

Palm_School_Medlock_Anna

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SPEAKERS

Jonathan Cortez, Anna Medlock

Jonathan Cortez 00:00

Today is Sunday, December 15, 2024 and my name is Dr Jonathan Cortez. I am interviewing Anna Salcedo Medlock in Austin, Texas for the Travis County oral history project. We are at the University of Texas at Austin campus. Miss Medlock, thank you so much for being with us today.

Anna Medlock 00:15

Thank you for having me.

Of course, the raw, unedited recording of this interview will be archived at the Travis County archives, where it will be available to anyone who wishes to access it. As we said earlier, if there's anything you don't wish to talk about, we respect your wishes. And if there is anything that you do want to discuss, please make sure that we that we talk about it. Let us know if you need to pause the interview, as I mentioned earlier, to for a bathroom break or for whatever reason. Today we are going to talk about your life experiences, particularly as it relates to the palm school. We'll also discuss your relationship to community education and political participation. Miss Medlock, are you ready? Yes, I am great. Let's go ahead and get started. So for the sake of the interview, can you just tell us your name and your relationship to the palm School.

Anna Medlock 01:11

My name is Anna Saucedo Medlock. I went to palm school from first through sixth grade, from 1959 to 1965

01:23 Jonathan

ms Medlock, how did your family end up in the palm neighborhood? How did what do you do? You know, when they migrated to to Austin and to this neighborhood?

01:37 Anna Medlock

No, I don't, but I can tell you this, and that's that we have always lived close to downtown, because that's where my dad had his jobs, and it was just more convenient for us, and it was a good neighborhood. We liked it.

01:52 Jonathan

What kind of jobs did your dad do?

01:55 Anna Medlock

He had several. He drove a cab, a yellow cab. He also was a delivery person for building flowers and for Rx all drugs. There was a time where he was a custodian at the Texas capitol. So, yeah, those are the kind of jobs he had.

02:17

Did he own the cab? Was the cab his? Or was it from a company?

02:21

No, it's from the company. He didn't buy it.

02:24

Do you know which company he works for?

02:26

Yellow Cab. Yes. He also, on the side, as we got older, learned to fix TVs through the Veterans Administration, they sent him to a business college to learn how to fix TVs. And he loved it. He he had a on the side, a television service where he would different people would come by, bring their TVs for him to repair. And he didn't make much money because most, most of the time, he didn't charge anybody. So it was good. He really loved it. Wow.

02:58

And your mother? What about your mother? What kind of work did she do?

03:03

My mother was a home maker.

03:12

your mother. What kind of work was did she do?

03:15

My mother was a home maker for a good part of the time I was growing up and somewhere in the late, in the mid 60s, she entered a program as a result of LBJ Great Society. It was called new careers, and they gave her training. She earned her GED, and they placed her in a job at the University of Texas law school.

03:46

Wow. And do you remember where you all lived in the neighborhood where your house was in the in relationship to the palm school?

03:55

Yes. Initially, when I started palm school, we lived directly across the street on East First Street. And then we moved right behind the same house we were living on, living in on East first and we moved on to Driscoll.

04:14

And what do you remember about your your your home life? Tell me about siblings. Tell me about, you know who you played outside with? Tell me about the kind of things you experienced is as a child in the palm neighborhood.

04:31

Well, we're seven kids, so for my mom, it was like controlled chaos. We did a lot of playing outside back then there was no air conditioning. I don't think anybody in the neighborhood had air conditioning. So we played a lot of the times outside. Now, our my siblings and myself, we usually organize the play we had my friends across the street, Emma. And Olga directly across they lived, their house faced rainy, so they would come over and we would play. And we really had a great time at night in the summer. It was hot, so we went outside and we organized games. And it was all different games that we would play. We played Red Rover, Red Rover. We had a small version of tag, because it's dark and, you know, we would need to find people. So we didn't go very far. And there was a time where we could during the day play. We played on the street, so we played softball and hope that we didn't break anybody's window. Also, there was kickball. We played kickball, and we always had these jump rope competitions. My friends directly across the street, Emma and Olga, and then we had some friends on the other side. Think her name was Irene. And then right next door, we had the Martinez family, Emma and Eva. They would all come over, and we would play. Somebody always had a ball, so we we were able to play. But on the jump rope competitions, we used to play different things, like we would have two people jumping. And the way to do it was they one would start, and somebody had to jump in, but you couldn't miss. And then it we counted how many times they jumped. So the one with the longest time jumping was the winner. So...

06:36

Which was your favorite game to play?

06:38

For me, the jump rope, because that was a whole lot of fun. And we had different things that we did and we we had the songs to go jumping rope.

Do you remember any songs?

Miss Mary Mac Ma. Do you remember that one all dressed in black? We used to do that one too. There was also a time where we played hopscotch that was before sidewalk chalk. So there was always some

kind of a rock, a white rock, that you could get, and we would draw the hopscotch diagram on the street. So it was fun.

07:18

you said you have six siblings. Where do you fall in the lineup? I'm third in line. So third to the oldest. Okay, how was growing up with with, with, with six siblings, or, you know, at some point two, and then they add on, and I would imagine all of them went to palm school. I'm curious. How was growing up in your household?

