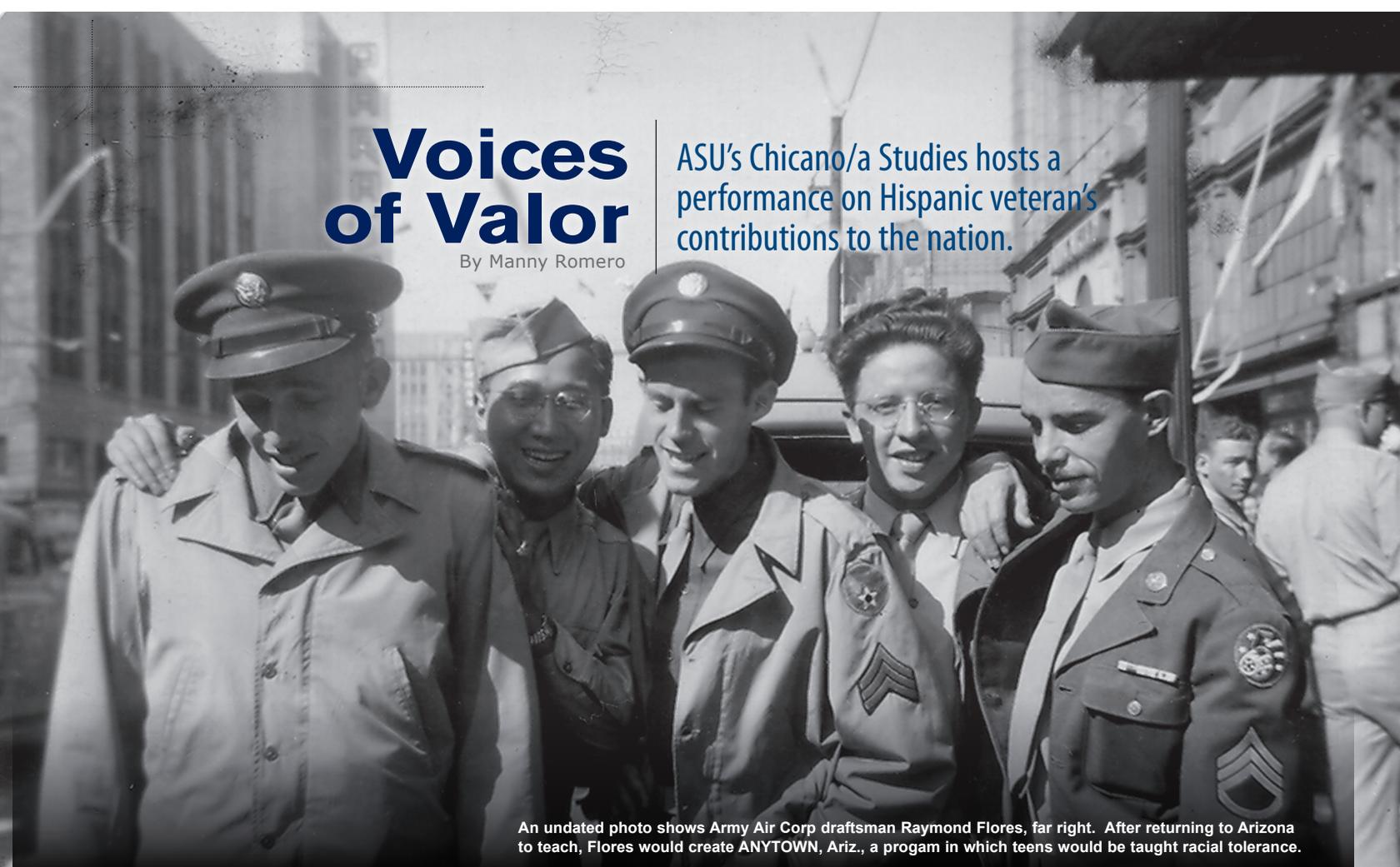


Voices of Valor

By Manny Romero

ASU's Chicano/a Studies hosts a performance on Hispanic veteran's contributions to the nation.



An undated photo shows Army Air Corp draftsman Raymond Flores, far right. After returning to Arizona to teach, Flores would create ANYTOWN, Ariz., a program in which teens would be taught racial tolerance.

Playwright James Garcia brings a story of Latino military honor and historical heritage to Arizona State University's Gammage auditorium.

His new play, *Voices of Valor*, will be presented at 7 p.m., March 11 at ASU's Gammage Auditorium. The one-night performance is part of Gammage's Beyond Broadway Series.

Directed by Richard Trujillo, *Voices*, will continue performances at the University of Texas in Austin two weeks later.

It's been almost two years since Garcia, former *Latino Perspectives* editor, embarked one of the most challenging projects of his artistic career – a play based on the Hispanic community's historic involvement in World War II. The idea was inspired by the work of Maggie Rivas-Rodriguez, a former journalist and now a professor at the University of Texas at Austin, who has been leading a project to compile hundreds of oral histories from Latino and Latina veterans, as well as their families and friends.

While most of us know of the involvement of Latinos during WWII, less understood is how the community's participation helped reshape the American landscape. *Voices of Valor* was Garcia's Master's degree thesis, and he also was commissioned by ASU's Public Events to write the script.

Garcia adds that *Voices*, in its own way, contributes to the memorialization of the people it



Alfred and Beatrice Dimas, parents of Pvt. Pete Dimas, an ex-POW.

portrays, and that he wants Hispanics' involvement in the war effort to be recognized for "how critical it was in moving this country and Latinos forward."

"I have two objectives with this piece, unlike other plays I've written," Garcia says. "It certainly makes a theatrical statement, something people will enjoy. That always has to be a goal. But I'm as equally interested in being part of an effort to document a story in the history of the Hispanic community that is extremely important and not often told, one that is not really known."

On the morning of March 11, ASU Chicana/o Studies will also host a symposium on the Hispanic community's contribution to America and the world during WWII and beyond.

Garcia's award-winning career encompasses

a variety of plays that reflect his experience as a journalist and his passion for history and philosophy. In 2003, Garcia won first place at the national Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival in the 10-minute plays category for his work *The Crossing*, a story inspired by the death of 14 immigrants in the Arizona desert.

His Valley-based company, Colores Actors-Writers Workshop (CAWW), has staged plays throughout the Valley and staged readings at the Gammage Auditorium in conjunction with ASU Public Events.

Tickets are available at ASU Gammage, showup.com and Ticketmaster. To order tickets visit the Web at www.asugammage.com or call Gammage Auditorium at (480) 965-3434. Tickets are \$20 general admission and \$10, students.



Well-known Phoenix musician Ralph Chavarria, right was a firefighter in the Pacific Theater.