

# BIOGRAPHY ROBERTO GONZALEZ BARRERA

**26 Aug 2012**

Roberto González Barrera was Chairman of the Board of Gruma and Chairman Emeritus of the Board of GRUPO FINANCIERO BANORTE.

He was born in Cerralvo, Nuevo León, Mexico, in 1930, and fully devoted his life and experience to entrepreneurial activities, being recognized as one of the creators of the corn flour industry in Mexico, as well as one of the most important world consumption promoters of the most significant staple in the traditional Mexican cuisine: the "tortilla".

His formal schooling was only up to third grade, because at a very young age he started doing business. His first commercial activity was renting shoe polish boxes in his hometown, Cerralvo.

He's survived by 6 children:

Roberto González Moreno.  
Graciela González Moreno.  
Mayra González Moreno.  
Bertha González Moreno.  
Juan González Moreno.  
Roberto González Alcalá.

In spite of all forecasts, Roberto González Barrera also held a very special space in the national financial world, as the most successful Mexican banker, since the 1992 bank privatization. As a majority shareholder of the largest Mexican bank, for over twenty years, he developed and consolidated Grupo Financiero Banorte.

Throughout many decades, his tireless work allowed him to be constantly recognized at a personal level.

In 1998, he received the "Good Neighbor" Award of the Mexico-United States Chamber of Commerce, in Washington D.C.

In 2005, the Autonomous University of Nuevo León gave him the "Entrepreneur of the Year" Award.

The Anáhuac University granted him the "Global Entrepreneur" Medal"

In 2005, the Mexican Red Cross gave Don Roberto González Barrera, "The Great Cross of the Honor and Merit Order" and the "Benemeritus" Medal, the highest awards granted by that institution, because of his altruistic work.

In 2006, The National Publicity Association granted him the "Kanay" Award, for outstanding Mexican businessmen, whose work has promoted Communication and Publicity activities.

In 2009, he received the "Italy-Mexico Honor Award", for being one of the main Mexican entrepreneurs with investments in Italy.

In 2011, he received the "Entrepreneurial Award", of the "Impulsa Nuevo León" organization.

In 2011, the Excelsior newspaper ranked Don Roberto González Barrera second place, out of the seven most important businessmen in Mexico.

For two consecutive years, the "Quien" magazine included him in its listing of "The 50 Characters that Move Mexico".

For 5 consecutive years, he was part of the 300 leaders in Mexico.

In 2010, the Chamber of Deputies or Mexican Congress recognized Roberto González Barrera, for his great support to the states of Nuevo León, Coahuila and Tamaulipas, severely affected by hurricanes.

## **HIS HISTORY SEEN FROM GRUMA S.A.B de C.V.**

In 1949, as a Young entrepreneur, Roberto González Barrera founded Grupo Maseca (GRUMA), a company he turned into a world leader in the production of corn flour and tortillas, as well as allowing it to be an important player in the production of wheat flour and by-products, such as flatbreads.

Since the beginning of his entrepreneurial adventure and life, Roberto González Barrera maintained the firm idea of “making industry”, always seeking to increase his plant's production capacity for a more relevant market presence with corn flour.

In a 60-year period and under his guidance and leadership, Gruma gave an important technological leap in favor of the main Mexican foodstuff: the tortilla. His tireless work allowed him to transform the “nixtamalization” method (the basis for corn flour production), thus achieving important benefits favoring the environment, as for instance: drinking water savings, gas consumption reduction, less gas emissions and waste water, among many more advantages.

In 1972, Roberto González Barrera decided to create his holding company: GRUMA. At that time, it was only present in Mexico and it was getting ready for its internationalization with corn flour as its star product. Said process started in Costa Rica, Central America.

At that time, Grupo Maseca only had 11 plants:

1957 ACAPONETA (40,000 tons a year)  
1962 CHIHUAHUA (26,000 tons)  
1965 OBREGÓN (37,500 tons)  
1966 NUEVO LEÓN (it moved from Cerralvo, 26,000 tons)  
1968 RÍO BRAVO (32,400 tons)  
1968 ZAMORA (37,500 tons)  
1968 JALISCO (34,800 tons)

In 1973, his vision and dedication, as well as a very strong presence in Mexico, allowed him to go into the Central American market in Costa Rica, to then take advantage of the experience acquired in international markets, to expand into the United States.

By the year 2000, and after a very successful process of growth and internationalization in Central and South America, GRUMA started operations in England, with the installation of a plant in Coventry, the first of the Group in the European Continent.

