

Lozano said that her goal was not just to report the news but also to educate her Latin readership in the basics of the American political and economic systems.

Emerging in the late 1990s and early 2000s was a new generation of Latino leaders, skilled at building coalitions and dedicated to the politics of ethnic transcendence. Christened by political satirist Lalo Lopez as "Generation Mex," the new leaders remained loyal to their ethnic heritage but also embraced broader issues. Typical of the new generation was San Fernando Valley native Alex Padilla, who was elected president of the Los Angeles City Council in 2001, the first Latino to hold the post in 133 years. In the same year Rocky Delgadillo was elected Los Angeles city attorney. Delgadillo, a Harvard-educated centrist Democrat, won a majority of support from Latinos, African Americans, and Asians as well as from white conservatives, independents, and Republicans. Perhaps the best known Latino leader was Fresno Democrat Cruz Bustamante, elected in 1996 as the first Hispanic speaker of the assembly. Two years later he became lieutenant governor, the first Latino to serve in statewide office in the twentieth century.

Succeeding Bustamante as speaker of the assembly was Los Angeles Democrat Antonio Villaraigosa, a master in the art of crossover appeal. Upon assuming the speakership, Villaraigosa announced his determination to reinvigorate the California dream by improving the lives of all Californians. In 2005 he was elected mayor of Los Angeles, receiving support from a broad cross-section of the city's various racial and ethnic groups. Pledging to "bring this great city together," he became the first Latino chief executive since 1872. "I'm an American of Mexican descent, and I intend to be a mayor for *all* Los Angeles," he assured his fellow Angelenos. "In this diverse city, that's the only way it can work."

The new generation of leaders offered the hope that California, at long last, might overcome its bitter legacy of ethnic and racial hostilities. That legacy formed the essential backdrop to the Census Bureau's historic announcement in 2001 that California's minority population was in the majority. Demographers subsequently predicted that an additional 8 million immigrants would come to California by the year 2020 and Latinos would then outnumber non-Hispanic whites by more than 4 million. "No other industrial nation, let alone state, has ever experienced such a dramatic alteration of its ethnic composition," commented demographer LeRoy Bouvier. "There will be no place in the state that is not touched by immigration and these racial and ethnic changes," added Mark Baldassare, author of *California in the New Millennium* (2000). "We will be inventing a new kind of society."

The single greatest challenge in that new society of the new millennium was the state's growing diversity. "Many significant challenges face California today: water, the environment, the quality of schools, affordable housing," acknowledged Cruz Bustamante. "[But] the most important challenge facing us . . . is the challenge of living together as one California. Our future demands finding common ground. The challenge is to appreciate the strengths that come from diversity, to celebrate our differences as well as the shared experiences of our common humanity. "Let me put it this way," said Arturo Vargas. "If California cannot shape a true multicultural society, then the whole country is doomed." Or to put it in more positive terms, if California *can* meet the challenge of diversity, then the whole nation may be illuminated by the brilliance of its example.