

# Palm\_School\_Ramirez\_Gloria

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## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

Palm School, Travis County, oral history, community education, political participation, childhood memories, family dynamics, bilingual education, neighborhood impact, school integration, teacher experiences, student friendships, community involvement, school facilities, educational opportunities., childhood memories, Palm School, friends, malt, Superior Dairies, sister, moving on, 82 years old, appreciation, opportunity, past, family

## SPEAKERS

Gloria Ramirez, Tracy Flores

### Tracy Flores 00:00

Hello. Today is Sunday, December 15, 2024 My name is Tracy Flores. I am interviewing Gloria Ramirez in Austin, Texas for the Travis County oral history project. We are at the University of Texas at Austin campus. Thank you, Miss Ramirez for agreeing to be for this interview. The raw unedited recording in this video 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 is anything you don't wish to talk about, we respect your wishes. Also, if there is something you want to discuss, please do make sure that we discuss it okay? Please also let me know if you need to pause the video the interview at any time. Today, we're going to talk about your life experiences, particularly as it relates to the palm school. We will also discuss your relationship to community education and political participation. And if you're ready, you will go ahead and begin.

### Gloria Ramirez 00:40

I'm ready.

### Tracy Flores 00:58

Thank you. Can you please tell us your name and your relation to relation, relation to palm School?

### Gloria Ramirez 01:08

My name is Gloria Gonzalez Ramirez and I attended palm school from 1948 through the fifth grade 1953 and my sister was a year older than I, and she was ahead of me one year. I had a number of cousins that also attended this school, and it so happened that my future husband attended this school as well, but way ahead of me, because he was older, and at that time, it was sort of a neighborhood school, even though we were surrounded by East Avenue, which is now i-35 and I'm feeling my boys get very raspy.

### Tracy Flores 01:30

Should I you need water?

**Gloria Ramirez** 02:10

Please?

I hope I can make it through this. I Okay, as I said, I had several cousins that attended this school, some of them were older and one was younger and one was same, great, although we were not in the same home room. So palm school, at that time, had a playground in the back. It was at a swimming pool. It had slides and swings, and we spent a large part of the summer there, because my grandmother lived very close, and so palm school and Palm Park were a very big part of our family back then.

**Tracy Flores** 02:44

What was your childhood like?

**Gloria Ramirez** 02:50

Well actually, it was sort of a fantasy type, because, excuse me, we lived on Seventh Street, and on that block, I had two uncles and an aunt and their families that lived. I'm so sorry. Get through this. We anyway, we all played together in the summer time, and then my mother, where my grandmother lived, and had an aunt next door and an uncle around the corner, and we spent a lot of time together playing. So we had a great time. We all went fun. We played games. We did all kinds of fun things. It was, it was a great child's child Life, and my parents were very loving. I told this story later on that I never saw my parents argue at all. So naturally, I thought that's the way everybody was. So I had a surprise coming when I got married. Anyway, it was, it was a very pleasant and very happy childhood. We were poor. We just didn't know we were poor, and because my dad worked as a waiter and my mother was a stay at home mom. And so it was, it was good. It was all great.

**Tracy Flores** 04:26

What kinds of games did you play as a fan, as your brothers and sisters or your family?

**Gloria Ramirez** 04:30

All kinds of different games we we played sports games, and I used to want to play with my older cousins, and I got in between them one time, and they fell on me and broke my collar bone. So that stopped and but I liked make-believe. I like to we would go to see the movies, and I would like come back and act them out. And we played hide and seek, we played tag, we played all kinds of, just kinds of games that kids played back then there was, uh, no television and very little television until later on. So we we had to play, we had to read, and we had to luckily, back then, we all lived together. We'd ride our bikes in the alley behind our house, and it was just a great time. I was very blessed to have a wonderful childhood.

**Tracy Flores** 05:21

And so you talked about it being a fantasy. Can you talk about what that means to you?

**Gloria Ramirez** 05:27

Well, you know, not knowing that there are other people that don't live this happy life, I just assumed everybody did. And I was blessed to have two parents, as all of our uncles and aunts were part of their family. They had their children, and so we were very blessed. So when I say it's like a fantasy, it's like, like the perfect family, although I know there's no such thing as a perfect family, my sister and I quarreled and argued and and I would aggravate her on purpose, and she would get mad at me, and anyway. But it was just all part of growing up. There was, you know, we became great friends, and unfortunately, she passed away the same year my husband did, just about six months later. So anyway, that's that's what I'm saying. When I say fantasy, it was just really good.

**Tracy Flores** 06:30

And you talk a little bit more about your family, what were they like at home?