In 2006, the first plant in Asia was opened, in Shanghai, China, and 3 years later, in 2009, Roberto González Barrera placed the cornerstone for his new technology generation plant in Australia.

Today, GRUMA has over 20,000 employees worldwide. It's present in Mexico, the United States, various Central and South American nations, Europe, Asia and Oceania, with 99 strategically located plants, and present in 113 countries all over the world.

As part of a process of institutionalization and corporate government promoted by Don Roberto González Barrera, GRUMA's CEO is now Mr. Joel Suárez. GRUMA is now a multinational, one hundred per cent Mexican company, a proud developer of its own leading edge technology, for industrial scale corn flour production.

## **HIS HISTORY SEEN FROM GRUPO FINANCIERO BANORTE**

In 1992, 20 years ago, at the head of a group of Mexican investors, Roberto González Barrera acquired Banco Mercantil del Norte, then a small local Nuevo León bank, with almost no national presence, which ranked sixteen in the national banking system.

Under Roberto González Barrera's direction and in two decades, from being a small regional bank, Banorte became a sound Financial Group, with national and international presence, now headed by Dr. Guillermo Ortiz Martínez, Chairman of the Board and CEO Dr. Alejandro Valenzuela del Río.

In the last 20 years of its history, Grupo Financiero Banorte (GFNorte) has been characterized by its constant

growth, organically obtained or through the purchase or mergers of various institutions, such as Afin Casa de Bolsa and the Bancentro, Banpais Bancrecer banks.

More recently, on March 30, 2011, GFNorte merged with Ixe Grupo Financiero, thus integrating the operations of both institutions in a single group, under the name of Grupo Financiero Banorte S.A.B. de C.V., consolidating Banorte as the third most important financial institution in Mexico, because of its assets, and the main one in the country under national shareholders' control.

Currently, Banorte is the only institution in the Mexican market with 2 branch networks: "Banorte" and "Ixe", through which it provides a broad gamut of commercial bank and consumption services in its more than 1,300 offices, plus over 6,300 ATMs and over 73,000 POS terminals.

Furthermore, Roberto González Barrera allowed Banorte to have a presence in the US Hispanic market, through the Inter National Bank (INB), based in McAllen, Texas, and the remittance companies, Motran and Uniteller, based in California and New Jersey, respectively.

On December 6, 2011, Grupo Financiero Banorte and the Instituto Mexicano del Seguro Social reached an agreement to merge the Retirement Administrators: Afore Banorte and Afore XXI, giving way to "Afore XXI Banorte", today the largest in the sector, due to the number of accounts it manages. "Afore XXI Banorte" has 7 million accounts, which constitute 17% of the total of the Retirement Savings System (SAR, by its Spanish acronym).

## **HIS UNTIRING ALTRUISM**

At the personal level, as through his companies, Roberto González Barrera was always interested in helping the neediest. He never forgot his humble origin and he used to say "we were so poor, even poverty respected me!" That's why he always looked for ways to lend a hand to all types of noble causes.

Through the GRUMA y BANORTE Foundations, as well as the Cerralvo Foundation for Education and Assistance, year after year important resources are used for different causes, as for instance, supporting education for children and youth, and young patients at the Hospital Infantil de México, whereas important cash and in-kind resources (corn and wheat flour) are made available, to support natural disaster victims. In 2010, Roberto González Barrera was personally and publicly recognized by the Mexican Congress, for his great support to communities hit by natural disasters in the states of Nuevo León, Coahuila and Tamaulipas.

For example, through the Grupo Industrial Maseca, Roberto González Barrera sent thousands of tons of corn flour to aid states, municipalities and communities hit by hurricanes, floods or droughts, putting at the disposal of all those affected his now famous "tortimóviles", or mobile tortilla shops, capable of autonomously making hundreds of kilos of hot tortilla a day, putting them directly in the hands of the poorest families in disaster zones.

Furthermore, through Don Roberto González Barrera's instructions and since malnutrition continues being one of the most serious health care problems in a high percentage of boys and girls in Mexico, to support efforts made by the Mexican government and Civil Society Organizations to reduce said rates, "Nutre-Fácil Maseca" was made. It's an instant easy to make product that significantly contributes to the Daily Recommended Intake of energy, fiber, protein, vitamins and minerals for children, set forth by the 086 Mexican Official Norm of the Health Secretariat. "Nutre-Fácil Maseca" is made with Maseca corn flour and enriched with folic acid, iron and zinc.

On the other hand, The Gruma Foundation and The Banorte Foundation have donated over 3 million "Nutre-Fácil Maseca" packets, benefiting about 10 thousand children a day in Mexico.