

**Chapter 24:
Fiesta San Antonio
And Human Rights**



All Pianos Have Keys & Other Stories

by José A. Cárdenas, 1994
IDRA Founder & Director Emeritus

**Special Edition Serial Release
for IDRA's 50th Anniversary**

Chapter 24: Fiesta San Antonio And Human Rights

On April 13, 1994, a surprisingly large number of minority and special interest organizations met with Mayor Nelson Wolff concerning racism in the San Antonio community. It appears that this issue surfaces periodically, particularly during the annual Fiesta celebration.

As usual, the San Antonio media gives extensive coverage to this perennial topic, although the coverage is usually slanted toward the sensational, such as the possibility of a Fiesta boycott or litigation and does not always address the pertinent issues.

As is the case since 1970 when King Antonio was exiled from the Edgewood schools, there are common misunderstandings in the information concerning this issue provided by the media.

Media coverage focusing on the community and charitable contributions of the exclusionary group is reminiscent of the attitude of the kind slave owners of the antebellum era: We feed them well, we clothe them well, we do not beat them. Why do they complain?

Neither the exiling of King Antonio in 1970, nor the current issues discussed in the April 13 meeting should be perceived as an attack upon the white Anglo segment of the community. It is not even intended as an attack upon the Texas Cavaliers, who have a right to enjoy the same freedom of association guaranteed by our constitution to all people and forms the basis for the membership in some of the organizations comprising this coalition. The purpose of the April 13 meeting was to protest the City of San Antonio tolerating, supporting and even subsidizing exclusive and discriminatory groups at any time, not only during Fiesta activities.

San Antonio accepts, cultivates, celebrates and advertises its cultural diversity. Its failure to address the human rights of all of the various elements of the community that provide this cultural diversity is hypocritical and an exploitation of San Antonio's minority population. San Antonio's cultural diversity is a valuable asset of the community. It should not be treated as a mythical commodity to be marketed to the tourist trade during Fiesta activities.

The members of the coalition seek for the City of San Antonio, and all other government entities, to establish a policy that rejects and repudiates racism and sexism in the community by any group, regardless of the composition of the group. The coalition further expects subsequent necessary action in keeping with this policy.

The establishment of a Commission for Equity by the City of San Antonio is one way of achieving this goal; there are other ways.

Prejudice and discrimination dehumanize. They dehumanize not only the recipients of prejudicial and discriminatory treatment, but they also dehumanize the perpetrators as well. Therefore, everybody in the community loses human dignity and respect when such practices exist.

A coalition of organizations called upon the City of San Antonio, other government entities, and the entire community to move forward in the complete elimination of overt and covert racism and sexism wherever they may be found. It is an imperative for the well-being and future growth of the community.