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Welcome to Guanajuato

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SCHOOL
OF LAW
SMALL SCHOOL.
BIG VALUE.

WELCOME TO GUANAJUATO*

GOVERNOR JUAN CARLOS ROMERO HICKS**

Buenas noches. Good evening. Welcome to the capital of the world, here in Guanajuato. We ordered good weather for you. People are crying because they are happy, not because they are sad.

It is truly an honor to host this 10th Annual Conference of the U.S.-Mexico Law Institute. We know that this Institute is highly devoted to very special causes, and of course we share your basic purpose in promoting research on legal problems common to the U.S. and Mexico and the study of the administration of justice in both countries. We also applaud the fact that you provide a regular forum for attorneys, judges and legal scholars to meet and share opinions with their counterparts from both countries.

You have come to Mexico at a truly fascinating time. On a personal note, I am very proud to have a bi-national, bicultural origin. My mother came to Guanajuato fifty years ago as an exchange student. I repeated the family practice and married somebody from Wisconsin. We have ten children, and they were all born in the U.S. When I asked my wife how it was that we met, she said she came to Guanajuato looking for a husband and settled for me.

Guanajuato is a very important part of Mexico. As you all know, the basic movement for independence began here in 1810. No important movement of Mexican politics or Mexican economics can be explained without the Guanajuato presence. On September 28, 1810 the first battle for the Revolution was here in Guanajuato with Father Hidalgo. And we also like to believe that the second call for independence was also here in Guanajuato, with President Vicente Fox.

The U.S.-Mexico connection is obviously very important. Some years ago, a correspondent for the *New York Times* wrote a special book called *Distant Neighbors*.¹ Obviously, you are no longer distant and we are good neighbors, and I was very proud to hear that President Bush told the Mexican delegation last September at the White House that the U.S.-Mexico connection was second to none. President Bush chose Mexico as his first destination outside the U.S. He came here on February 16th and, out of all of Mexico, he chose Guanajuato, which makes it very special.

* Remarks of the Governor of Guanajuato to members of the United-States Mexico Law Institute at its Tenth Annual Conference held in Guanajuato, Guanajuato, Mexico, September 6-8, 2001.

** Gobernador Juan Carlos Romero Hicks is the Governor of the State of Guanajuato, Mexico where he took office on September 26, 2000, Paseo de la Presa #103, 2º Piso, Palacio De Gobierno, Guanajuato, Gto. Mexico 36000. For many years, education has been the main professional concern that has guided Governor Romero Hicks public activity due to his personal belief that education constitutes the backbone of social and human development for the Guanajuatenses. During his term as Rector (President) of the University of Guanajuato the institution obtained its definitive self-governing status (autonomy). Along with his work in teaching, planning and directing activities in higher education, he has also collaborated with many research and cultural institutions which include the Center for Reach in Mathematics (CIMAT), the Center for Research in Optics (CIO), the Center for Research and Technological Assistance in Leather (CINTEC), Higher education and Research of the State of Guanajuato, A.C., the National Council on Science and Technology (CONACYT), the Center for Education, Training and Technical Assistance in Agriculture (AGROEDUCA) and the State Institute Cultural Affairs, among others. He obtained a B.S. in Industrial Relations in 1974 from the University of Guanajuato: a Masters in Social Science in 1979 from Southern Oregon State College: and an M.B.A. in 1981 also from Southern Oregon State College. Additionally, he has taken professional training courses in the fields of psychology, personnel training and development didactics, industrial safety, administrative auditing, educational technology, political sciences, sociology and human resource management.

1. ALAN RIDING, *DISTANT NEIGHBORS: A PORTRAIT OF THE MEXICANS* (1989).

Today we have a country with many, many needs. In Guanajuato, we are working on social and human development. We are trying to develop a more sustainable economy for the development of our people. We are obviously concerned with the rule of law and public safety. We are also committed to education and to a more humanistic government.

Guanajuato has 4.9 million people. There are some very important things about Guanajuato that I would like to share very briefly. In Guanajuato, besides the history and the culture, we host the most important artistic festival in the Americas, *El Festival Internacional Cervantino*, which had its 29th edition from October 10th to October 28th, 2001.

We also have some very important economic activities, such as agriculture, food processing, processed leather, footwear, accessories, textiles and clothing, handicrafts, hats and automobile parts. And also I would like to point out that we are the first state to develop a network of foreign trade offices in the U.S. We have offices in New York, Dallas, Los Angeles and Chicago. Today we also have trade representatives in Hong Kong and various places in Europe. Obviously, as a proud Guanajuatense, there are few things that I would like to emphasize.

We have the sixth largest economy in Mexico. We have the third-highest ranking infrastructure for development. We have quick access to a big market. Within a four hundred mile radius from Guanajuato, we have about sixty percent of the Mexican market. We have an international airport with flights daily that are going to Atlanta, Dallas, Houston, Chicago, Los Angeles, and a weekly flight to Oakland.

We are exporting many products mainly to the U.S. and Canada. Among them are broccoli, cauliflower, strawberries, asparagus, carrots, sesame seeds, garlic, leather goods, cowboy boots, industrial boots, footwear, accessories, tennis shoes, hats, textiles, blue jeans, sweaters, colonial-style furniture, handicrafts, electronic appliances, software development, transformers, car batteries, automobiles, trucks and vans, chemicals, and petrochemicals.

But the basic pitch is that we are very, very happy.

One of the key issues in modern Mexico is the rule of law, and we would like to believe that we can no longer have two borders that separate us. We have two borders that have to unite us. We have common aspects and values in people. We also need to respect our differences. But beyond all that, we need a better humanity.

Guanajuato is very proud to host you tonight and thank you very much, because your example, by guarding and by exemplifying a good practice with the rule of law, will make this a better world.

Buenas noches. Aprovecho.