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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

CIVIC LEADERS UNITE TO ORGANIZE THE CENTER FOR ARIZONA'S FUTURE
Action-oriented "Do Tank" will address high school dropout rate as first project

PHOENIX, Feb. 12, 2003 – Dr. Lattie Coor, Dr. Sybil Francis, and a board of well-known community leaders have formed the Center for the Future of Arizona (Center), a “do tank” dedicated to improving the quality of life for all Arizonans through an action-oriented agenda to tackle the important issues facing our state. One of the first orders of business for the new action-oriented Center is to address the state’s high-school dropout rate. Over the next four months, the Center will also strive for consensus on a vision for the future of Arizona, convening civic leaders to develop an action agenda for the state.

“Arizona’s agenda for the past fifty years has centered around growth,” said Dr. Lattie Coor, chief executive officer for the Center. “It is now time to identify and actively pursue the qualities we most seek in the Arizona of the future.”

The Center is governed by a board of directors comprised of distinguished community leaders committed to the Center’s mission to improve the lives of Arizonans. The board intends the Center to exert its influence through strategic leadership, action planning, and the development of implementation strategies aimed at the most pressing problems facing the state.

“Our goal is to create a roadmap to the future that Arizonans can embrace and that can serve as a basis for collaborative efforts throughout the state,” said Dr. Sybil Francis, Executive Director of the Center. “An action plan for education must be a part of that plan along with a focus on quality of life, a competitive knowledge-based economy and opportunities for all who make their home here.”

“Arizona’s high school completion rate is among the lowest in the nation,” said Coor. “We must develop a statewide agenda to ensure that substantially more than the current 68 percent of our young people receive the education they need to build successful lives. Their economic well-being, and our state’s future, depends on it.”

The Center will always have two or three active projects underway while others are in the earlier stages of development. Additional projects that are in the exploratory phase include strengthening opportunities for Arizona’s working poor and developing a contemporary leadership model that will better meet the needs of the state. Staffing will remain purposefully lean since the Center’s objective is to achieve goals through leadership and collaboration.

Located in leased space at Arizona State University’s Downtown Phoenix Campus, the Center is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization funded through the donations of philanthropic individuals and organizations dedicated to Arizona’s future well being. The Center has already obtained the commitment of initial major founding sponsors and is seeking others. For more information, visit the Center’s Web site at www.ArizonaFuture.org or call (480) 727-5005.

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