbean. Thus, celebrating diversity and building community.

The 1992 Hispanic Heritage celebration will be an even greater event

than it has been in the past. We have the co-sponsorship of the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board and that of the St. Anthony Main Association. As a result of our supportive and collaborative efforts with Hispanic artists as well as all Hispanic agencies we have developed a network of support and referral. Thus providing the community with access and participation in understanding and experiencing the Hispanic arts and culture.

Hispanic Heritage Month is also an opportunity to focus national attention upon the concerns of the Hispanic community. It is the time to reflect not only upon the past, but also the present, and well as the future. Explorers such as Ponce de Leon, who discovered Florida in 1513 and Francisco Vasquez de Coronado, who explored the southwest in 1540, remind us of our past. Hispanic Heritage Month is a celebration of the future and the contributions Hispanics are making as we approach the year 2000.

Irene Gomez-Bethke Honored for Service to Latino Community

By Jay Miskowicz

In recognition of her many years of work with the Instituto de Arte y Cultura (IAC), as well as in general the state's Chicano and Latino community, Irene Gomez-Bethke was presented with a plaque at the Hispanic Heritage Month Celebration Awards Program. The event was held October 11 at the St. Paul Science Museum. Rev. Tony Machado of Todos Los Santos Church in Minneapolis handed out awards and Dr. Rusty Barcelo, a vice-president at the University of Minnesota, delivered the keynote speech.

"I feel like I really didn't do all that work myself," she told La Prensa in a recent phone conversation. "I had the help of my family, my friends, and of course all my associates at IAC. They're the ones who have helped make this achievement possible."

Recognized as well that evening at the awards banquet were Tanya Galaviz, a production assistant at public television channel KTCA and a youth leader who has worked with organizations such as Teens Networking Together (TNT); Norma Garces, an education advocate and executive director of La Escuelita in Minneapolis; Juan Linares, Hispanic Organizing and Outreach Coordinator of Catholic Charities who also helps Hispanics to develop their own businesses; Miguel Ramos, president of



Irene Gomez-Bethke was recognized during the IAC awards banquet at the Science Museum of Minnesota

American Multivision Corporation who has collaborated with places like La Oportunidad and Kids First, Inc.; and Lupe Serrano, executive director of Casa de Esperanza and a development consultant to various Twin Cities organizations.

Gomez-Bethke has not had a lot of free time since officially retiring from IAC on September 11. Since then she has been interim executive director of the Chicano Latino Affairs Council (CLAC), taking over on October 5 after the departure of Maggie Zalamea. Gomez-Bethke plans to stay for six months while the organization seeks to permanently fill the position. In the mean time, her priority is "to make sure that the council doesn't lose its momentum

in areas important to the Hispanic community."

Along with other board members of CLAC, she is developing goals and agenda items for the next session of the state legislature. These include finding funding for minority scholarships for higher education and maintaining a strong commitment to affirmative action, which Gomez-Bethke calls "a remedy for hundreds of years of exclusion of people of color, a way for them to participate in all the things this country has to offer."

A member of the Human Rights Commission for the city of New Hope, Gomez-Bethke said she keeps active "working for justice as a servant of the community."

Continues on page 4

delinquent, Enquist volunteers

Irene Gómez . . .

Continues from page 1

She is also working on a book based upon her own and her family's experiences as Mexican-Americans in the United States and here in Minnesota. She has been keeping a journal while looking through old photos, correspondence, and other documents, all of which provide "the rich lore of the history of my family."



Pictured left to right standing are Eddie Calderon, Wendy Adler-Robenson, Sandy Vargas, Sue Short, Judy Fairbanks, Tom Beaver, Bill Small, Irene Gomez de Bethke, Charles Smith, Penny Roberts, and Gary Sudduth. Seated left to right

are Jackie Slater, Kathy O'Brien, Mayor Don Fraser, Sally Howard and Tony Scallon. Not pictured are Vy Pham, Larry Blackwell, and Al Garcia. Photo by Danny Davis.

