Phoenix, AZ
ARIZONA REPUBLIC

Phoenix Met Ana

Thursday 0 496,373

FEB 13. 2003

fflCE P1176

PRFSS CUPPINGS

Retired ASU president to work on dropout rate
By Pat Kossan
The Arizona Republic

Lattie Coor said there is a lot
of good thinking going on about
why so many Arizona kids
don't graduate from high school.
The retired Arizona State University president said it's time to do something about it. That's why Coor, and his partner, Sybil Francis, a public policy specialist and wife of new ASU president Michael Crow, like to call their new or-ganization a "do tank." Unveiled Wednesday as the Center for the Future of Ari-zona, the powerful duo intends to select the best ideas from think tanks, studies, surveys and committee reports. Then, they'll gather the state's power players, agree on a plan, and go forth as a united front to do something about it. "In simple, clear, understand-able modes of expression," Coor said.
The center has one assistant and a couple of downtown Phoenix offices. But it has powerful people behind it. For example, Don Budinger, the

education philanthropist who created the Rodel Foundation, donated $100,000.
"It's a complex, big, difficult sociopolitical critter, this drop-out rate," Budinger said.
And it will take the state's biggest players to fix it.
If one person can bring de-velopers, educators, politi-cians, and all of the state's mov-ers and shakers to the table, it's Coor, Budinger said. Coor al-ways insisted that ASU reach out to the community, he said, and always invited business leaders in.
Both Budinger and Coor agree the best way for the state to entice, grow, and keep eco-nomic powerhouses is to drag its school system from the bot-tom of the national heap and make jt one of the best. The^Center f or the Future of Arizona expects to start in small, focused steps. But it ulti-mately wants to reshape the state from a "bargain base-ment society" surviving on growth into a national leader in economics and culture.
"We first considered calling
it The Don Quixote Center ," Coor said.