

Nixon Redeems a 15-Year Pledge

Provo, Utah

Fifteen years ago, when Vice President Richard M. Nixon was on a South American tour, he stopped at a public health clinic in La Paz, Bolivia, held twin girls in his arms and told their mother they would have the opportunity to attend a U.S. university when they grew up.

When the girls turned 18 a few months ago, their mother enlisted the assistance of some influential friends in Bolivia to get in touch with Mr. Nixon and remind him of his 15-year-old pledge. The President remembered the offer and replied that it was still good.

The La Paz twins, Ru and Judith Leonardini, have just enrolled at Brigham Young University here.

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The contact with Mr. Nixon resulted in their receiving scholarship offers from 27 U.S. Universities, including the President's alma mater, Whittier College.

They chose Brigham Young because it is a Mormon institution. The Leonardini family joined the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Bolivia last year.

The dark-haired, brown-eyed twins, who finished first and third in their high school graduating class in Bolivia, plan to obtain degrees in sociology.

They want to return to serve as social workers in Bolivia, where they will rejoin their parents, Raul Julian and Maria Aida Prada Leonardini, and their two brothers and one sister. Their father is a silversmith.

"We love our country, and we want to work for our country, but we like the U.S. and its people who are being so nice to us," they said. "We arrived at the campus here two months ago to take special English courses, and

we like the way all the people say 'Hi' to us with a smile.

The Partners of the Americas people-to-people program, of which President Nixon is the honorary chairman, financed the trip from La Paz to Utah with a stopover at Disneyland, and is also paying the tuition costs of the twins.

Under the Partner of Americas program, 41 states in this country, including Utah, maintain partnerships with 43 Latin American states and regions in 18 countries.

Room and board for the girls is provided by the university. They are living with Mr. and Mrs. L. Kirk Tolman.

According to Tolman, who is a member of the Brigham Young mathematics faculty, the girls' favorite U.S. foods are cheeseburgers and chicken, although they say the food isn't as spicy as they might like it.

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