07:39

Well, there's five girls, two boys between the girls, you know, we showed no mercy to our brothers. You know, we we had our chores. My mother always, there was always something to do. Kept us out of trouble sometimes, but we would take care of our siblings, the little ones, and we also were able to help with the breakfast so my mother could make sure we all got off to school on time, and we would walk together. My mother made sure that we walked together to school. For those of us that were were in at Palm school, just so we could make sure that we knew where everybody was. So that was that was always something that we could do. But there was a time when we as siblings, we used to play in the house also, because when it got too hot, I mean, you know, Austin summers are brutal, there was always something that we could do. So we would myself and my two older sisters, Juanita and Carmen. We would make sure that there was something to do for us, because otherwise, you know, idle hands. No telling what people were going to get in trouble with. So, so there was always something to we used to take turns washing dishes, you know, all of us. And I remember, as we got older, we asked my dad if we could get a dishwasher, and he says, I have five. Why would I want to buy a dish washer. So it was always somebody was somebody's turn to wash the dishes and somebody's turn to make supper with my mom, so she she could have some help. But I remember my mother. She worked really hard. She really did. She would make tortillas, and she made sure that we set the table, because she said, I'll never get through making tortillas, all you do is use the tortilla to eat. So everybody use a fork. And so it was fun. We made sure that we didn't do a lot of that, and my mom had time to sit and eat supper. So and my dad, he would come home at five o'clock. And so we were busy trying to make sure that, you know, we didn't wait too long after he got home so he could have supper.

09:51

What would a typical morning look like on the way to palm school? You know, I would imagine what, I guess I'm trying to ask, like, what kinds of foods were. Were you all having, either for breakfast or taking for lunch? What was it like to get ready, to kind of organize yourself, to get out of the door?

10:09

Well we would sometimes have cereal. There was cereal for us to eat, and my mom would make sure that we were helping the younger ones, making sure everybody had some breakfast so we would be able to get off to school. My mother sometimes would make breakfast tacos, some so that we could make sure that we had, you know, a full belly to go to school with. So we would go home for lunch during the during the day, so we had, I'd say, 30 minutes to make sure that we got home. And I was just across the street. So all of us did go home for lunch, and my mom would make sure that we had, she had something ready for us. So that was, we didn't take our lunch because, you know, that was

just, you know, it was a lot for my mom to get us all ready with lunch. So that's what, that's what it was. And you know what, she would give me two cents, or all of us two cents, to go back to school and have milk before the lunch period was over. So we would all buy a carton of milk, wow,

11:20

before we, before we jump into the palm school, I'm curious. You know, what was it like living in that neighborhood? What what businesses do you remember? What institutions do you remember? What do you remember about navigating the palm neighborhood?

11:38

We would you know, my brother is the only one that had a bike. So we would take turns driving that bike or riding that bike down Rainey Street. And I don't know if y'all, y'all know that, but there's, it's, it's a hill. It goes downhill from Driscoll. So that was always fun. So we would take turns on the bike to make sure we could go down the hill. And there were some friends of our I remember my friends in the Zapata. She lived just down Rainey, and we would go down to her house, and then all the way down there was Annette. She lived at the very end of rainey so we would ride our the bike and go down that way, or we would just walk down there and visit with Annette and we visit with Linda Zapata. All of us went to school together, so it was easy to find somebody. Can I have some water? Absolutely.

12:41

Thank you.

12:49

Cricket in my throat.

12:51

It's cedar fever.

13:00

You know, I'm really, I'm really interested in the relationship between the girls in the neighborhood, and I think this might have to do, because I've, the last two people I've interviewed have been men, and so I'm really curious about, what was it like growing up as a Mexicana in the palm neighborhood. Did you feel safe?

13:24

Yes, we never worried about, I guess, being, you know, being assaulted or or any kind of trouble. It was really a quiet neighborhood. Now, I know that my mother didn't like for us to go down rainey at night. Well, because it's dark, and she was very, very protective of us. I like to tell people, she kept us on a short leash so she always knew where we were, and she knew our friends were down Rainey Street. I'd go see my friend Linda and Annette, and there were some other kids that were down there. So we would sometimes gather. And as as girls, you know, things always went to boys, and whether they had seen the boy they liked or I liked, and things like, who got to wear makeup and who didn't? And I was not one of them. Neither were my sisters. But there were some of the girls in the neighborhood that we would talk about the different kinds of makeup they were able to get and they were allowed to wear,

and in some cases, we were talking about, how can we get makeup and then just put it on at school. That way our parents would never know, and we would just have to make sure we didn't have any when we got home. But those are the it was all basically same, girl girl talk.

14:53

It was fun. Did you did? Did you put on makeup when you went to school?

14:58

Not until junior High. Then my mother, kind of, you know, relaxed it a little bit, and she let us wear some

15:07

so your friends, you mentioned Annette, Linda, Emma, Olga. Did you know them before going to palm, or did you meet them at Palm?

15:16

No, I knew them from the neighborhood. My poor friend Linda, died when we were in junior high. So that was that was a real tragedy for all of us. That's the first time I ever knew anybody that died, other than my grandparents.

Do you know how she passed?

She had cancer, she had bone cancer. When back then, you know the technology in the Medical Field was not, was not anywhere advanced to where it is today. So once she was died, she lost her leg, because that's where her cancer was diagnosed from. And then after that, she she passed away.

15:57

Were you aware of her diagnosis at that age?

16:00

Yes. Now I didn't know what cancer was until later, but she did. She was very open about it, and I remember she walked with a cane. She got a false leg to be able to walk on once she lost her leg, and she had a good sense of humor about it, because we would walk to school, and she thought it was real neat to have a cane to walk with. So, you know, we all, we all walked with her to make sure she didn't go alone, that that we were, we were there with her.