Cablevision will uphold affirmative action

On Thursday, Nov. 4, Mayor Don Fraser signed a resolution awarding the cablevision franchise to Northern Cablevision of Minneapolis and Minneapolis Cablesystems.

In the presence of the Ad Hoc Cablevision Affirmative Action Committee, he also signed an approval of the Affirmative Action Plan for both firms. Danny Davis was on hand to take photographs of this event as well as the citizens on the advisory committee who have volunteered so much of their time.

This committee has assisted the City with securing plans that will comply with the City's Affirmative Action requirements. These plans will insure that persons of color, women and persons with disabilities are employed in all aspects of construction and operation of the cablesystems. The plan will also assure that minority and women con-

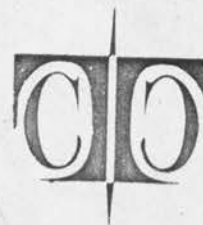
tractors have the opportunity to do business with the cable companies.

The committee will continue to assist the City with monitoring efforts while the cablesystem is being built and after service to residents begins. Projections are that the first cable service to the City will be in the latter part of 1983.

Members of the committee are Tom Beaver, Indian Community Representative; Eddie Calderon, Centre for Asians and Pacific Islanders; Judy Fairbanks, Indian Coordinator Mayor's Office; Albert Garcia, Centro Cultural Chicano; Irene Gomez de Bethke, Hispanic Coordinator Mayor's Office; Vy Pham, Indochinese Advisory Council; Sue Short, City Advisory Committee on People with Disabilities; Willia, A. Small, Women/Minority Business Advisory Committee; Charles E Smith,

low-income and Black communities Representative; and Gary Sudduth, Minneapolis Urban League.

Former U.N. ambassador to speak at a benefit reception



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IRENE GOMEZ-BETHKE

Executive Director

Instituto de Arte y Cultura

During the 1980s, Minnesota's Hispanic population jumped to 53,800, a whopping 68 percent increase, which makes Hispanics the third-largest minority group in the state.

Those figures make what Irene Gomez-Bethke does all the more important. Since 1984, she has been the executive director of Insti-



tuto de Arte y Cultura (IAC), the largest arts, cultural and educational service for Hispanics in the Twin Cities. It's also the only program that provides those services statewide.

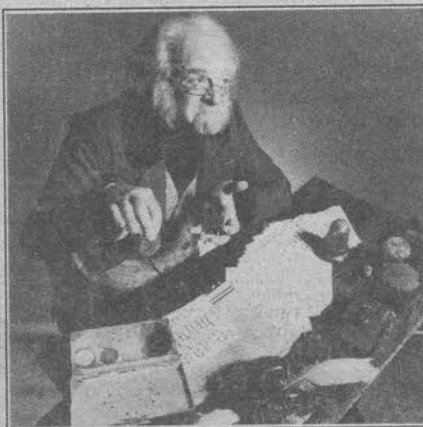
The IAC teaches Hispanic culture to Hispanics and non-Hispanics by utilizing theater, dance, storytelling, art, folklore and cuisine. The Inner-City Summer Youth Program, just one of the IAC services, provides 10 weeks of Spanish and Hispanic culture to disadvantaged children from the inner cities. Last year, 91,925 people attended IAC programs.

"[Gomez-Bethke] promotes the Spanish arts, but she does it in a remarkably broad, inclusive framework," says Phill Lindsay of the Minneapolis Community Development Agency. "She builds lots of links to other ethnic communities. Most ethnic-based organizations tend to focus on their own group. She's a bridge builder." He adds that the IAC has actively worked with the

Hmong, Jewish and African American communities.

The IAC does not confine itself to the Twin Cities, however. Group members regularly go on the road to bring Latin American culture to the Hispanic communities in Willmar, Duluth and other Minnesota cities.

