The Texas A&M International University Distinguished Lecture Series honors Antonio R. Sánchez Sr. (1916-1992). After 20 years as the owner of an office equipment business, Sánchez in the 1960s began buying oil and gas leases and used his earnings to establish a bank. In 1974, Sánchez and his son, A.R. Sánchez Jr., along with geologist Brian O’Brien, established the Sánchez-O’Brien Oil and Gas Corporation. The same year, the father and son team discovered the largest natural gas field (Webb and Zapata counties) to that point in history.

Under his leadership as chairman, the International Bank of Commerce grew to become the International Bancshares Corporation, with currently more than 200 branches in more than 90 communities throughout Texas and Oklahoma including Laredo, Austin, Houston, San Antonio, Zapata, the Lower Rio Grande Valley, the Gulf Coast, Oklahoma City, Tulsa and Lawton.

Today, the bank employs more Hispanic men and women in leadership positions than all other Texas banks combined. A. R. Sánchez Sr. is best remembered in Laredo for his philanthropic efforts. Known for his work ethic and generosity, he was a major crusader for a four-year University in Laredo and a supporter of the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund. He was also a legendary Texas entrepreneur with a down-to-earth sense of humor.

This lecture series is presented through the vision and generosity of Mr. and Mrs. A. R. Sánchez Jr.


A CELEBRATORY RECEPTION WILL PRECEDE THE LECTURE AT 5 P.M. IN THE CENTER FOR THE FINE AND PERFORMING ARTS’ LOBBY.
Thursday, September 20, 2007
“Robert Oppenheimer and the Manhattan Project”

A dynamic teacher and distinguished lecturer, Dr. Martin J. Sherwin’s Robert Oppenheimer and the Manhattan Project, is an account of the man who is known as the father of the atomic bomb.

Dr. Sherwin’s lecture is based on his recent award-winning book, The Triumph and Tragedy of J. Robert Oppenheimer (with Kai Bird). Oppenheimer, a physicist, led the Manhattan Project and the development of the atomic bomb during World War II.

The book won the 2006 Pulitzer Prize and the National Book Critics Circle Award for biography and the English Speaking Union Award.

Among Sherwin’s other work is A World Destroyed: The Atomic Bomb and the Grand Alliance, which used satellite technology to link his students with university students in Moscow for interactive discussions on the nuclear arms race and the environment.

Sherwin joined the faculty of George Mason University (GMU) in Fall 2007 where he is an adjunct professor. He received his B.A. degree in physics from Princeton University in 1974, and his Ph.D. in theoretical physics from the California Institute of Technology in 1970, Phi Beta Kappa and Magna Cum Laude, and was the Walter S. Dickson professor of English and American History at Tufts University for 27 years.

Dr. Sherwin’s lecture is based on his recent award-winning book, The Triumph and Tragedy of J. Robert Oppenheimer, where he is an adjunct professor.

In 1981, Dr. Lightman began publishing essays about science, the human side of science, and the “mind of science,” beginning with Smithsonian Magazine and moving to Science, The New Yorker, and other magazines. Since then, his essays, short fiction and reviews have appeared in numerous magazines and catalogs.

Lightman’s books have been translated into 30 languages. His work includes The Discoveries: Great Breakthroughs in 20th-Century Science, Including the Original Papers; Einstein’s Dreams and TheDiagnoses. He received his B.A. degree in physics from Princeton University in 1970, Phi Beta Kappa and Magna Cum Laude, and his Ph.D. in theoretical physics from the California Institute of Technology in 1974.

Thursday, October 11, 2007
“Einstein in the 21st Century”

Dr. Alan Lightman, novelist, essayist, and physicist and professor, has taught physics and astronomy at Harvard University for over 20 years. He also teaches in the Writing and Humanistic Studies Program at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, where he is an adjunct professor.

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Tuesday, March 4, 2008
“Wonderful World of Digital Engineering”

Dr. Natalie Jeremijenko, design engineer and digital pioneer, is a new media artist who works at the intersection of contemporary art, science and engineering. Her lecture, “Wonderful World of Digital Engineering,” addresses information politics, the examination and development of new modes of information technologies, in particular regarding the production of knowledges, tangible media and distributed computing elements.

Dr. Jeremijenko’s work takes the form of large-scale public art works, tangible media installations, single channel tapes and critical writing. It investigates the themes of the transformative potential of new technologies, particularly information technologies.

She recently held positions of Lecturer in the department of mechanical engineering at Yale, consultant to the Advanced Computer Graphics Center/Media Research Lab, department of computer science at New York University and Distinguished Visiting Chair in the department of art, Virginia Commonwealth University.

Jeremijenko has received prestigious awards and grants from agencies that include the Rockefeller Foundation and the National Academy of Science. In 2002, she received a Public Space Commission for a work “Private Revenues” from the Royal College of Arts, London.

Wednesday, April 9, 2008
“Defending the Mexican Name in Texas: The Incredible Life of Juan Cortina”

Dr. Jerry D. Thompson, Texas A&M International University Regents Professor of History, explores the life of Mexican folk hero and revolutionary, Juan Cortina, with Defending the Mexican Name in Texas: The Incredible Life of Juan Cortina.

Dr. Thompson’s Cortina: Defending the Mexican Name in Texas was published in Fall 2007 by The Texas A&M University Press.

The prolific author has written about Cortina before. In 1974, his book Nacimientos Cortina and the Texas-Mexico Frontier, 1859-1877 was published by Texas Western Press. He also edited Fifty Miles and a Fight: Samuel Peter Heintzelman’s Journal of Texas and the Cortina War.

Author of more than 20 books, Thompson is considered one of the country’s top scholars on the Southwest Campaign of the American Civil War and Border History.

The Texas Institute of Letters awarded Thompson the Beat Scholarly Book Published in 2006 award for his Civil War to the Bleed-Ed End: The Life and Times of Major General Samuel P. Heintzelman.

He has received numerous awards from the Texas Historical Commission, Western Writers of America, Texas State Historical Association, Historical Society of New Mexico and the Arizona Historical Society.

A.R. SANCHEZ, SR. DISTINGUISHED LECTURE SERIES 2007-08