16:39

Just curious, did she do? You know, if she ever experienced any bullying for her, for her disability, or

16:46

none that I know of, I just remember the other kids were very curious about what happened to her, but also how neat it was to walk with a cane. That was a big thing. I don't know why, but it was being a kid,

17:04

I'm really interested in the institutions around the neighborhood, so you off camera you mentioned the Pan American Center. I'm interested to hear like, if you ever went to palm Park, palm pool, the Salvation Army Center. Like I'm curious, what kinds of places were you visiting as a child around the neighborhood?

17:28

Well we visited the park a lot. That was something that we really loved to do. I learned to swim in that pool.

Who taught you how to swim?

We took lessons. The Parks Department would offer lessons. They would have a guard there that would that would teach anybody that wanted to join. And we would get these, these badges that we could wear, or little cards that certified that we had passed certain phases of the lessons. So unfortunately, I couldn't find those, but we did receive them myself, my siblings, we would go down there to swimming lessons and at the park, where, you know, the playground had everything you ever wanted to point out being kids, we didn't know any better. They. We thought it was fantastic, the swings, we had, the merry go round, the slide and the seesaw, which was my favorite. But there was also, during the summers, there were movie nights. On Friday nights, there was movie nights, and so many people from the neighborhood would come and would bring blankets and watched a movie. And there was also a little stand where you could buy Razpas (snow cones) or popcorn, and the families would come and have picnics. It was really a great time.

19:00

Do you remember any of the movies?

19:04

You know, I've been trying to rack my brain to find the names, but I can't remember.

19:08

Were they mostly in English or Spanish, English or in English?

English.

19:13

You know, there's

19:15

a, there's a, something we've been hearing a bit about the pool. Was that it was segregated, or that there might have been some tension around in between, you know, Mexicanos and Anglos who were maybe still living in the neighborhood. Do you remember any of that? Or do you remember feeling any of

19:34

that?

No, I didn't. No, we didn't go until I was, like, 10 years old to learn to swim. And a lot of the kids, they would learn to swim, you know, five and six years old. So we didn't go back early in the earlier years, when it would have been segregated, but it is something, you know, we heard of. Now, my mom would come with us when we swam, because she was afraid we were going to drown. But, um. Uh, it was fun. We didn't, we didn't experience any of that.

20:05

What was the population, the racial makeup of the population, while you were growing up? Do you remember living next to you, or having friends or students peers who were who were not, Mexicans,

20:18

Our next door neighbors, they were a white family. Who were they? The Martinettes, and we used to play with them all the time. There was no tension about the you know, that we were Mexican and they weren't. So we played with them just like we did any of the other kids.

20:37

And did those kids go to palm as well.

20:41

Yes, they did. Yes they did. And our mothers, all everybody would would talk. I know my mother would speak with Mrs. Martinez and and all that and they lived with her grandmother, so my mom knew her very well. And then there was Joe, Rudy and Jesse lived right next to Emma and Olga and they her. They were living with their with their grandmother as well. So my mom knew everybody, so she knew what we were doing.

21:11

Curious Joe, Rudy and Jesse. What was their last name,

Guerra,

and what about Annette?

21:20

Now she was white. I can't remember her last name. I'm sorry,

21:23

that's okay. And you mentioned two friends earlier, Emma and Olga.

21:28

They were Guerra too. Yeah, they were they were related. They were cousins.

Okay, Okay,

21:36

any other, any other places of business, or that places that you went to, that you that you feel made up your community.

21:48

Well, the Pan Am was, was a place that we would go to. We went to their Tuesday night, family nights, where there was Mexican music, there was always a band playing. We were very fortunate. We got to hear the bigger of the Tejano bands, like little Joey, la familia, Ruben Ramos and the Mexican Revolution. So there were quite a few of the bigger bands that we got to hear there. So that was a lot of fun. We really looked forward to going and listening to that music and and that's where all the teenagers would hang around. And I had friends there that we would we would gather, look at the boys. The boys would be looking for girls. So it was a it was a lot of fun.

22:39

I want to hear more about, about those evenings, what were people wearing? What were foods? Were they serving? What decorations were they? What dances were they? Were they performing? Were you dancing like I want to hear? What was it like to be there,

22:53

very loud, and they did have a dance at the pan am in the pan am gym, so, yeah, that was that was something that after, after the music played, and the families are starting to go home, the kids could go there and dance so, and it was mostly Tejano music, and that that's how I really got into the Mexican music, the Tejano music. We had friends that, as we got older, had a band that would play, and that was a lot of fun, too, when we used to go and listen to them playing. But there were sometimes organized dances that played at the dance at the Pan Am on those Tuesday nights. A lot of it was folklorico, which is very beautiful, and they were kids from the neighborhood. Let me drink some water.

24:00

Okay, is it warming up too much? It's a little warm, yeah. I didn't want to be that person. Okay,

24:10

it is a little warm, yeah,

24:15

But at least we know how to work it now. So that's good. Yesterday, we were in here shaking. Poor Red

24:33

Anna, what do you remember about your first day at Palm Elementary, or palm at the Palm school?

24:41

I loved school. I was so anxious to go to school, and I remember my mom took me to first grade, and the teacher was very welcoming. Her name was Mrs. Birch, and she called all of us angels. We were her angels, and invited us into the classroom, and we had her little name tags, and she made it fun, you

know, she wanted us to be comfortable in the classroom, so we got to sing songs that everybody knew, you know. So it was one of those inviting places. And the thing I was more excited about than anything about going to school was that I was going to learn to read, and that's something I really wanted to do.

25:34

What language was predominantly spoken at your house?

English?

English were you knew English before coming to the palm school? Yes, yes. Do you feel like that? That helped you?