Gomez-Bethke, Minnesota commissioner of human rights in 1983 and 1984, has devoted most of her life to making existence easier for Hispanics in Minnesota. A graduate of Minneapolis North High School, she has also served on the boards of the Urban Coalition, the Spanish-Speaking Affairs Council, the Legal Rights Center and Hispanos en Minnesota, among other organizations.



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La Voz Latina

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septiembre 1998 • Vol. 32, No. 9

Celebración de la Independencia de México

Por Julie Pfitzinger

La comunidad del West Side está haciendo los últimos preparativos para la celebración de la Independencia de México a llevarse a cabo el sábado 12 de septiembre de 10 a.m. a 6 p.m., con algunos eventos llevándose a cabo el domingo 13 de septiembre. La celebración este año será auspiciada por Riverview Economic Development Association (REDA) y Capitol Beverage Sales. Toda la comunidad y sus visitantes tendrán la oportunidad de celebrar este día tan importante en la historia mexicana disfrutando de música en vivo, baile, un torneo de fútbol, comida y bebida y un gran desfile de moda. Varias tarimas estarán a través de toda el área presentando música y baile. En el estacionamiento de Las Américas/ El Amanecer habrá una presentación especial por la Banda Inspiración de Jalisco, dirigida por Lupe González de Radio REY. En el estacionamiento de La Clínica

un grupo de salsa Sabor Tropical tocará, y clases gratuitas serán ofrecidas. Los Twin City Boys estarán en el Cozy Cantina, quien tendrá también un puesto de cerveza durante la celebración, el segundo puesto estará en Joseph's. En el Parque Castillo, se exhibirán bailes folklóricos realizados por los grupos Resplendor de México, Cuauhtemoc Danzantes, Los Alegres Bailadores, y Rincón del Flamenco con La Cordobesa como invitado especial.

Una gran variedad de vendedores de comida y artes estarán localizados a través del Parque Castillo y los restaurantes del área también permanecerán abiertos. El Parque Río Vista será la cede de un gran torneo de fútbol que durará todo el fin de semana, siendo la premiación el domingo en la tarde.

Un nuevo evento será el desfile de moda a ser presentado en el Parque Castillo el domingo, presentando ropa de comercios del West Side, como Novedades Lupita, Arroyo's Fashions, San Pablo West y muchos más. El programa

coreografiado se llevará a cabo de 1 p.m. a 3 p.m. y presentará jóvenes modelos del West Side.

Para ofrecer más seguridad a los presentes algunas calles serán cerradas durante el sábado. La Calle Concord, entre la Ada y la State será cerrada, también cerrarán la Avenida Clinton entre el Parque Castillo y el Río Vista. Rachel LaBelle, directora asociada de REDA, dijo que especialmente por los niños corriendo entre los parques la decisión fue tomada de cerrar la calle durante la festividad.

El sábado en la noche, el evento final de Uniéndonos. La celebración del Puente de la Calle Wabasha presentará un gran concierto de orquesta en el Harriet Island, una parada y la iluminación del Puente de la Calle Wabasha, seguido por una exhibición de fuegos artificiales. LaBelle dijo que los visitantes de la Celebración del Día de la Independencia están invitados a quedarse para las festividades de la noche al borde del Río Mississippi.



Juventud de ¡AVANCE! se gradúa del Instituto de Liderazgo Juvenil Prudential

La juventud de ¡AVANCE! se unió a Jimmy Longoria de CreArte para así crear "La Llorona", un mural sobre la esquina de las Avenidas Chicago y Franklin en el Sur de Minneapolis. Los Fondos para este proyecto fueron obtenidos de Project for Pride Living y fue auspiciado por Steve Kramer y Tyrone Guzmán del Centro Cultural Chicano. El proyecto del mural es la etapa final de la juventud de ¡AVANCE!, al completar un proyecto de servicio y aprendizaje requerido por El Instituto de Liderazgo Juvenil Prudential, para así graduarse. De este modo, estos jóvenes líderes del futuro devuelven algo a su comunidad mientras

establecen estandartes más altos para la juventud del sur de Minneapolis.