**Gloria Ramirez** 06:34

Well, at home, it was my dad and my mom and I was the baby for quite a few years, for like, seven years, I didn't realize this until much later on, that my mother had had a couple of miscarriages, and so when she was expecting my brother and he came, I was a little bit like, I'm not the Baby anymore, you know, and but my mother always had like the perfect thing to say, Well, no, but you're the baby girl, so you're still the baby girl, that that would satisfy me and my my then we had two little brothers, and as we grew older, we did things for them. I'd take them to the movies and and so they were little brothers, and they were mischievous and traviesos and but they were fine. I mean, they didn't, they didn't fight at all that I can recall. And we had cousins, and for a while, when we first, my first memory was that we lived in a big house, and in that house, my mother, my dad and my sister and I lived, my uncle and my aunt and their oldest daughter lived, and my grandfather and my grandmother lived. Now, my grandmother passed away, so it was just but my grandfather lived with us, Apagolfo, and he came to Mexico from Mexico, and he was a warden in a prison then at that time, and during the revolution, he was told, you really need to get out of here. You need to go take your family and leave because there could be a price on your head. I didn't know anything about that, but they were fine. I mean, he, he even went back to Mexico a couple of times to visit relatives much later on, after the revolution, of course, but he was very strict. And back then, we had to be very modest. We we could not wear shorts. We had to be dressed properly and and that was just those way it was that, you know, it wasn't anything like, oh my god, he won't let us wear shorts. Or wanted to. Just did it. We just did it. That's all. Was it for boys and girls? Well, just the boys, because the girls were not, I mean, just the girls not the boys were not there yet. Then we built a house. My dad built a house two houses down, and my grandfather would sit on the porch and watch who was coming in, who was coming out. It was just and, but he always had candies in his room and dates and orejones, which is apricot dried apricot. And I would remember I'd go into the room because I really loved candy, and he'd come into the room. I'd come into the room and and he had some candies that I didn't like and and I said, "Que son esos?" and he said "quien sabe," or I can't remember and I said "No, me gusta" "que bueno porque no te iba dar". It was a joke but you know, it's a good thing, because I wasn't going to give you any anyway. But he had. His little meriendas in the afternoon, we what we grew up watching him do that, and he was he had a sense of humor, and he lived to be in his early 90s, and probably would have lived longer, but he tripped and broke a hip, and it was downhill after that. On my mother's side of the family, we had a grandmother and grandfather and my grand, both of them were born in the United States, and so my grandfather had a stroke, and he was not able to work, and it was hard to understand him. But my

grandmother, she loved to sew, and so she would so make some dresses for us and and we spent a lot of time with her, and it was fun. Across the street was an aunt, my mother's sister and her family, and we would play there too. So it was just, it was lots of fun. It was, you know, we didn't do we did take little trips, because one of my uncles moved to Corpus Christi, and I remember that we moved, we went and visited them, but we didn't take vacations or anything like that. We would just go visit relatives in other cities, and it was fun.

**Tracy Flores 11:16**

And what kind of languages? What language did you speak at your house?

**Gloria Ramirez 11:20**

We spoke nothing but Spanish. And with my grandfather living there, we spoke nothing but Spanish. And then my mother, when my sister was five, and my mother said, Yolanda is going to be going to school next year. We need to start speaking English. So she and my dad spoke well. My dad had a accent, but he spoke English as well. So we started speaking English. And of course, we would speak Spanish to my grandfather and but we started just making our home conversation English, which really helped, because by the time we got to school, we were fluent in English, and that helped us.

**Tracy Flores 12:04**

So the decision was, was made when you were all starting school?

**Gloria Ramirez 12:08**

Yes, it was because we were starting school, and when you at that time, they wouldn't even let you say anything in Spanish back then. And I know because my husband came from a Spanish speaking family, and they didn't prepare them as well. Well they did, because he was younger, so he had learned a lot, but still, he struggled a bit, but he would never have known it later on. But anyway, Spanish was the primary language in our household until we started school, and then we switch to English.

**Tracy Flores 12:41**

and what languages were spoken in the neighborhood?

**Gloria Ramirez 12:45**

Well being is how most of our neighborhood was our family, it was bilingual. The kids would speak English. The parents learned English, or they knew English, and so it was bilingual. I mean, we had a couple of people in the neighborhood that one of them African American. No, they were Anglo, and they spoke nothing but English. But they were we had had no issues. Later on, it was funny, but later on, one of them, a lady moved in whose husband had been in the military. She had one son, and they were African American, and one of their sons was at age of my kids. This was later on, as I said, and so he came and knocked at the back door one time and said, Can I play with those little Germans? My children were the Germans, because they were because they were not black, or they were not I mean, he just considered having lived in Germany because his dad was in the military. So that was, that was one thing that was amusing.

**Tracy Flores 13:56**

And then what about, what about expectations around education. What role did education play in your home?

**Gloria Ramirez** 14:05

Well, we were all expected to graduate high school, which we did back then, it wasn't that common for girls to go to college. A lot of times, girls would go to business college to learn secretarial work and things like that. And I had a cousin who did that. She went to Nixon Clay College and learned how to do clerical work. Her brother was a year older, and he went to UT to the School of Architecture, and he became an architect. So unfortunately, back then, it was the guys go to school and the girls not so much.

**Tracy Flores** 14:49

So there were different expectations, yeah, girls and boys?

**Gloria Ramirez** 14:53

But not limitations. You know, if one of us had said, I want to go to college, they would have done whatever they could. It is there, but it was just not something we expected to do.

**Tracy Flores** 15:05

Can you put your papers on the table just because we're picking it up on the microphone? Sorry. No, don't be sorry. Just want to make sure that we capture your voice. Tell me about how you got to school?

