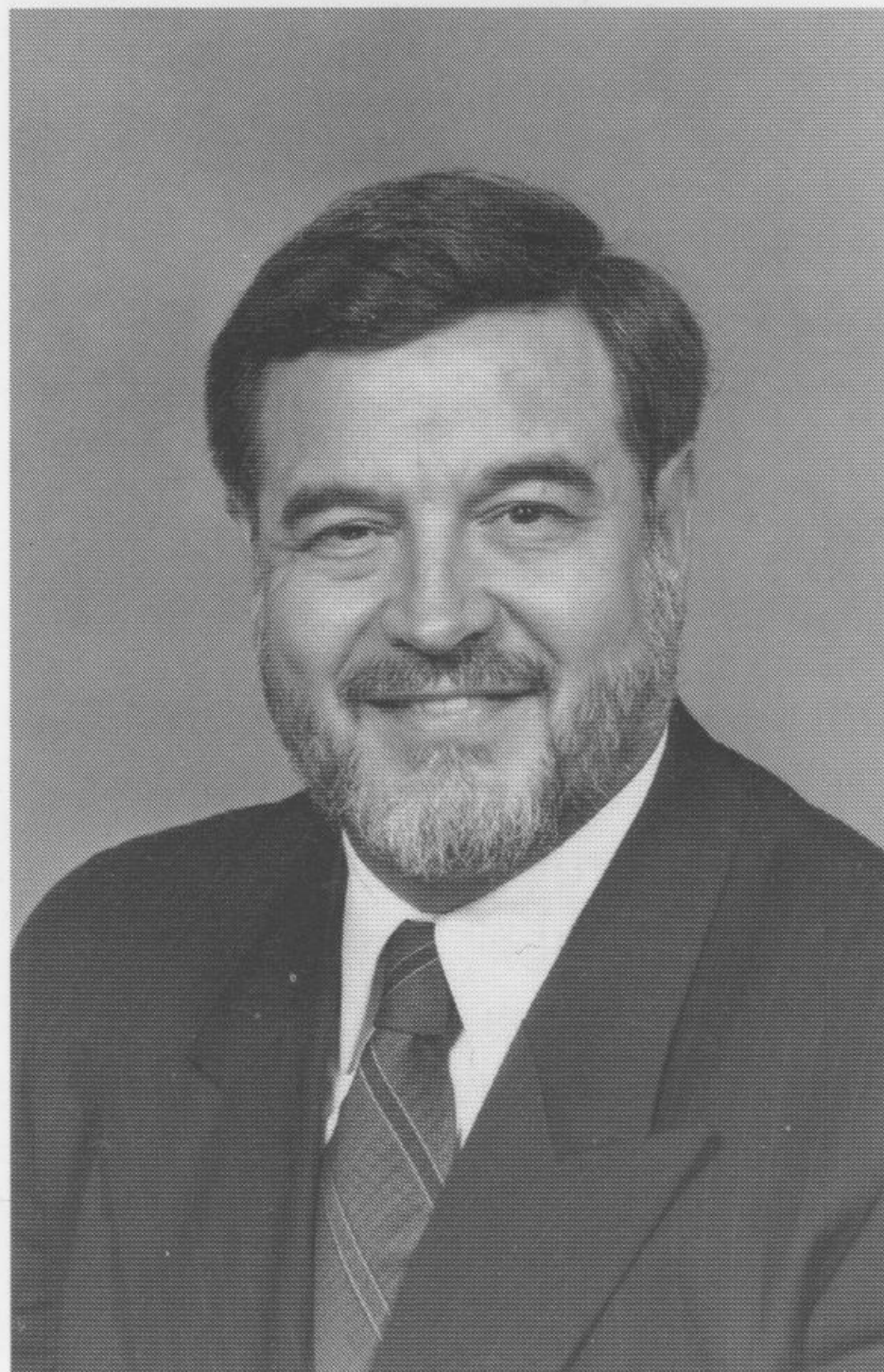


HENRY RIVERA TURNS FCC JOB INTO A CAREER



Henry Rivera isn't quite sure whether or not his uncle ever finished high school, but he is certain of his influence on Rivera's decision to pursue a legal career. H.S. Chavez operated a gas station in the South Valley where he also presided over a little courtroom as a justice of the peace.

"When I was a kid, I worked with him in the gas station," says Rivera. "Every once in a while he'd stop pumping gas and preside over a hearing."

His uncle, wise beyond his education, taught Rivera not only about the

mechanics of automobiles, but also about the ways of New Mexico's legal system.

By the time Rivera went off to the University of New Mexico, he knew he wanted to be a lawyer. After earning a bachelor's degree in economics, he applied at the law school. After all, he had planned on living in his home state the rest of his life and what better place to learn the state's laws? He also was attracted to the school's small size.

Two weeks after school started, however, Rivera was drafted into the U.S. Army to fight in the Vietnam War. He served two years and was awarded the Bronze Star, along with the Army Commendation Medal.

When he returned home, the law school had saved his spot. During his last two years of school, he worked part time for Eugene Klecan, whose practice primarily focused on personal injury work. In addition to gaining valuable hands-on experience, Rivera also learned that he didn't want to practice that kind of law.

"I decided I wanted a business-oriented practice," he says. Upon graduation in 1973, Sutin, Thayer & Browne hired him to do corporate and commercial work.

Four years later, he was invited to serve on the board of directors of the New Mexico affiliate of the American Diabetes Association. This modest appointment eventually led to his nomination to the Federal Communications Commission in 1981. It just so happened a fellow board member was working on Harrison "Jack" Schmitt's election campaign. Schmitt was looking for a Hispanic lawyer he could nominate to the FCC. Rivera provided him with a list that didn't include his name.

"I didn't want to go to Washington, D.C.," he says. "I wanted to practice law." Not to mention he didn't know anything about communications. But, he finally gave into pressure and agreed to be nominated to the commission. The Senate confirmed his appointment in August 1981.

Although he disputes any ulterior motive, Rivera's move placed him in the middle of the nation's most famous Civil War battlefields, making him feel like a child in a candy shop. He could now pursue with endless glee his passion for the Civil War, which he had studied on his own for most of his life.

Now, 20 years later, he leads battlefield tours and admits that even after many visits to Gettysburg, he still learns something new every time he goes.

"I'm interested in how campaigns and strategies developed and how armies moved from place to place," he says. "A lot of my interest comes from trying to understand the leadership capabilities of battlefield commanders and how they motivated people."

Meanwhile, Rivera continued in the communications field after his four-year stint at the FCC, starting up a telephone practice at Dow, Lohnes & Albertson. When it became obvious that practice conflicted with the firm's Cable TV practice, Rivera took his specialty to Ginsburg, Feldman & Bress. Rivera was head of the 60-member firm's communications department and also served as assistant managing partner.

After eight years, he felt it was time for the department to broaden its scope and capabilities. At the same time, Shook, Hardy & Bacon recruited him to their Washington D.C. office. He took with him the entire communications department: 12 lawyers, three paralegals and secretaries. Today they represent clients in all areas of communications.

"It's something different all the time," he says. "We're before the FCC one day, then the National Telecommunications and Information Administration, then up on the Hill."

Even though he loves his work, Rivera remains surprised that he ended up practicing in the communications area.

"But it's been rewarding, especially the people I've met along the way," he says.

Rivera misses New Mexico and intends to move back some day. He remembers two mentors at the Sutin firm whose influence he still feels today: Franklin Jones and Graham Browne.

"They put the client first and the quality of their work was always stellar," he says. "If I could be half as good as either of them, I'd be happy."