El programa ¡AVANCE! es un programa innovador para el éxito académico de la juventud latina auspiciado por Minnesota Hispanic Education Program. Este gran programa ayuda a estudiantes a avanzar en su educación al desarrollar destrezas académicas y personales que motiven el desarrollo del liderazgo entre ellos. El programa opera durante el año escolar y el verano, trabajando con

¡AVANCE! vea página 2

Instituto de Arte y Cultura Celebra 30 años de Preservación y Promoción de la Cultura Hispana

Por Julie Pfitzinger

Irene Gómez-Bethke, la directora ejecutiva del Instituto de Arte y Cultura, ha realizado muchos trabajos en su larga y variada carrera, pero es el hacer historias como "La Tía María" el más que ella disfruta tanto personal como profesionalmente. Cuando Gómez-Bethke ofrece sus historias a niños en las escuelas, siempre les pide que le cuenten la historia de cuando nacieron o la historia de su nombre. "Usualmente dos o tres solamente saben su propia historia", dijo ella. "No debe de ser sorpresa cuando los niños se sienten aislados, si un niño no conoce de dónde él vino, se le hará difícil ser unido a su familia". Gómez-Bethke dijo que ella siempre les asegura a los niños que cuando pregunten de su historia no tan sólo descubrirán "cosas maravillosas" de su familia, sino también su historia "los ayudará a descubrir quien ellos son".

La teoría de Gómez-Bethke, de cuan importante es el descubrirse uno mismo, no está muy lejos de las metas del Instituto de Arte y Cultura, el cual fue fundado en el 1978 "para presentar, preservar y promover la cultura hispana a través de bellas artes, artes culturales, presentaciones y los medios de comunicación". Con la presentación de artistas de más de 21 países hispanos, Instituto de Arte y Cultura busca inspirar no tan sólo la comunidad hispana en Minnesota sino también todas las comunidades. "Desde el 1978, nuestra organización ha tratado de fomentar la comunidad", mencionó ella. "Tenemos muchas diferentes culturas bajo una misma bandera, nuestro común denominador es que somos hispanos, y podemos celebrar nuestras diferencias".

Gómez-Bethke dijo que la idea del Instituto de Arte y Cultura nació del deseo de encontrar un modo de preservar formas

Gomez, vea página 2

¡AVANCE!

de la página 1

estudiantes de 6to a 8vo grado de la Escuela Windom Open, la Escuela Emmerson Spanish Immersion y la Escuela Intermedia Washington Technology.

El Instituto de Liderazgo Juvenil Prudential es un esfuerzo combinado entre el Programa de Educación para Hispanos en Minnesota, Prudential, Juventud al Servicio de América y la Fundación Points of Light. El Instituto le ofrece entrenamiento liderazgo juvenil de alta calidad que está usualmente disponible únicamente para ejecutivos de corporaciones y líderes gubernamentales. Este entrenamiento está siendo ofrecido en comunidades a través de Minnesota. En las Twin Cities los participantes de ¡AVANCE! han aceptado ser parte de un movimiento juvenil nacional que se enfoca en liderazgo y desarrollo comunitario.

Jimmy Longoria, un artista chicano del sur de Texas dirigió a los participantes de ¡AVANCE! al presentar la leyenda de La Llorona en este proyecto del mural. La Llorona es una trágica historia que ilustra la característica de la comunidad Chicano/Latino de aceptar la responsabilidad personal por los errores de interacción social.

"Estamos encantados de unirnos a Prudential para presentar el Instituto, el cual expandirá las oportunidades de liderazgo y servicio comunitario para miles de niños a través de los Estados Unidos, especialmente la juventud del Sur de Minneapolis. Por este proyecto del mural que se realizó junto a CreArte, nuestra juventud latina ha aprendido a servir a la comunidad, y la comunidad se ha beneficiado de un nuevo grupo de líderes jóvenes y un gran trabajo artístico en el Sur de Minneapolis", dijo María De León, directora de ¡AVANCE!