**Gloria Ramirez** 15:22

Well, because we had a car, my dad would usually drive us and some other cousins to school, and he worked as a waiter, and sometimes my mother drove, which was a little bit unusual back in those days, a lot of the times the women didn't drive, but my mother drove. She would either pick us up from school or my dad would. And actually sometimes, as we got into the higher grades, we would walk home from pond school to where my grandmother lived on East third, because it wasn't that far and the traffic wasn't as bad. So we did everything. We walked and we got rides. You know, later on, as we went into high school, we would take the bus home.

**Tracy Flores** 16:12

How did your mother learn how to drive?

**Gloria Ramirez** 16:15

I think my dad taught her. We had a little car. That was at first, we all thought it was good. It had a rumble seat. You put the open it up and sit in the back. And as we got older, we would say, Dad, leave us a block away from the school. We want to get off. We don't want to see our friends this little antique car. But we always had a car.

**Tracy Flores** 16:36

And your father, where was he? A waiter at?

**Gloria Ramirez** 16:39

He worked at El Matamoros. Well, first of all, going back, my grandfather opened up a Mexican restaurant, and it was called El Monterrey, and my oldest uncle ran it, and my younger, younger sons worked there, but my dad also worked selling newspapers downtown. And he would tell us stories about how he took his two younger brothers, and he would put them, you stay on this corner, you stay on this corner, and then you stay here, selling all your newspapers, and you stay there. I'll come back and pick you up, and he would pick them up, and then they'd go home. And so. But later on, he worked at El Matamoros. He worked at my grand, my uncle worked and managed el Charro back then. There was restaurants that were back there. Then my dad went to work at an Italian restaurant, Carusos cafe that was on East Sixth Street. So he worked at two or three different places. He was Assistant manager or manager at one of those places. And he also worked at Spanish village. There was a restaurant called the Spanish village in South Austin, and those people would give us, they have a Christmas party every year that shut the restaurant down, and then they'd invite all the workers and their families. So I remember that.

**Tracy Flores** 18:09

What was that Christmas party like?

**Gloria Ramirez** 18:11

Well, it was eating food and I actually don't remember if they gave us gifts or not, but it was fun. It was we got to visit with other kids and and they we ate the food and probably played games. I just don't quite remember all that, but it was fun.

**Tracy Flores** 18:30

And can you think back to your first day of school at Palm do you remember it? What was that like?

**Gloria Ramirez** 18:37

Well, I knew the teachers because my sister had been there the year before, and actually for a short period of time, they had let me go and sit with my sister, who was home sick, wanted to go home. They let me sit with her, so I knew Miss Mullins, and she was very nice with me. She was quite elderly, but she was very nice, and we had a mixture of Anglo and Hispanic people in that class and and I was talking to one of the ladies that we were preparing for this, and she said that she had Miss Mullins too, and that they had to take naps. I say, Yeah, we took naps, she said, and we would lie down on top of our desks, which were tables back then, and we would take naps. And she said, Miss Mullins would pay them to sleep, so she didn't pay us (*laughs*), anyway. I don't know what that was about, but I don't remember the exact first day, but I just remember that it was it was okay, it was fun. We had the school cafeteria was in the basement at that time, and there was a lady that knew my mother, I was a finicky eater, and I wouldn't eat all my food. And she would tell my mother later on that I had not eaten all my food, and she was Tattler. They only built a cafeteria that's adjacent. It's right next to the building and and so it was the truth. The school changed while I was there, while I was attending it. They built that cafeteria and or

**Tracy Flores** 20:20

What were some other changes.

**Gloria Ramirez** 20:25

Well, they had had, what did they call them, barracks in the back, and I learned later on that that's where they would put the children that didn't speak any English at all. They would put them back there, and they would teach them back there, but that's all I remember. You know, I don't want to jump ahead, but you know, I came back to work there later on. So that's when a lot of things had changed and but anyway, those are my memories. I have memories of doing back then. We would have, like, you have tornado watches. We would have bomb, you know, in case of bombing, because during the war, but hide under our desks and but I was not afraid of that at all. I thought that was, you know, never was gonna happen. It wasn't real to me.

**Tracy Flores** 21:25

How often did you experience those drills?

**Gloria Ramirez** 21:27

I'm sorry?

**Tracy Flores** 21:29

How often did you experience those drills?

**Gloria Ramirez** 21:31

Probably once or twice a week. Maybe they were like fire drills. You know, when you have a fire drill, you have to go outside. And so this was a bomb drill, I guess, excuse me. Okay,

**Tracy Flores** 21:54

and I wanted to ask you about the barracks where they they took the students to teach them who were learning English. Did you know anyone who had that experience in there, like personal friends?

**Gloria Ramirez** 22:07

Well, later on, I learned that my husband had been there, but not very long, because they learned English real quick. But other than that, no, because the people I know were people from the neighborhood that we all hung around together and cousins. So I didn't know too much about that. I know we had two teachers that one one was Mrs. Reyes, and another one was Mrs. Quintanilla. And they taught the children that were primary Spanish speakers. I'm sorry. wait

**Tracy Flores** 22:58

Do you know anything about how the students were taught in the barracks?

