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LATEST NEWS

January 7, 2004

Valdez Austinite of the Year

Gary Valdez, president and CEO of Austin-based Focus Strategies LLC, has been named Austinite of the Year by the Greater Austin Chamber of Commerce.

Valdez served as chair of the Greater Austin Chamber of Commerce in 1998, chair of the Austin-San Antonio Corridor Council in 2000 and as a member of the Austin Area Research Organization. In those roles, he was committed to "regionalism," bringing opposing sides in Central Texas together to benefit the area in the future, according to the chamber.

He will be honored at the 126th Annual Meeting of the Greater Austin Chamber on Thursday, Feb. 26, at the Hyatt Regency Austin.

"He has given his time to improve health care, higher education, the environment, regional planning and economic development, and he has done much of that while building and managing a new small business," says Charles Barnett, the chamber's 2003 chairman and president. Barnett is CEO of Seton Healthcare Network.

Rick Burciaga, regional president of Wells Fargo Bank and the chamber's 2004 chairman, says, "Each year we try to select an honoree whose contributions over time make our community a better place to live and do business. Gary's contributions in so many areas that have significant impact on the quality of life here in Central Texas are what really stand out."

Valdez has years of experience in the financial industry and has served extensively as a civic volunteer, willing to share his time freely, according to the Chamber.

In 1999, Valdez formed his own company, Focus Strategies, which provides corporate finance and strategic advisory services.

Valdez' 24-year banking career started at Texas Commerce Bank in 1975. After 10 years with Texas Commerce, he joined Cattlemen's State Bank as president and CEO. Valdez later became Norwest Bank's president and managing officer for the Austin.

Valdez serves on the board of Seton Healthcare Network and on the board of trustees of St. Edward's University in Austin. He is on the board of the United Way Capital Area.

Valdez helped orchestrate the agreement among the business community, real estate firms and environmentalists that resulted in the creation of the Hill Country Conservancy to preserve open space and habitat for endangered species.

He is a lifelong resident of Austin.

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