Charles, un joven de ¡AVANCE!, añade con orgullo, "La mejor parte de mi verano ha sido hacer el mural porque ha sido algo que yo y mis compañeros hemos hecho para nuestra comunidad".



Gomez

de la página 1

de arte cultural. En los años 70, Gómez-Bethke asistió a una conferencia en Colorado que inspiró un sueño en su interior. "Había un centro que se enfocaba en servicios sociales y arte", dijo ella, añadiendo que supo de inmediato que quería desarrollar un centro así en Minnesota algún día. Instituto de Arte y Cultura fue el resultado de 30 individuos, "desde inmigrantes hasta Ph.D.s", según Gómez-Bethke, quien formó el comité, ellos decidieron que querían una organización que incluyera todos los grupos hispanos y que celebrara las aportaciones de cada uno. "Estamos decididos a educar las personas en las grandes tradiciones y buenos artistas que tenemos localmente", mencionó ella. Gómez-Bethke, quien tiene un bachillerato en Administración de Arte, pasó a ser la directora ejecutiva del Instituto de Arte y Cultura en el 1984.

El Instituto de Arte y Cultura auspicia variados programas a través del estado de Minnesota, incluyendo exhibiciones de arte, talleres, un programa de enriquecimiento (HAASE) que busca promover la cultura hispana en las escuelas del área metropolitana, la Coalición de Hispanos en Artes de Cable (CHICA) que provee oportunidades a los hispanos en el campo de las telecomunicaciones, celebraciones del Cinco de Mayo y una ceremonia anual para premios de liderazgo. "La misma visión de diversidad que comenzó esta organización continúa, y es consistente en nuestra programación", dijo Gómez-Bethke. "Queremos enseñar respeto y crear amor por la diferentes culturas".

Gómez-Bethke está bien orgullosa de un programa que el Instituto de Arte y Cultura presentó el otoño pasado en el Colegio de St. Catherine, llamado "Esplendor de México". La producción, que tomó dos años en ser creada presenta a bailarines, cantantes y mariachis locales actuando en frente a una bella pintura realizada por el artista Alejandro Trujillo. "Fue realmente una producción maravillosa", mencionó. "Tenemos tanta gente talentosa que miembros de la audiencia nos decían que parece un espectáculo de Broadway". El gran evento fue filmado por la televisión de cable y se ha pasado en muchas ocasiones debido a la continua petición

de los televidentes. Gómez-Bethke dijo que los planes son que sea presentado por la compañía de cable en Saint Paul y tal vez sea posible que llegue al área de Winona también. "Habíamos deseado hacer un programa como este desde hace mucho tiempo, y el poderlo hacer junto a la gran respuesta, es como un hacer un sueño realidad", mencionó con entusiasmo.

Otro de los más grandes proyectos del Instituto de Arte y Cultura es organizar los eventos para celebrar el Mes de la Herencia Hispana, que se llevará a cabo del 15 de septiembre al 15 de octubre. Esta celebración ha sido reconocida desde el tiempo del Presidente Johnson en los años 60, y luego enmendada por el Congreso para ser así por todo un mes. Gómez-Bethke llama la celebración "un buen tiempo para celebrar la independencia de todos los países hispanos y honrar nuestra música, baile y contribuciones culturales que estos países han hecho". Este año, el Instituto de Arte y Cultura celebrará Mujeres en Artes durante el mes de la herencia. "Es interesante ver como muchas mujeres no creen que tienen talento artístico, como coser, tejer, macramé, especialmente ya que muchos de estos artes han desaparecido gracias a la tecnología", dijo Gómez-Bethke. "Necesitamos ayudar a las mujeres a reconocer que ellas son artistas y que también han ayudado de gran manera a superar la calidad de vida en Minnesota".

El 10 y 11 de octubre, el Instituto de Arte y Cultura ofrecerá un evento celebrando las Mujeres en Artes, en el Museo de Ciencia de Minnesota, exhibiendo costuras y demostraciones de tejidos, presentaciones especiales y varios invitadas que compartirán con el público. Gómez-Bethke dijo que un programa adicional ha sido tentativamente programado para el Centro de Arte Walker para celebrar el Mes de la Herencia Hispana.