**Gloria Ramirez** 23:00

No, I don't.

**Tracy Flores** 23:03

I wanted to ask you also, you mentioned being you mentioned being a finicky eater. Did you ever bring your own lunch to school?

**Gloria Ramirez** 23:11

We didn't, for some reason, we didn't bring lunches to school.

**Tracy Flores** 23:17

And do you remember what you wore when you went to school, like, what your clothes was like?

**Gloria Ramirez** 23:21

Yes, we we couldn't wear dresses. We wore. I mean, we couldn't wear pants. We had to wear dresses. And as I said, we didn't have a lot of money, but we didn't know a lady. So sorry that sewed. All you had to do was show her a picture of a dress or a skirt or something, and she would she could make it for you. So my mother would buy material, and she would make her clothes, but they were just ordinary clothes.

**Tracy Flores** 23:53

And was this someone from the community that would make the dresses for you? I'm sorry, was it someone from the community that would make the clothes for you?

**Gloria Ramirez** 24:00

Yeah, she lived in the community. She had children going to their children were older, but she had children that went to palm school and and she was someone that we knew, and she was very good, and she made a lot of our dresses.

**Tracy Flores** 24:20

And then thinking back to your classroom experiences. What was that like? What kinds of things did you get to learn about at Palm school?

**Gloria Ramirez** 24:27

Well, you know, for some reason, of course, the fifth grade was has more memories for me, and that was when we learned a lot of the history of the United States and the wars and the presidents and so forth, and so the fifth grade is the year that I feel I learned a lot. I'm sure I learned a lot in the other grades too. But. Now we had music we would go to music classes, and I got to know the music teachers, and we went to PE, and the physical ed teacher was good. I was not very good in PE, and I couldn't sing. In fact, I tell a joke about, I don't know if I mentioned this to you before, but they would choose me as the mistress of ceremony, or the master, you know, to announce whenever there was going to be a choir singing or the play. And "oh, they always choose Gloria to be the" and later on, I found out that they probably did that because I couldn't sing at all. And so they said, "Let's get her do anything so she doesn't have to sing."

**Tracy Flores** 25:49

And what were those shows like?

**Gloria Ramirez** 25:53

Well, they just a lot of times they were plays, and a lot of times they were just singing. You just stand up there and sing, but somebody would walk up and introduce, and that was me introduce, what song that we were going to sing. That's what. It wasn't any big deal, except that we did have plays and but I can't remember right now the plays later on in junior high, I took, I took speech, and I we did a lot of plays, and I got more involved, but I didn't follow through in high school.

**Tracy Flores** 26:29

what plays did you get to be part of in junior high school?

**Gloria Ramirez** 26:33

Well, I can't remember titles. I mean, they were just ordinary plays that, you know, nothing spectacular or anything. I just, I can't remember. I just remember they were pleased.

**Tracy Flores** 26:47

And then for the songs that were, you were all taught what, what songs were those? Do you remember any of those?

**Gloria Ramirez** 26:55

Unfortunately, I don't. A lot of them were songs that well as you in the lower grades, like Row, row, row your boat. And it's things that we sing, you know, to kids, to our children. And they are really a lot of them were songs from plays, and so they were but unfortunately, my my head is not working right now, and I can't remember titles, but...

**Tracy Flores** 27:30

And then I wanted to ask you about more about your learning in school. How much did you learn about the Mexican American experience in the US and in Texas at the Palm school?

**Gloria Ramirez** 27:43

Not much, not much at all. Back then, they would give us these tests, and then they would sit you on tables according to your level of reading. And I was fortunate that I was in a high level reading but I don't recall getting anything about the history of Mexican Americans. In fact, they hardly ever used the word Mexican back then it was and you couldn't speak Spanish at all in schools, and so it was, but I guess I was very naive back then. I just accepted it. I didn't challenge it or anything. I don't think any of us did, but we didn't learn about the Alamo until much later on. And all of the you know, you did wonder why all the streets were called La Vaca or Pedernales or whatever they all had Spanish names, but we were considered minority back then. And of course, they there's stories about how we lived in West Austin at the beginning, but then they pushed us out into East Austin, and now here we are again in East Austin being pushed out because people are moving into the area that and the taxes are so high.

**Tracy Flores** 29:22

So did you learn about Mexican American experience or Texas outside of school? Were there other places we learned?

**Gloria Ramirez** 29:34

because my grandfather had been in the Mexican War and probably the revolution. We just learned a little bit about Pancho Villa, but they didn't talk very much about that to us. They didn't talk about the history and the things that they did when they were living in Mexico. And my dad, I know that they had a rough time acclimating when they got here, because they had to learn English, and he had to the oldest brother went to work, and he was then the oldest one, and had to care for the two younger ones, and they did whatever they could to add to the family, shine shoes, sell newspapers. But they managed. They managed.

**Tracy Flores** 30:34

And how did your your parents learn English?

