

SFI Program and Administrative Staff

Della Ulibarri: Weaving Sunshine

As rigorously scientific as the SFI environment is, the atmosphere retains a quintessentially New Mexican flavor. Academic Affairs Assistant and Truchas native Della Ulibarri contributes to that flavor.

Ulibarri has been at SFI almost since the beginning; when she was hired in 1988 as a research assistant, she was just the seventh person on staff. Since then she has worked in almost every area of the Institute. In her current job, she works closely with the Chair of Faculty, facilitating visit requests and assisting faculty members with administrative, technical, and research support. She also organizes seminars and colloquia, and assists with public lectures and trustee meetings.

Outside of SFI, Ulibarri is a straw appliqué artist. She uses this traditional Spanish art form to embellish crucifixes and other objects, and has begun to create pieces using the designs of her great-great grandmother, who was a weaver of traditional Rio Grande Vallejo blankets. Her art connects her with her heritage, her ancestors, and her faith.

Ulibarri's art work has won best in show at the Santa Fe County Fair. For the past three years she has participated in

the Spanish Market, a juried art show that takes place on the Santa Fe Plaza every July.

She finds the setting of the Cowan campus beautiful and inspiring. "Every morning I get out of my car and count my blessings," she said. "I enjoy coming to work."

Visitors to SFI get a warm welcome from Ulibarri. And when they go home, she sometimes gives a gift of New Mexico flavor – a jar of her prize-winning green chile.

Despite its global reach, SFI is firmly anchored in New Mexico culture and tradition by staff members like Della Ulibarri.