Para más información sobre las actividades del Mes de la Herencia Hispana o cualquier otro programa ofrecido por el Instituto de Arte y Cultura, llame al 824-0708 ext. 125.

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By JUDY WILLIAMS

For most people, caring for six children would be a task that would leave little time for outside activities. Not so for a high-powered New Hope woman, though.

During the past three decades, Irene Gomez-Bethke has raised her six children but also has found time to volunteer in more than a dozen organizations, finish her high school education, hold several paid positions, begin college studies, serve as administrative aide to the mayor of Minneapolis and, for the past year, hold the position of Commissioner of the Minnesota State Department of Human Rights.

Gomez-Bethke, a North Minneapolis native of Mexican-American heritage, has a long history of working in the human rights area. As far back as the 1950s and 1960s, she was active

in such groups as the League of United Latin American Citizens, the Hispanic Advisory Board, United Farm Workers and Hispanos En Minnesota. Her early efforts focused on gaining voting access for minorities and government services for Spanish-speaking persons.

AS THE CIVIL RIGHTS movement spread nationally during the 1960s and 1970s, so did Gomez-Bethke's involvement. While continuing her advocacy for Mexican-Americans, her efforts expanded to include human rights issues for women and the disabled. She was instrumental in forming Women of Color, Chicano Latino for Political Action, and Chicana Feminists. She served on several University of Minnesota Hispanic advisory committees and was a volunteer worker at Glenwood Hills Hospital in Golden Valley and

North Memorial Hospital in Robbinsdale.

And, in the middle of all that, while her children were progressing through the educational system, Gomez-Bethke found time to fill a void created when she dropped out of North High School in 1952. She went back to school and earned her high school diploma from Anoka High School in 1970.

Following graduation, she embarked on a career in management, first as restaurant and deli manager at the New Hope K-Mart store and then as food service supervisor and director at Homeward Bound in New Hope. Although she held management positions many years before beginning college business administration studies, Gomez-Bethke asserts that "Especially women come to the workforce with a lot of experience in organization, coping, time management and even psychology."

Gomez-Bethke said that working at Homeward Bound was "a highlight in my life . . . What I especially liked was that every child, no matter what the handicap, could achieve a success." But she left Homeward Bound in 1979 to begin business administration studies at Metro State University.

WHILE A STUDENT at Metro State U, Gomez-Bethke also worked for three years as an administrative aide to Minneapolis Mayor Don Fraser. The combination of management work experience, business administration academic studies and three decades of human rights advocacy as a volunteer and within government has adequately prepared her for the human rights commissioner job, she feels. "I know I can do the job," she said.

Still, "I was floored," was her reaction to her January 1983 appointment by Governor Rudy Perpich. Her reaction, however, was more to the rapidity with which she was appointed than to the enormity of the job. She had interviewed for the position in the morning and was hired the same afternoon.

Gomez-Bethke said she had applied directly for the commissioner's position and also had been recommended by several organizations. "They recognized that I'm a good



IRENE GOMEZ-BETHKE, New Hope, commissioner of the Minnesota State Department of Human Rights: "I always meet my goals."

of human rights concern

worker," she commented. "And that happens when you're a volunteer. People get to know you." By this time, she had spent eight years working with the Urban Coalition and six years with the Legal Rights Center.

The Department of Human Rights has been under fire for its large backlog of unresolved cases. About 3,000 cases of alleged discrimination currently are on file with the agency. Gomez-Bethke also has been criticized by Senator Jim Ulland, Republican minority leader, for approving a two-month paid leave of absence for a department employee to train for the Mr. Universe competition. "There's been a lot of attention focused on this department," Gomez-Bethke said. And she expects "very positive things to happen" as a result of that attention.