**Gloria Ramirez** 30:38

Well, I think my mother learned it because she started to work. She told me that she worked as a shampoo girl, and so I'm sure, through her job, but through school, I mean, my grandfather worked, spoke her dad spoke English, and my grandmother understood, but didn't speak it as much. So she learned English at home, and she had older cousins that spoke English my my dad learned it from working in the and it's funny, because my kids learn Spanish from working from some of the workers that come from Mexico. And my dad learned English from working in the restaurants and working around people that spoke English all the time. So that's how that's how it was done back then.

**Tracy Flores** 31:36

And do you remember at your school any stories that were read to you, or any other things that other subjects that you learned did?

**Gloria Ramirez** 31:46

What do you did?

**Tracy Flores** 31:48

You remember any stories that were read to you at school, or any other subjects that you were able to learn?

**Gloria Ramirez** 31:54

Well, not off hand. I'm sorry if I'm if that had been in there, I would have researched, because I did like to read, and I would read about the Box Cart children, that was one of my favorite movie. And there were others, other stories that I like to read. And my husband, after I met him, he loved to read, and he would tell me books that he read. And he also would read because he wanted to improve his vocabulary. He'd look at the diction, at the dictionary and learn that. But that was much later on my mother would would speak English to us and read to us, but they were childhood stories that that probably are still around now.

**Tracy Flores** 32:49

And what was what did your classroom look like? What were the classrooms like at home?

**Gloria Ramirez** 32:54

back then, they had desks, and then your chair went under one and then on one side was where you could put your notebooks and papers. Most of them were like that. I don't remember getting the kind with the arm till Middle School. Junior High, we had desk like I told you we used to lie down on top of our desk to take a nap. So that's what it was like. And they would put the chair the tables together, and they were probably like 2,4,6, 8, in a group, because they would put them all together, and they would be with people that were at our reading level or math level or something like that.

**Tracy Flores** 33:38

And what was on the walls? What do you do? You do? You remember what was on the walls?

**Gloria Ramirez** 33:41

The ABCs, of course, and Blackboard and maps and pictures. Sometimes we would draw pictures, and they would put our pictures up on the walls or out in the hallway,

**Tracy Flores** 33:59

and for their windows, like the lighting. What was all about?

**Gloria Ramirez** 34:01

Yes, there were windows, big windows, and all of my well no,... the lower level, first, second and third, we had our windows were on the east side. The fourth and fifth were on the west side, but there was a building next door, and we didn't get a lot of the sun, but yeah,

**Tracy Flores** 34:24

and can you tell me about a teacher that was memorable to you?

**Gloria Ramirez** 34:30

I had a lot of teachers that I loved. I I would get real attached to my teachers, and at the end of the year was really sad. Same thing happened when we would go to the Palm Park, and they would have a recreation somebody from the recreation center, and they'd have a lady and a man, and not get real attached to them, but I seem to remember my second grade teacher, my third grade teacher and my fifth grade teacher, they kind of stand out to me, and I can't exactly tell you why, but they just seemed more personable or something. They were, they were ni- they were I didn't have a mean teacher back then. Do you remember their names? Yes, I know. Miss Mullins, Miss Rich, Miss Jameson, Miss Keel and Miss Cullers, C, U, L, L, E, R, S. Then I went to, I had to go to another school in the sixth grade, and she was very nice, but I can't remember her name in that that's weird.

**Tracy Flores** 35:39

And you mentioned that you moved schools. Where did you end up going?

**Gloria Ramirez** 35:42

There was a school that was, it was on the corner of i-35 and 19th Street, which is now MLK. There's a the baseball field is there. And so that was, it was called John B Wynn, and I went to school, and it turned out that a cousin of mine also went to that school, and he was one that we weren't very close to, but he was good to know somebody. And back then, the problem was I felt a little uncomfortable,

because, again, they would seat you with the people that were in your reading and math categories, and not that I was smart or but I was with nothing but Anglos. And then there was a table with nothing but Hispanic people. And I thought I kind of felt they were resentful a little bit. You know, they never did anything, but it was just the fact that they would not associate too much when we went out to the playground or anything. So what did that feel like? Yeah, you said, well, it felt it would have felt much worse had the Anglo people that were not been friendly, had they avoided me, and then I would have been both sides. But they were very friendly, and I ended up knowing them through high school and being friends with them and the others they were not, I can't tell you they bullied me or they were rude to me. It's just that they were not warm and they were not, you know, if I reached out, they would just answer the question and not try to engage. So I felt a little uncomfortable,

**Tracy Flores** 37:35

and you knew that you were separated because of abilities. Is that what it felt like?

**Gloria Ramirez** 37:40

They tested you? And I don't even know if I knew that. Then I think I learned it later. So I wasn't quite, quite sure why that might have added to it. Or I'm, you know, maybe by the sixth grade, I had learned that a little bit more, I don't know, but that kept on going. And even in junior high, they would put you in classes with the people at your reading level and and one year, I scored really high on some tests that they even called my mother and told her that. And so it was a difficult year, because I must have guessed real good in those days, because, but anyway, I survived.

**Tracy Flores** 38:30

And what were your favorite subjects in school?

