

AN INSIGHT TO A VETERANS FAMILY ORGANIZATION

The American GI Forum is a national veteran's family organization, composed primarily of Mexican American veterans. The Forum was initially a group of interested persons from Corpus Christi, Texas, who formed after World War II to issue complaints to the proper authorities at various levels of our government and specifically to the agencies involved in discriminating practices. In spite of protective legislation that had been passed by our government guaranteeing all veterans certain rights and privileges, the Mexican American veterans were being subjected to certain discriminatory practices in the areas of Education, Employment, Medical Attention and Housing. This group was led by a young doctor named Hector P. Garcia, who had served during WW II in the United States Armed Forces in combat as a Major in the Medical Corps. His dynamic leadership incited these Americans to action and they were successful in correcting the discriminatory practices in the Corpus Christi area.

The destiny of the American GI Forum was precipitated by the case of Private Felix Longoria, who was killed in action on June 16, 1945, while serving with the 27th Infantry Division in the Philippines. A local funeral home in Three Rivers, Texas, refused to accept Private Longoria's remains because he was Mexican American. Through the efforts of Dr. Garcia, Private Longoria was finally laid to rest, with full military honors at Arlington National Cemetery. The Longoria incident was a major factor in the Forum broadening its objectives to include improvements of the social, economical and political conditions of the Mexican American communities.

The motto of the American GI Forum, "Education is our Freedom and Freedom should be everybody's business," attests to the organization's commitment to a greater America through the educational process. Indeed, the improved standards of living which educational achievements can promote, especially for Spanish speaking Americans, is a meaningful responsible goal for the Forum's very existence.

When Private Longoria met his destiny, on that day in June, 1945, little could he have realized that his supreme sacrifice would give meaning to an organization dedicated to improving the quality of life for Americans of Hispanic descent. Private Longoria's legacy lives on, and is more visible than ever through the American GI Forum of the U.S.

"AMERICAN" That we are as American as any other ethnic group; surely with distinctive cultural and linguistic characteristics which we take pride in, but American all the same, and expectant of the rights and privileges attendant to that fact.

"GI" That we are veterans who defended America from its enemies, and we are veterans who will uphold and maintain loyalty to the Constitution and the Flag of the United States.

"FORUM" Greek connotation of democracy and underscores our dedication to democratic principles and ideals.



MEMBERSHIP

The American GI Forum is not limited to the Mexican American veterans, but to any veteran who wishes to work for the aims and objectives of the organization. There are non-veterans within our ranks as members and they have the same vote, rights, and privileges in the organization as a veteran with the exception of holding certain high offices.

WOMEN'S FORUM

Women's Forums are formed into Chapters similar to the GI Forum Chapters. They have a structure on the Local, State and National level similar to the Veterans Forums. They have an equal voice in the organization. They meet in Conventions on the State and National level at the same time the Veterans do.

YOUTH GI FORUM

Local GI Forum Chapters sponsor Youth GI Forum Chapters. The main purpose is to render service to our youth by fostering and encouraging spiritual and ethical values, develop character, teach responsible citizenship and leadership qualities and instill a desire or aspiration for higher learning. They also meet in Conventions on the State and National levels at the same time as the Veterans do.

FINANCING

Most Chapters undertake Scholarship and other charitable projects. Local Chapters raise their own money through contributions from interested people and businesses. Most money, however, is raised with the help of the members who work in money making projects to further the programs of their Chapters.

AND IN CLOSING . .

We have tried to anticipate some of your questions concerning the American GI Forum. We stand ready to welcome you to the membership of the many who are joining the GI Forum. We can not help but to obtain new heights in our objectives. No member is required to do anything to hold membership except pay his dues and meet the qualifications of membership. All work is done on a voluntary basis by the members.

We hope that this information about the GI Forum has been helpful to you. You will be joining an organization that is respected & recognized nationally. We shall be pleased to answer any further questions that you might have.

The American GI Forum is a non-profit and non-partisan organization. If you are interested in receiving further information or becoming a member, contact:

AMERICAN GI FORUM OF TEXAS
P.O. BOX 310533
NEW BRAUNFELS, TEXAS 78131
(830) 625-3349

Regional or Local

AMERICAN GI FORUM MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name _____ Last _____ / _____ First _____ / _____ Initial _____

Address _____ Street _____ PO Box _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Name of Chapter _____

Place of Birth _____ City _____ / _____ State _____ Telephone _____

U.S. Citizen: ☐ Yes ☐ No Veteran: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Membership: ☐ New ☐ Renewal _____ / _____ Date Paid _____

Signature of Member

American GI Forum Membership Receipt

\$ _____ Paid

Date: _____ 19 _____

in payment of dues for _____

Member _____

Signature of person receiving dues

OBJECTIVES

The American GI Forum, with chapters throughout the United States objectives are to provide help and education in the following areas:

EDUCATION

To provide information and motivation for education, scholarships, and opportunities for higher education.

COMMUNICATION

To provide a viable channel of communication within the American GI Forum, between the Hispanic community and the private, public, and government sectors.

CIVIL RIGHTS

To educate the Hispanic community in the protection and defense of their civil rights as mandated by federal and state laws.

LEGISLATION

To provide input to current legislation which affect education, veterans, affirmative action, social programs, and policies as directed by state and federal laws.

THE AMERICAN GI FORUM OF TEXAS



National Veteran Family Organization

FOUNDED - MARCH 26, 1948

BY

DR. HECTOR P. GARCIA



Education is Our Freedom and Freedom
Should be Everybody's Business