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## Introduction

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# Introduction

*Rona R. Mears\**

The success of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) during its first three years--outlined by President Clinton's report to the U.S. Congress and echoed by President Zedillo of Mexico in numerous public statements--has led to an unprecedented amount of trade between the U.S. and Mexico. In a recent statement, President Zedillo noted that Mexico-U.S. bilateral trade will be close to 165 billion dollars for 1997; almost twice what it was before NAFTA was signed on January 1, 1994.<sup>1</sup> This increase in cross-border business transactions creates additional burdens and challenges for the lawyers on both sides of the border who must provide legal counsel to their clients on myriad issues that touch on both U.S. and Mexican law.

It was with such challenges in mind, that in February 1994, representatives of the legal profession from throughout the State of Texas and the Mexican States of Chihuahua, Tamaulipas, Nuevo Leon and Coahuila, met in San Antonio, Texas, and established the Texas-Mexico Bar Association, known in Mexico as the Barra de Abogados México y Tejas (the Association). The Association was formed to "develop and promote understanding of the legal systems and practices and the cultural differences of the two nations...; to exchange professional information among its members concerning issues of law which affect common interests, such as commerce, investment, and immigration, so that lawyers of the region might better serve their communities and clients; to promote development of infrastructure for the provision of legal services and the solution of controversies; to share experiences in dealing with matters of common interest; and to avoid unnecessary conflicts...."<sup>2</sup>

Membership in the Association is open to attorneys and law students from throughout Mexico and the State of Texas, with associate membership available for attorneys from jurisdictions other than Mexico and Texas. Among the projects of the Association was the recent completion and approval of "The International Lawyers' Creed," a voluntary statement of ethical principles for international lawyers.

Each year the Association holds an Annual Conference (alternately in Mexico and Texas locations) to provide presentations on legal issues of interest to both Texas and Mexico lawyers. Topics are always considered using a comparative approach with attorneys from both the U.S. and Mexico participating in the program. The Fourth Annual Conference was held in Dallas in September, 1997, and the Association is pleased to have this journal reprint here for its readers, two of the articles produced for that Conference on the topic of cross-border insolvency.

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\* Ms. Mears is a Partner at Haynes & Boone, Dallas, Texas, and 1996-97 Co-Chair, Texas-Mexico Bar Association.

1. 7 EL FINANCIERO 22, November 17-23, 1997, at 1.

2. TEXAS-MEXICO BAR ASSOC., STATEMENT OF PURPOSE (1994).

The Association extends its congratulations to the Board of Professional Editors and the Student Editorial Board (SMU) for the significant contributions this journal makes to the scholarship of legal systems and practice in the NAFTA region and throughout the Americas.

For more information about the Texas-Mexico Bar Association, contact 1998-99 Co Chairs, Allan Van Fleet (713-758-2006) or Leonel Pereznieta Castro (52-5-258-1000).

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