25:46

I think so. Because I know there were kids that Spanish was their first language struggled a little bit. And, um, palm school was fortunate that they had some bilingual teachers who were assigned some kids that whose first language was Spanish, to help them along and learn them, tried to help them learn English, but my mom was very adamant that we learned to speak English first, because she when she started school, she only knew Spanish. She didn't know English and she struggled a bit, and so she would tell us, you need to speak English. And at home, we spoke English, except with my grandparents, because my grandparents didn't speak any any English, and or if they did, it was very little. So they did understand some but they spoke very little Spanish. I think that's the only reason I picked up some Spanish, was because of where we were communicating with our grandparents.

26:55

What was the role of education in your household? How? How important was it for what kind of messaging did you get from your parents about the importance of education?

27:08

It was very important because my mother, she didn't get to go to high school. She attended our Lady Guadalupe school up until eighth grade, and she had wanted to go to high school, but wasn't able to. So she made sure that we all understood that we needed to do well, that we do our homework, we go to school, we pay attention and do well. So she never let that go. She always reminded us of that.

27:45

And did both of your parents speak and write English?

27:49

Yes, yes, they did. Wow.

27:54

So, so you're in first grade with with Mrs. Birch, any songs that you remember, even if just the titles,

28:04

oh, my goodness, I remember we sang "someone's in the kitchen with Dinah". Do you know that song? "Someone's in the kitchen with Dinah. Someone in the kitchen. I know, I know." In fact, we ended up having a play about that specific thing, and it was very short play. We were in the first grade, and I got to be Dinah. So I got to wear the fancy dress, pink fancy dress with flowers in my hair. And that was very exciting.

28:48

That is very exciting. Your first year in school to be the star of the star of the show. Tell me about it. Was it? Was it a performance that you all did after school? Or was it something you did within school, and

28:59

we did it in school, and the parents could come, our parents could come.

29:03

Did your parents go? How did that make you feel?

29:07

I was so glad they were there. And a little bit it made me nervous. So, but, you know, once I started singing, I was fine. So, yeah, that was really good.

29:19

That's really great. I'm curious like so, so So Miss Birch, then would have made a very positive impression on you. Yes, yeah, any other teachers that you, that you remember?

29:31

Yes, I had Mrs. Wheeler, and she was, she was a really nice person. She helped everyone better understand our readers and making sure that when we pronounce the words, we pronounce them correctly. I do remember that in fourth grade, I had Mrs. Reyes, Sarah Reyes, and she was a really nice person. She was one of the bilingual teachers, and she was just a very nice person. My mom spent a lot of time at school with us, visiting teachers, making sure that we were doing okay, and so they all knew my mom, and in some cases, she would volunteer to help the teachers, and we also volunteered. I know I did. I volunteered to help the teachers, like after school, in what they needed. So I would take things to the office for them, and I remember one of the things and tidy up the classroom, but one of the things I did was I would clean the erasers. You know, it was a chalkboard that we used, and I they would, they had these, this device that was like a wheel, and you would put the eraser on it, and had a little cover. But for whatever good that did, there was a crank, and I would turn the crank, and the eraser would be wiped. But there was a chalk that was everywhere on me, on, you know, all over the place, so that it was something that we Yeah, my mom wouldn't appreciate that. I was full of chalk when I got home.

31:37

Was your mom part of the Parent Teacher Association at all, or she was just very involved in your in your life,

31:44

No, she was a member of the PTA. Now, she didn't hold office, but she would attend, and you know, if she needed to she would participate in what they were doing.

31:56

Do you remember going to any PTA meetings?

32:00

Oh yeah, I remember there was always a welcoming type of atmosphere. They welcomed the parents. They encouraged them to participate and add whatever feedback they had. So, yeah, it was, it was a nice thing.

32:17

Do you feel like your mom felt like the school listened to her and the concerns of the community?

32:28

Yes, I do. I do believe that the principal encouraged that kind of, that kind of thing. Mr. Moore, he knew all the kids, all of us and and the parents and I remember he spoke to my mom often to make sure that you know that we were okay, and if there was anything she wanted to share with him, he was he was willing to listen.

32:56

That's great. That's really great. Do you remember any any other staff people at the school, besides teachers. I'm thinking, you know, front office staff, janitorial staff, lunch ladies, any of, any, any, any of those people coming to mind,

33:11

you know, I remember the lunch ladies because they were, they were very generous, you know, they made sure that we were eating. And I remember the the cafeteria manager, particularly, she knew my mom, so she always used to ask about my mom, ask her. She asked if she was all right. And there was one thing about the cafeteria, I do remember that there was always a special time when we had cookies. It was very special because we didn't usually have, you know, dessert. There was always something a little sweet to eat with the lunch. But they called them flying saucers, and really what they were oatmeal raisin cookies, and they were a little bigger than a normal cookie, and we all thought that was the best thing ever, those those flying saucer oatmeal cookies.

34:10

Was it like a special day? Or like a when would they have,

34:14

I think about, you know, once a month, you know, they would, they would serve them, and it was always on a Friday. And also that was special was we'd have hamburger day. Oh, yeah, everybody, everybody was looking forward to those hamburgers.

34:31

I'm interested to think more about the kinds of foods you ate at home versus the kinds of foods you ate in school. You mentioned, you know, for the first couple of years, going home for lunch and then you ate at school. I'm curious, like, what was it seems like you enjoyed the food at school. You remember the cookies and the hamburgers, but do you remember like, ever taking lunch or ever, ever the.