A GOVERNOR'S TRANSITION TEAM has been studying the agency's structure and a Governor's Task Force has been reviewing the department's management, budget, case procedures and the state Human Rights Act. Both reports are due in February. Gomez-Bethke expects the department's budget and staff will be increased.

The commissioner's immediate goals for her department are to reduce the overall caseload and to reduce the time it takes in case processing. "But not at the expense of due process," she said.

To that end, Gomez-Bethke, who manages a staff of 46, in November initiated a "backlog reduction" program. A total of 1,050 cases that were 18 months or older, predating Gomez-Bethke's tenure, were identified. Now, three months later, 787 of those cases have been contacted, closed or reactivated.

Protected classes in the Minnesota Human Rights Act include race, color, national origin, religion, creed, age, marital status, disability, familial status (parent) and public assistance recipients. Areas in which these groups are protected include employment, housing, public accommodations, education, credit, public service, reprisal (for filing discrimination charges) and aiding and abetting an act of discrimination.

THE BULK OF CASES filed, 80

percent, charge discrimination in employment. Sex-based discrimination claims account for 38 percent of the employment cases. But the largest percent increase, according to Gomez-Bethke, has occurred in age-discrimination cases. Both in Minnesota and nationally, there has been a 326 percent increase during 1983 over the previous year in cases alleging age discrimination in the workplace.

In addition to her efforts to speed case processing, Gomez-Bethke is proud of her past-year record of sending 45 cases to hearings and litigation. "This says we're serious about going after discrimination," she asserted. Before she took over the department, only 10 cases a year went to court.

How could anyone manage a household of six active children and still accomplish as much as she has? "I was very equitable in work distribution in our home," Gomez-Bethke said. The family had a job jar, and everyone was taught to handle every kind of job.

"I tried to instill a sense of independence," the commissioner said. All six children, four girls and two boys, were required to do the washing, cleaning, sewing and ironing. One son even took a home economics course in school, before it was required in the curriculum, to learn to cope with home responsibilities.

GOMEZ-BETHKE has lived in New Hope for 19 years. All six of her children, who used only Bethke as their last name, graduated from Cooper High School in Robbinsdale Area School District 281. All six remain in the Twin Cities area.

Two, Julia and Jess, still live at home with the commissioner and her husband, Jack. Jess recently graduated from the University of Minnesota, and Julia is taking a break in her university studies. Daughters Mary, Patricia and Anita are homemakers — Gomez-Bethke has 11 grandchildren — and son Jack works for the Urban Coalition.

When Gomez-Bethke enrolled in college in 1979, two of her children also were attending college. Some evenings, she said, "All three of us would be sitting at the table working

on college work together."

While Jess and Julia were at the University of Minnesota, Gomez-Bethke elected to attend Metropolitan State University. "I felt comfortable there," she said. "The school is for older women who have gone back to finish their education." Lower tuition costs also influenced her decision, as well as the school's independent study policy, which allowed her to continue working.

WHILE HER FAMILY was "proud of the fact that I had that vision" to return to school, the commissioner said, it also helped her to "realize the kind of academic stress" her children were experiencing.

Besides her commitment to human rights, Gomez-Bethke has a strong interest in the arts. She has taken Folkloric courses at Southern Colorado University, the University of Washington, Kansas State University and in Mexico. She was a costume designer for El Ballet de Minnesota at the university and on the Arts Advisory Committee of the Metropolitan Council.

Gomez-Bethke's performing arts interest has been adopted by her family. All six children are performing members of Ballet de Mexano, a group that presents folkloric dances throughout the Midwest.

Closer to home, the commissioner is a member of the Parish Community of St. Joseph in New Hope, where she is an usher. She also served on School District 281's Minority Task Force.

BEYOND HER AMBITION to reorganize the state human rights agency, "to be sure that our department is capable of meeting emerging needs," Gomez-Bethke also would like to see the state Human Rights Act strengthened. A personal goal is to finish her college degree work, which has become difficult now with the time-consuming responsibilities as commissioner.

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