



Mario Gonzalez Muzquiz

1918 -

His first day of work at his father's lumberyard in Delicias, Mexico made such an impression on young Mario Gonzalez Muzquiz that he still remembered it clearly, some 60 years later. It was May 5, 1941 and by the end of that day, he had sold \$500 worth of lumber and merchandise. A connection was made! Providing needed goods, making a sale--- the process of being in business--- so exhilarated him, he knew that from then on, being in business for himself was what he truly wanted to do.

Since then, Don Mario helped grow that same family business, which began by producing and selling railroad ties for 25 cents each, into Duraplay, a company that is a major force in Mexican lumber and forest products. And Don Mario became a respected leader, not only within his own company, but also in his country's economic development efforts as well as the global forest industry.

Don Mario was born in Musquis, Coahuila, Mexico in 1918, a year after his father and two brothers started the family business. After graduating from high school, he enrolled at the University in Mexico City to study engineering. But after a year there, dreams of participating in the family business beckoned him home.

It wasn't too long after coming on board for his father that Don Mario began demonstrating his visionary and expeditious energies. In a major step for the maturing company, Don Mario was responsible for acquiring and implementing the company's first Yates American high-speed planer, as well as its first dry kiln.

Through the following years, Don Mario continued to work hard with his brothers to expand Duraplay into the high volume, diverse company it has become. And diversity exploration came early on. One of the first laboratories testing logs for the manufacture of particleboard was located in Braunschweig, Germany. Soon after World War II, already contemplating the production of particleboard, Duraplay sent the first foreign logs for testing. Typical of his commitment to growth and improvement, in 1963 at 44 years of age, Don Mario enrolled in and graduated from the Harvard Graduate School of Business Administration's Advanced Management Program in order to improve his management skills.

Ernesto Goeldner, general director of Duraplay de Parral, is quick to point out that Don Mario focused on "growth in an orderly manner...always assuring there's something to produce in the future."

Duraplay employs over 2,000 people: in mills in the Sierra Madre mountains; in transportation, moving lumber to plywood plants in Parral and Santa Maria del Oro; in production, turning logs into plywood, particleboard, mendeboard and laminates; and in administrative offices located in Parral, Chihuahua, Monterrey, Mexico City, Guadalajara and El Paso, Texas. And it remains a family business. Don Mario and his wife raised four children, three of whom will continue his legacy at Duraplay.

Don Mario's belief that each job in his operation is crucial proved vital to this success. He is notorious for greeting every employee with a handshake and a friendly word as he has always said, "Every job is important." His commitment to his employees has earned him great appreciation and devotion. "Employee loyalty is very high," Goeldner stresses. "Many of our management people have put in a lot of years at Duraplay."

Don Mario's views on product efficiency have been equally important to Duraplay's success. "I have always taught of diminishing waste," he stated. "I do not believe in the word 'waste'. I believe that the whole tree is just one crop, and if we waste some of it, then we are not using the whole crop. For example, if a tree is 100 years old, and we waste 30% of it, then I believe that we are throwing away 30 years of forestry crop."

His efforts to obtain efficient use of his wood products led to expansion of Duraplay through increased exportation of his products, and new lines of value added products, including molding from Duramold, prefabricated homes from Duracasa, and furniture from Duralinea.

Don Mario's visionary and leadership abilities also called him to arenas outside of Duraplay. He served as the second president of the 55 year-old Wood Manufacturers Union for the State of Chihuahua. He served on the Board of Directors of the World Forestry Center in Portland, Oregon.

He was president of the Office of Economic Development for the State of Chihuahua, a non-profit organization created to promote and develop industry. One of his most significant contributions

in this capacity was attracting the first "Maquiladoras" (In-Bond Plants) into the state of Chihuahua. Today, the "Maquiladoras" are the main source of employment and economic activity driving the state of Chihuahua, while also representing one of the primary sources of exports nationwide.

A key example of his commitment to his industry and his country's economic growth was the important role Don Mario played in bringing the United Nations' "Food and Agricultural Organization" (FAO) to the state of Chihuahua. The FAO performed the first true inventory of forestry resources and provided training in dry kiln lumber processing.

In addition, the FAO made it possible to implement the first "Gang Sawmill" in Mexico, which was installed in Nuevo Casa Grandes, Chihuahua. This was significant. The mill immediately realized a huge difference in lumber yields using band saws compared to circular saws which, at the time, were being used throughout Mexico. Higher efficiency. Less waste. This first-hand information and experience enabled Don Mario and his colleagues to convince the Mexican authorities to prohibit the use of circular saws and use band saws or gang saws instead. More yield and higher quality were obtained.

Another notable contribution to the Chihuahua forestry industry was Don Mario's efforts that convinced state authorities to build paved roads into the forest. This resulted in substantially lowering the cost of logs to F.O.B. mills.

Don Mario's dedication to his company, his industry and his community is obvious. His tremendous commitment and remarkable work ethic gained him success in all aspects of his life. "Anyone who thinks working 40 hours a week is enough, I want to tell them it is enough---to be mediocre," he said. "To succeed is to love what you're doing and let your eyes be gleaming, which is a sign of inner conviction. When you're putting the best of yourself forward to succeed, the hours don't matter. I feel that way about everything I do."