34:59

Reason why we ate at school after a while was because we had lunch cards. That's when they implemented lunch cards for kids. We had reduced lunch so that's how, you know, we started eating at school, and it was a balanced meal. I mean, it was, you know, we had a fruit and we had, you know, the balance of a vegetable, a meat, and, yeah, yeah, we really got to balance the meal out of the lunch.

35:31

That's great. What kind of student would you say that you were?

35:35

I think I was a good student. I know my friend Hortensia and I were always in a group of the smarter kids, whether it was reading or any of the other subjects. And I always thought I was a good student. We made good grades.

35:54

Do you know Hortensia's last name?

Palomares?

So, you, you, you, you, you, you were a good student. What was your favorite subject?

36:06

Reading and writing? I I really love to do both of those things. In fact, I'm still an avid reader. Sometimes I read two books at a time, a fiction and a non fiction. So yeah, it stuck with me.

36:22

You mentioned earlier that one of the things you were looking forward to the most going to school was was learning to read. When? When did you learn how to read? When did you what? I mean, I'm curious. You know, often times as a first grader, their excitement isn't about learning how to read, but I'm curious. You know, where that comes from for you, maybe, maybe your mother's influence is really important here. But also, when did you learn how to read? When did you finally feel comfortable? You know reading on your own?

36:47

Well, you know in the first grade, you know you have your introduction to your ABCs or the alphabet and numbers and some basic, basic words that we learned in first grade and in second grade is when

there was the introduction of Dick and Jane, and the teacher would read some of that to us. I thought that was fascinating. I want to do that. So that's that's really how I was introduced to it.

37:17

Did you have any favorite books as a kid?

37:22

There were the fairy tales. I always were. I was always looking for fairy tales. I know as I got older, I read The Canterbury Tales. And those were always, those are good, yeah.

37:38

So in your, in your reading and writing classes. You said, that's your your favorite subject. What do you like? What do you remember about, about learning to read? What do you remember about, like, the act of reading itself? Because I'm really curious. Like, I feel like reading is such a is such a, an important skill in life, obviously. But if you learn how to read right, then the world opens up to you. And so I'm curious like what learning to read in first and second grade at the Palm school? How has that stayed with you and helped you throughout your life?

38:17

Reading brings everything to you. It open up it. It opens up new places, different parts of the world, different people, cultures, which I always found very interesting. And I just felt like I could read about other people and what they did for like, a living, their biographies, learning to do what some people would do. And I thought, well, you know, I can that's a really good place to be. I want to visit that place. So those are the kind of things that really intrigued me. And not only that, I was I liked words. So there's always a new word to learn.

39:04

I like that Absolutely. Do you remember learning about other cultures or other histories or other parts of the world while in while in school? I guess this question is really about curriculum, like, what were you being taught at the Palm school?

39:18

I remember we would cover different countries and being Mexican American. You know, I always wanted to know about not just Mexico, but South America, Central America, I mean, we spoke Spanish. So what was different about them than us as Mexican Americans, why are they different, and what customs did they have their family traditions that would be almost similar to ours?

39:55

Did you learn any of that in at the Palm School?

39:58

Yes, we did. We would cover a. We would cover, maybe not on a larger scale, but we would cover traditions that happen in the different cultures, like in Peru. I remember covering a segment on Peru,

and I remember covering a segment on Japan and how different they were than we were. So I always thought that was so interesting.

40:28

When you were in class, you know, I'm curious about what kinds of posters, what kinds of images were you seeing on the walls? You know, I'm thinking about your surrounding as a kid, you know, what? What kinds of things were you seeing when you were looking around?

40:50

You know, every teacher had the alphabet posted up on the on the wall, and our teachers always made sure that we knew that there were pictures of whatever culture we were studying. So there were pictures of what the mountains looked like the Swiss Alps. I remember that picture I thought, I don't think there are mountains that high until you got something to scale. So it was unbelievable to me that anything could be that high. There were also pictures of the Mexican American community and what it was like to be Mexican from Mexico. I remember Mrs. Reyes would have some pictures like that. And there was always a bulletin board with our achievements. She would post our good grades, recognize the kids that did a good job with even if it was just drawing a picture. So it made everybody's self esteem pretty high because they were so proud. We were all so proud when we had our work posted on that bulletin board.

42:07

That is so important to build kids self esteem right through, through, showing the teacher is proud of their work. Um, is the water bottle, okay? Gustavo or it is not afraid, okay? Perfect. Um, just maybe on the floor, just so you're not squishing. It's fine to hold it. I just said, Yeah, I don't want to. I'm really interested in Miss Sarah Reyes as one of the few Mexican American teachers at Palm school. Did you did? Was it? I'm curious. Like, I'm curious as a young Mexicana, as a young Mexican American girl, did you did you notice a difference when Miss. Reyes was your teacher? Or did you, like, I'm curious of that relationship.

42:55

She She was understanding and about those kids that could not speak English very well, and she was very patient, and took the time to make sure they understood where the class was in a different lesson. And I remember how nice she was about sitting one on one with some of these kids to make sure, to go over the lesson, to make sure they understood where we were and what, what the message was being conveyed. So her lessons were, were all very, very good. Now we didn't fall behind. We all stayed, stayed up, and in some cases, she would say after school, if we needed her to to help, to help in any of our lessons. And she was, well, you know what was? What struck me, too, and I remember as a fourth grader, I thought, well, I didn't know that Mexican Americans would be teachers because I thought, well, maybe there are, there are some that are teachers that really wanted to help the community. So that always struck me as a great thing.

