

By: Noriega

H.R. No. 1495

R E S O L U T I O N

1           WHEREAS, A respected Houston civic leader received  
2 well-deserved recognition as Graciela G. Saenz was named one of the  
3 Sor Juana Women of Achievement for 2007; and

4           WHEREAS, Created by the National Museum of Mexican Art in  
5 Chicago in 1998, the Sor Juana Women of Achievement awards commend  
6 female leaders of Mexican descent and are presented in conjunction  
7 with the National Sor Juana Festival arts celebration; the year  
8 2007 marks the expansion of this notable event to Houston, with six  
9 prominent Texans being honored for their accomplishments; the  
10 awards and festival pay tribute to the famed 17th-century Mexican  
11 writer Sor Juana Ines de la Cruz, who was an early proponent of  
12 increased educational opportunities for women; and

13           WHEREAS, Gracie Saenz is a fitting recipient for this  
14 prestigious honor, having been a prominent figure in Houston for  
15 more than two decades; after earning her law degree at the  
16 University of Houston, she was an assistant district attorney for  
17 Harris County from 1986 to 1990 and then spent two years in private  
18 practice; seeking a further role in public service, she was elected  
19 to the Houston City Council and took office in 1992, becoming the  
20 first Hispanic to be elected to an at-large position in the city;  
21 she was subsequently reelected to two additional terms before  
22 stepping down due to term-limit requirements; and

23           WHEREAS, Ms. Saenz served as mayor pro tem from 1994 until she  
24 left office; an advocate for youth programs and inner-city

1 development, she also served as chair of the Ethics Council  
2 Committee and the Minority/Women-Owned Business Enterprise Council  
3 and was a member of several other council organizations; and

4 WHEREAS, During her time in office and in her subsequent  
5 legal work, Ms. Saenz has specialized in international business,  
6 helping to increase Houston's connections with global markets and  
7 suppliers; her activities have included chairing the city's NAFTA  
8 Task Force and heading up Houston International Initiatives, a  
9 nonprofit city-sponsored organization that helps small businesses  
10 to develop contacts in Latin America; in addition, she played a  
11 leading role in efforts to increase trade with Asia and to  
12 strengthen ties between Houston and other cities that are centers  
13 for the energy industry; and

14 WHEREAS, Ms. Saenz lends her expertise to a large number of  
15 community organizations, including the American Leadership Forum,  
16 the Memorial/Hermann Hospital System, the Houston Hispanic Chamber  
17 of Commerce, the Hispanic Sports Group, and LULAC Council No. 643;  
18 her achievements have been recognized with numerous honors such as  
19 receiving the International Service Award from the Houston Junior  
20 Chamber of Commerce and the Hispanic Woman of the Year Award from  
21 the Mexican American Opportunity Foundation, and being inducted  
22 into the Hispanic Women in Leadership Hall of Fame; and

23 WHEREAS, Now a partner in Oppel, Goldberg & Saenz, this  
24 distinguished attorney and community leader may take great pride in  
25 her achievements and in the knowledge that she is an inspiration to  
26 other aspiring female leaders; now, therefore, be it

27 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 80th Texas

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1 Legislature hereby congratulate Graciela G. Saenz for being named  
2 one of the 2007 Sor Juana Women of Achievement and extend to her  
3 best wishes for the future; and, be it further

4       RESOLVED, That an official copy of this resolution be  
5 prepared for Ms. Saenz as an expression of high regard by the Texas  
6 House of Representatives.