**Gloria Ramirez** 38:34

Not Math. I liked reading. I liked English, although in in high school, I have we had a teacher that was he'd give you the he'd walk in and say, take out a paper and pen. We're going to have a pop quiz. Oh, my god, that scared me. But that was high school in in part, in the lower grades, I liked reading and I liked the music classes and and just like my grandchildren and great grandchild tell me now I like recess, but math was alright, I just wasn't one of my favorite subjects so .

**Tracy Flores** 39:18

And you mentioned your teachers and how you got really attached to them. What do you think their expectations were of you?

**Gloria Ramirez** 39:30

Well, I think, to be honest with you, I think they just expected us to listen, behave, finish our work. Unfortunately, when my kids were in middle school, they had a teacher that was, it was terrible. I don't even know if I should say this, but you might want to cut it out. But he left the room, and while they were gone, the kids were talking and doing, throwing uh, pencils around and stuff. And he came back, he's and he said, "I could hear all this noise from down the hall. Y'all need to listen. You need to he says, I don't. I don't know why I care. None of y'all are gonna amount to anything anyway." That was a horrible thing to tell. My kids would always come home and tell us what the teachers see, but I never had

anybody tell us that back then, but that was a terrible thing to say. And and there were a couple of times we went to the principal and and told him like another child was he wanted to go to play basketball, and the coach said, "You're too short, you'll never make it." Well, he ended up being the captain of the team later on. So back then, but that's when my kids were in school. But when I was in school, I don't remember any teacher being rude or ugly and saying things like that.

**Tracy Flores** 41:03

And do you remember any of the administrators?

**Gloria Ramirez** 41:07

I remember the principal in Palm School, Mr. His name just went out of my head. But Wilford, Mr. Wilford, and if you ever got called to his office? You were in deep trouble. But of course, I never got called to his office. It was usually just the boys. Now, when I came back to work there as a school as a school secretary, corporal punishment was and one of my jobs I hated it was being a witness to paddling. The principal would paddle, and he didn't like that job either, but he had to have a witness. And it was embarrassing to me, embarrassing to the young boy that was going to get paddled because they would paddle him. But that was, that was what they did back then.

**Tracy Flores** 42:04

And what year did you go back as a secretary?

**Gloria Ramirez** 42:08

It was in the early 70s, I think. And I worked probably 72, 73, 74, 75 I worked for like, five or six years, and I don't remember later on, it was just this, and this was my music teacher. He had been my music teacher, and when I went to interview for that job, he hired me right away, and so and he was a very nice man, just as nice as you can be. And he hated that part of the job, but they that's what they did. They would paddle the students, and I don't know what great sin they had caught, they had done to warrant that that paddling, but it happened.

**Tracy Flores** 42:50

And this wasn't Mr. Wilford? This is a different.

**Gloria Ramirez** 43:00

Yeah, this was, this was Mr. Moore, who had been my teacher, Mr. Wilford, I didn't know him well at all, but I just, you know, we were all leery of him, scared of him, you know, just because he was the principal.

**Tracy Flores** 43:16

And then going back to your experience as a student, I wanted to ask you, were you able to speak Spanish in the classroom?

**Gloria Ramirez** 43:24

No.

**Tracy Flores** 43:25

Were you able to speak Spanish at all to your friends?

**Gloria Ramirez** 43:27

No, we were not allowed to speak Spanish at all in the schools.

**Tracy Flores** 43:33

Did they tell you this? Or how did you know?

**Gloria Ramirez** 43:36

Yeah, they had told us you don't speak Spanish. You speak English. But and so I was not the necessarily, the obedient one. I was the scary one. They didn't want to cause any trouble. I didn't want to get in trouble, so I never spoke Spanish. How did that make you feel? To be honest with you, it didn't bother me. It didn't bother me at all. I don't know why, but, and we spoke Spanish at home. I mean, we got home, my grandfather was there, my tia was there, and we all spoke Spanish. But to our parents, we just spoke English all the time. It was just, that's what. But we did, and we didn't question a bunch of things back then we would just okay, we do it.

**Tracy Flores** 44:28

And can you tell me about some of your friends at Palm?

**Gloria Ramirez** 44:33

Yes, I am. I had some dear friends at Palm school, and unfortunately, when we got into the higher grades, one of my best friends moved and later in life, her sister, one of her sisters, married a friend that somebody that I knew so and I was able to touch base with my friend that had moved to California, uh. Them. And I just still remember some of the friends from there, from there. And of course, a lot of them have passed away, and a lot of them have moved away. But I there was a young man that was in the first grade. I went. He was in the first grade through the fifth grade with me, and I think he might have had a crush on me. I didn't know it at the time. Didn't care, but he would, I would get a Christmas present from him every year. Well, I know him now. He's married. He's been married a couple of times. I'm very good friends with his sisters. He has two sisters, and I'm very good friends with him. And you know, we both have the same memories. He grew up with parents that were close, and they did the same thing. They couldn't speak Spanish at school. A lot of times. We just accepted it. We didn't question it, but I guess some did.

**Tracy Flores** 46:19

And what kinds of games that you all play at school when you were a student?

**Gloria Ramirez** 46:24

in the playground, you mean, kick ball was one of the favorites. Tag, Red Rover, just games like that. We probably played softball too, just where we throw a ball and hit it, but mostly kick ball. I remember kickball.