44:19

What do you remember about the building, the building itself, the palm school. You know, I find it really fascinating that you grew up right across the street, and so I would imagine you saw it every single day. And so even before you went started going to the palm school, what did the building represent for you?

44:37

Well, it represented something that I thought, you know, I can, I can grow up and learn different things and be able to learn more than my parents did, and experience things that that they didn't get to experience, and it's going to help me move forward in my education, and I really thought this was a good place to go. And when I would look at the school, I would think, wow, I am able to go to school and really enjoy the place, really enjoy the people there, and so many friends. If I didn't see them at school, I saw them in the neighborhood, and we were all so close. The families were close, the kids were close. And it all represented something that brought the families, brought the neighborhood together, and that really meant a lot to me.

45:37

What do you remember about the building do? What do what do you remember about, I don't know, the windows or the doors or the classrooms or the lunch, the cafeteria, the gym? What structurally? What do you remember? What do

45:49

I remember that it was not air conditioned, that's for sure. And there were hard wood floors in the entrance way, because the office was, you know, right there by the front door, and some of the offices were on the other side. So down that little Hall, it was a hard wood floors and a very tall ceilings, very tall ceilings. Well, you know, I was like, I was little kids, so I thought it was a high ceiling, and the classrooms were farther back, and I remember that they they would group them classrooms together, like where the first grade was. It was close to the office. They kept those close to the office and close to the front door. And I remember second grade being just beyond third and fourth grade were somewhere on the first floor, and some were on the second floor. So, yeah, I was on the second floor for like, four through six grade. Now we did have a basement, and that's where some of the earlier classes were like first graders. They would have some classes down there as the school grew more families came. That's where they are now. It also had, it wasn't really a gym. It was just like two classrooms put together and we would, we, that's where we would go to our gym and the cafeteria was an addition to the school. So it was off on the west side of the school. I remember that, and it was, it was where we have the PTA meetings, our school assemblies, that kind of thing. Well, and lunch.

47:39

I'm really curious why the hardwood floor stuck out. Why do you think that stuck with you for so long?

47:49

Well, because I remember, well, the sound that it made, I remember that it sounded different than when you go farther down and it was tile or something, I can't remember.

48:05

I'm really, I really want to hear about extracurricular activities in terms of you mentioned, like dances or play, like any, any of those kinds of sorts of activities that you remember from the palm school.

48:21

Well, I was in the band when the sixth grade. I played a flute. It was, it was a real good experience. I remember I started late, because my mom finally got a hold of a flute for me. So I started, like, two weeks later. So I, you know, I caught up pretty quick. And in fact, the band teacher let me have a solo at the end of the school year.

48:49

I love this because I haven't heard anything about a band yet, so I'm going to continue to ask about this. Okay, I'm a band kid as well. Okay, I've played the trumpet for 20 years. Do you remember your bad teacher's name?

49:03

It was a gentleman, and I really don't remember his name, you know, I'm sorry this was so long ago. I don't remember his name, but he sure was a good guy.

49:12

What interested you in the flute?

49:16

I like the sound, and it was easy to play so and I really liked it.

49:24

Were all the students required to take band, or was it a they opted into it?

49:28

It was a volunteer thing. And so it was a full band, with clarinets, and we had a few flutes, trombones, the coronets, the horn section.

49:42

If you were to guess about how many would you say were in the band?

49:46

I'd say there were at least 12 of us.

49:50

Do you remember any songs that you played?

49:57

No, not really. You. They were on the easier side in a slower rhythm. But no, I'm sorry. I don't remember, I don't remember their names.

50:10

Did you continue with the flute later on?

50:13

Yes, I was in the in the band in junior high, at university junior high, and at Martin junior high.

50:22

That's great. I love that. Did the band ever have concerts or perform anywhere?

50:28

Yeah, we played, I remember, for Christmas and and then we played at the end of the year for the parents and see, that's, that's one thing about assemblies at night, you know, with the performances, either the choir, because I was in the choir too, parents would come, but the community would come. That cafeteria was full because everybody wanted to just, not just see their their kids play, but they wanted to come and watch school, have a have a concert. So it was always a big thing,

51:10

which, which kind of reinforces what you've said, is that palm school was situated in a much larger community, and so the students, the kids from the community, went, went to palm the palm school, but on on nights of activity or concerts, more people who didn't have kids might have still come and enjoyed the music or enjoyed the entertainment.

Yes

That's really great.

51:31

And what, what also did was it encouraged students, other students, to want to be in band. So that was, that was always also good.

51:43

I have very similar questions about choir, because we also haven't heard about that. Curious about, you know, do you remember any of the students who were in choir or band with you? Do you remember teachers, any songs or anything of that sort?

51:58

Well, there's a group of close friends that we were in choir together, myself, Hortensia Palomares, Christina Gutierrez, Mary Lu Trevino, we were all real close friends. My sister Carmen, she also was in the choir and that was a lot of fun. Our teacher, her name was Miss Mrs. Song, and she really, she really encouraged us to sing different kinds of song. I remember we bar Santia is the one that reminded me that we celebrated the 75th anniversary of palm school, and we sang as the choir, and we were singing songs from the era when it opened. And I remember one of the songs we sang was I um, "Great, big, beautiful doll". It was one of those songs from early 20s, I believe, and it was, it was already fifth or sixth grade that we that that happened. So my friend Mary Lou Trevino had a solo where she

sang from South Pacific "Happy Talk". We still remember that my friends and myself that she she dressed with a lei and a mumu, and she was barefoot, and she had a good time with that song, because she was just happy talk. And it was, it was, it was really neat.