**Tracy Flores** 46:51

Did you all play with like as teams? Or what was that like?

**Gloria Ramirez** 46:56

Well, we played with a class. We never played our class against another class that I can recall, we just played, you take this base, you take that base, whatever.

**Tracy Flores** 47:15

And did you belong to any clubs?

**Gloria Ramirez** 47:19

And I don't think that we had clubs at Palm school, I'm trying to remember, and I don't think that we had clubs.

**Tracy Flores** 47:32

What about in junior high or high school?

**Gloria Ramirez** 47:34

In junior high, yes, we had art classes and we had different types of clubs. I belong to a couple of them, but you know, it wasn't any big deal.

**Tracy Flores** 47:51

And going back to your your classroom experience, is there something that you remember learning that stuck sticks out with you to this day?

**Gloria Ramirez** 48:01

Well, one of the things that I remember, and I think this was in the fifth grade, was that the Pledge of Allegiance, I think I was in the fifth grade, when all of a sudden they added "one nation under God" before that. And I just remember we had a hard time remembering to say, "under God, one nation under God." And somehow that sticks in my mind, and I'm thinking that I'm surprised that some of the extremely radical people didn't want to take that out. But I've never heard anything about taking "under God" out of

**Tracy Flores** 48:48

how did you realize it was included?

**Gloria Ramirez** 48:51

They taught it to us. They because we used to say the Pledge of Allegiance every day, every morning. I don't know if they still do. I think now they do the pledge allegiance, and also the Texas Pledge of Allegiance. I never learned the Texas Pledge of Allegiance, but that's how I learned, you know? And I thought, oh, that's fine. I didn't have a problem because we were religious. We went to church every, every Sunday and everything, we were involved. But it was different. I just that sticks out in my mind.

**Tracy Flores** 49:28

Were there any challenging experiences in the classroom that you remember?

**Gloria Ramirez** 49:34

Well, in in Palm school, sometimes some of the math was challenging. No if I needed help, I always felt comfortable adding asking another thing that kids do, who. Just not good. We would, we would say, we would sit like I said, and and somebody would say, number four, what's, what's the answer to number four? And then somebody would call that was a way of cheating, I guess, quietly.

**Tracy Flores** 50:20

And how did the other students treat you?

**Gloria Ramirez** 50:27

I had a lot of friends. I was friendly. I was not... I was a very calm person. I didn't in elementary now, in middle school and junior high, that's where the sides. You know, you took sides. But in Palm school, we were all friends, even the Anglo people, and we played together. And we, I do remember, though, that the population of palm changed because in the fifth grade and the fourth grade, I don't remember as many Anglos as there were in the lower grades, so I think they were going somewhere else. I guess. I'm not sure.

**Tracy Flores** 51:16

What was it like when you first started, the population?

**Gloria Ramirez** 51:18

it was pretty half and half,

**Tracy Flores** 51:23

and then towards the end, you noticed a shift.

**Gloria Ramirez** 51:25

Towards the end, it was more Hispanic than there were some...

**Tracy Flores** 51:30

Why do you think that is?

**Gloria Ramirez** 51:35

I think people were just moving out of the neighborhood, going to and I don't know what school they were going to, because all of the schools in the neighborhood, John B Wynn actually had a lot of the big Anglo population and but there were some Hispanics there too.

**Tracy Flores** 51:53

And where was that located? Again, you mentioned that earlier.

**Gloria Ramirez** 51:56

Oh it's where i-35 and MLK, right now the baseball fields were there,

**Tracy Flores** 52:02

and what were their special days at Palm school, special celebrations?

**Gloria Ramirez** 52:10

Trying to think, well, there were Christmas programs, of course, and Thanksgiving things that we would do. I remember that we used to sell candied apples. So I don't know if we sold them all the time, or if it was for some special occasion. There were a lot of PTA meetings or or programs, because I remember my parent, my mother, my dad never got to go, because he had me worked at nights, but my mother would go to all the PTA programs that there were, and we would sell candied apples and but I don't, I don't specifically remember anything. I remember we started get taken the polio vaccine when I was in Palm school, and polio was prominent at that time, and my mother was she was very cautious. "Don't drink out of the fountain, don't this, don't that," and so we were very careful. But I don't remember any special programs other than what I've mentioned

**Tracy Flores** 53:22

and you in the Christmas program, what was that like?

**Gloria Ramirez** 53:25

It was mostly singing Christmas carols. I don't think we ever did a Santa Claus thing or baby nativity scene or anything like that.

**Tracy Flores** 53:36

So were there other times where families were invited to school?

**Gloria Ramirez** 53:42

Well, I don't know of any. I don't remember. I mean, I think parents could come whenever they wanted to. We didn't have a whole lot of parents dropping in. My mother, because she didn't work outside of the home. Used to come and help from time to time. And so the teachers got to know her, and when they know your mother, they know you so but I just don't remember a lot of people, a lot of people worked, and

**Tracy Flores** 54:15

what was that like to have your mother at school?