53:50

That's really cool. That's fun. I also love that you all are still able to recall these memories together as a collective. That's really special any other, any other kind of after school or like thinking holidays, you know, Fourth of July, Thanksgiving, any kind of those celebrations.

54:11

Well, I remember we had an assembly before, before we, we all left for the summer because it was June and July, 4 was real close, and we had a twirling team, and I was one, I participated, and we had a twirling presentation program for the parents at the end of the year. I think that was in fourth grade. I can't remember, but that was fun. That was really fun.

54:48

Anna, you were a very active kid

54:52

anytime something came off me. I mean, I'll do it.

54:55

I'm curious, the baton twirling was this with a. Um, Luisa Campos. No, does that name ring about all?

55:03

Yes, it does, but I don't remember if that was with her.

55:07

Okay, um, do you have any memories of of Miss Campos? Or do you have any thoughts

55:13

on Well, her name is real familiar, but no, I'm sorry it does. Okay. Um,

55:22

so Fourth of July, any other, any other holidays that you remember?

55:29

Well, the Christmas programs were always a big thing, because we were, it was right before the break.

55:46

And uh, we would have the choir, would have, uh, would sing. And that was always fun. We got to sing Christmas carols, all of the regular you know, Christmas carols, Joy to the world. And did you have a favorite white Christmas? We got to sing White Christmas. I remember that. I remember my mom. We had an old vitro that was my grandmother's. And my aunt and my mom surprised me one evening

because she had found the old record to play on the vitrola, which was Perry Como singing, because she knew that that I was going to participate in the choir singing that song that was very special.

56:36

Yeah, that must have felt nice to feel the support, right? I want to hear about play and joy at the Palm school. What do you remember about being able to play with your friends?

56:53

The best part was the playground. I mean, it was, it was a great playground. We got to play whichever whichever games we wanted to play as kids. So tag was a big one. So we were all over the place. And I remember, as we got older, there was softball. I mean, I wasn't any good at softball, but, you know, I got to play outfield, where I never caught any balls, but that was always fun. So there was like a four square diagram on the on the by the pavilion, there was like a big platform that had the four square so we got to play that. And it wasn't like real restrictive, but we just had to stay where the teacher could call us if she needed to. But that was always fun, and in the summers, we used to go out there to play,

57:54

explain the pavilion, where was it? In relationship to the palm school?

57:57

It was right behind the is right by the playground. It was closer to the sidewalk that that joined the access road to I 35 so it was like this big building that there were restaurants there, but it had a cover. It was like a little patio that sometimes when it rained, we would go out there and get under the pavilion so we wouldn't get wet.

58:26

How close was Palm Park and palm pool to to the school and to this pavilion

58:33

I was directly behind, behind us. There were stairs that we could go down out the side of the school, stairs that went right to the park. So it was very, very close to the school.

58:46

And it sounds very like, like, like, integrated into each other, right? That they're kind of ..

58:54

Yes, because if you didn't know, and you, you know, walked up to pond school, you would think that park belonged to the school, but that Park was a community park.

59:06

Thinking back, what would you say is a moment of joy that you experienced while at the Palm school?

59:22

I think that what always made me feel good was the recognition of kids. They would always make sure that whatever assembly happened, there was always some recognition of kids and their accomplishments, whether it was they didn't miss a day at school, whether it was kids that achieved, like, very good grades, straight A's, and that kind of thing always meant a lot to me, because, you know, I had friends that were um recognized a lot, and they wanted to make sure the teachers, the staff, the principal, that the different activities that we participated in were recognized, the teachers that were recognized that and teachers were sponsoring different different things, so that was always good.

1:00:23

Tell me. I'm interested to hear some of the few recognitions that you received that you are very proud of.

1:00:29

Well, there were like spelling, I always make good grades in spelling. So those were some recognitions I got. And also the there was a Readers Club, and I got a certificate that recognized that I was a part of the Readers Club, and I achieved the reading goals. That was never difficult for me, because I read all the time.

1:00:59

That's awesome. How were you treated by other students?

1:01:05

Um, good. Yeah, we were good. You know, there's always somebody that was gonna, you know, find a fault and point it out. But overall, it was good.

1:01:17

Do you remember any experiences in the classroom or on the playground that that you found really like, like, I don't know, you just had a really good time, like, a really good experience in the classroom, whether it be, you know, a teacher being writing on the chalkboard, or, you know, like playing with friends on the playground, like, I'm curious of experience that you felt like, like you felt very happy.

1:01:53

I remember that we were able to develop our own story, and we could, as a group, we would put the story together, and that that was really fun, because we could pick the subject, you know, that was that we wanted to talk about, and each of us would be able to read it or play a role in those stories. So myself. I remember myself and Hortensia, yeah, would would be participating in one of those groups. She and I were best friends all the way through school, so we did a lot of things together.

1:02:35

Do you remember what, what kind of stories you all were writing back then?

1:02:39

Oh it was mainly fantasy stories. I remember that part we just made up, maybe something magical, you know, a secret door, a forest that would, you know, talking trees. And I think we got that from the Wizard of Oz, but

1:03:02

that's great. I was so my next question was, Who were your best friends?

1:03:07

Yeah, we were all very good friends. Hortensia was my best friend. She and I did everything together, went to each other's houses. Her mom and my mom were really good friends, Mary Lu Trevino, she was also one of my very good friends,

1:03:32

one, and Christina Gutierrez was also a part of our group. And I remember Dolores Amaro, she lived down east First Street.

1:03:50

Are you still in contact with any of them, or any of them still with us?

1:03:53

Mary, Lou, we just reconnected not long ago, and Hortensia yeah, we've we've we've stayed in touch one way or another, and Christina also, we just recently reconnected.

1:04:14

So you went to the palm school until the sixth grade, which was 1960 remind me 519. 65. What after the palm school? Where did you what schools did you attend?

1:04:30

Seventh through eighth grade? I went to University Junior High. That was a beautiful building. I really liked going to school there,

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tell me about why was it so beautiful?

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It was an older building and different from all the other schools because it had really wide halls and things were there was a lot of wood. The doors had glass, and it had these great big windows that were open during the spring and during the good, good weather months. Well, for one, there was an air conditioning but we were able to to open those windows. It just seemed like a school that anybody would want to go to because it was so pretty. It had a it had a patio out front in the middle of two buildings, the gym and the main building, and we would have pep rallies out there and those, that's something I never had participated before, so I thought those were really cool. So, yeah, I was in the band, so we got to, got to play for those pep rallies, and it was right next door to Memorial Stadium. So it was always a good place during the spring, when they would have their, their their own field days

when it was, it was really, really a neat thing. You could, you could see the students, and that was always really nice.

1:06:19

How far was UJH, from where you lived?

1:06:24

We lived on at the time, we had already moved to second street, so and they were on 19th street. So that's a good ways. Yeah, we walk to school and back. Sometimes my dad would pick us up because he was delivering, but for the most part, No, we just walked, walk to school and walk home.

1:06:46

How was going from the palm School, which was predominantly, you know, Mexicanos to UJH, which, if I'm not mistaken, was one of the first integrated junior highs in Austin, how was, how was any, any reflection on that?

1:07:02

I remember when I was first started in the seventh grade that was a little intimidating for me, because there were going to be white kids going to school with us, and there was, and it was a mixture. We had black kids too, and we didn't. We didn't have any in Palm school, not very many white kids that went there. But and not only that, they were primarily from West Austin. So they were, they were different. And their families, you could tell, had money, and we were, we were the poor kids. But, you know, at first it was intimidating, but after, you know, several weeks going to school, it wasn't that bad. They're just kids. Everybody was just kids. We all got together.

1:07:54

Yeah i'm really curious. You mentioned, you know, we were, you said we were the poor kids. How old were you? Or when did you realize that you were the poor kids?

1:08:07

in junior high? That's when, that's when I realized that, well, they dressed better than we did, and there was just an air about them, you know, that was different than ours. But you know, you do feel that little, you know, nudge of you know, they I'm not dressed as well as they are. But you know, you get over it. It wasn't just me as my friends too. So

1:08:35

commiserate together.

Yeah, yeah.

After UJH, where did you go to school after UJH?

1:08:44

Well UJH closed. So a ISD open a new school in East Austin, Martin junior high. And that's why I went to school. And just about everybody went went to school there.

1:09:00

And then, what about did you continue on to high school?

1:09:02

Yes, I went to Austin High graduated from there in what year, 1971

1:09:10

and after high school, did you pursue any higher education?

1:09:14

No, I went to work.

Where did you go work?

IRS, the Internal Revenue Service. I started there. I mean, I took a few courses at ACC mainly to help me in my job. As I spent 38 years at IRS before I retired, it was the only place I worked. It's a great place to work. They're good people. They have career advancement. You know, all you have to do is, if you want it, and you try hard enough, you'll advance. So I really appreciated it. Everything those people did for me.

1:09:57

That's great, that's beautiful, that's great. Um. We're kind of getting towards the end of the interview, what has the role of education meant in your life?

1:10:09

I think it meant a lot for me. I encourage my kids to also do the same, the same, the same techniques my mother use I use with my kids. School is important. You have to do well. And yes, I'm going to find out if there's something that you're not doing, because I would visit with the teachers and go to the back to school nights, those kind of things. So and my kids knew they they were really self motivated. They did well in school.

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How many kids do you have?

1:10:39

I have two children. I have a daughter, and she lives in Dallas, and have a son that lives in Chicago.

1:10:56

What kind of educational and leadership opportunities were provided from the school and the surrounding area. Do you feel like, what kind of kind of do you feel like you were you gain skills of, of kind of leadership, or skills of, well, actually, you've talked a lot about reading and writing, and I love

that your emphasis is on reading, reading and writing, and that even before going to Palm you were like, I want to go to learn how to read. And some of the, some of the, some of the moments that you've picked out are moments that required using those skills, right, writing the story, being in the play, required you to read a script, right? And so I'm curious, like, what skills? What have you taken from the palm school?

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I think the motivation to learn, to learn new things, to accept things that aren't exactly what you thought they were. And I really believe that the skill in making friends come with going to school, because it's part of socializing, part of being able to get along in life and get along with other people, I thought, taught me a lot, because there were team activities where you had to work as a team, or you had to work with somebody else, and that kind of thing takes you all through life, because you can't do things All by yourself on occasion. So I think that kind of thing really stayed with me,

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and I think it's such a perfect way to sum up what the neighborhood meant in general, was this idea of community and this idea of you need each other to to make life easier right, to make life more worthwhile. What does the palm school symbolize to you?

1:13:06

Palm school symbolized to me that doesn't matter where you live, how much money you have, that an education was there. It was just up to you to learn to do well, and gave you the basis for me to be able to learn different things with different people. And yes, you can succeed. You can do well. You can succeed in life, knowing that these basic skills you learned from the time you were five years old, so I always appreciated that experience.

1:13:49

Miss Medlock, thank you so much for your time. This has been a real joy and an honor for me. So thank you.

1:13:54

Thank you. Applause.