**Gloria Ramirez** 54:19

It was fine with us. I didn't have any problems at all. I love my mother. My mother was very helpful, and she was not just helpful to us, she was helpful to other children.

**Tracy Flores** 54:31

Can you, can you tell us a story about how she helped other kids?

**Gloria Ramirez** 54:34

Well, not necessarily at Palm school, but later on, I had a cousin that was she was going to Catholic school, and she had stuck her tongue out of the nun behind her back, and some kid was blackmailing

her and getting her milk money from her and my cousin every day because my mother would give them a ride to school. And. She say, "can you I forgot to get my lunch money from my mom? Can you give me a little" so Mother was Mother would give her, and this was happening so much that she thought something's going on. So she asked my aunt, but she said "I gave her my lunch money every day, or milk money every day". So she finally got my cousin and tell me what's going on. And she, she said, "well, so and so saw me stick my tongue out at the head. And then so" she she went to the school and she told the principal. She confronted him, and stopped other times too. I mean, other things that it was mostly she would go to speak on behalf of the student, if they were doing, getting wronged or something like that.

**Tracy Flores** 55:49

But did the students confide in her? Or how did she find out?

**Gloria Ramirez** 55:51

No, they wouldn't, you know, we wouldn't know about and then we'd tell our mother.

**Tracy Flores** 55:58

And what was the role of education in your life. What role did it have in your life?

**Gloria Ramirez** 56:05

Well, I have a daughter as a teacher, and she retired. Her son is a teacher. My one of my brothers is a teacher. His wife is a teacher. I have let me see how many I have, a granddaughter and a grandson that are teachers. And then my my daughter retired from teaching. But So teaching is in the family. We have a lot of our relatives that were teachers. I think I would have liked to have been a teacher, but I didn't go to college, and I started having children, and just just a bunch of children, so I didn't have time, but it played a big part, and one of them in our neighborhood, a couple that moved in and became friends. He was a professor at the University of Texas, and he was Mexican, and they became compadres to my parents so and he was a professor at UT, if I'm not mistaken. And anyway, so we were around people with education and and a lot of our I have four kids, two of them got degrees, one of them got close to a degree, and one of them was so happy he graduated from high school. He's never wanted to go to college, but, I mean, it was important our parents. We always expected to graduate. We expected our children to graduate, and they did, thankfully so. And my husband's family was the same way,

**Tracy Flores** 58:03

and your husband went to Palm school as well?

**Gloria Ramirez** 58:05

To Palm school, yeah,

**Tracy Flores** 58:07

years before you said?

**Gloria Ramirez** 58:08

I'm sorry?

**Tracy Flores** 58:09

years before you?

**Gloria Ramirez** 58:10

Yes, because he was, like, five or six years older than I was. But his family were migrants, and they would go for the summer to California, but his dad said he would never take him out of school. They would go after the last day, and he always knew when school was going to start and they'd come back before school started, because he never wanted them to miss any school. And out of the four sons and six daughters, they all graduated school, and about five of them went to college, and that was back then. Was difficult because it was expensive and but anyway, yeah.

**Tracy Flores** 58:52

Can you talk a little bit about how you started working at Palm school?

**Gloria Ramirez** 58:56

Yeah, one of the reasons was I had my kids were really busy, and they they wanted to do this and that in the summer, and they wanted to, my daughter is a good artist, and she wanted to go to the art school classes or something. So I told my husband, you know, I really wish I could work at a school where I could be home with them during the summer. So he said, well, so I applied through a ISD, and then it just so happened there was a job opening at Palm school. So I called and made an appointment, and the appointment was the principal at the time, was Mr. Moore, who had been my music teacher. He hired me that right away. So I started, and then that's how I got to working at the schools, and I could be home with them during the summer and for the holidays, I told some friends just once, I'd like to be home when they're at school and I'm at home. And have some peace.

**Tracy Flores** 59:51

What years did you work there in the office?

**Gloria Ramirez** 59:55

I worked from like the early 70s. maybe, like 72-73 until about 78 I worked there about five or six years, and then at that time, my husband went into a business, and he needed my help with his business, so I was trying to do two jobs at one time. So I said, You know what? Let me just go ahead and retire. Stop from here and and I was working with Mr. Guerrero. Were you at the table when we were talking about that special program? Are you familiar with that?

**Tracy Flores** 1:00:35

Can you talk more about it?

**Gloria Ramirez** 1:00:38

Well, I don't know exactly what it was, except that they recruited, I believe, Hispanic teachers who were interested in becoming principals, and they put them through some sort of program, and then they

placed them at elementary schools in East Austin that were primarily Spanish speaking people or Hispanic people, like Zavala, Mets, Palm school, and then I think Allison, I think there were four schools. So that's when Mr. Guerrero and Andres Guerrero came and Mr. Moore, bless his heart, he moved, and he asked me if I would like to join him to go to Zavala. And I really was it hurt me to tell him, I said, one of the reasons I took this job is not just because my kids would be home, but because it was close to my home, close to my mother's house and and I could, it wouldn't be a big driving across town to so I said, I'm really appreciated it, but I was needed to stay where I was. I worked with Mr. Guerrero for about three years or four years, and he was a very good principal. He, Mr. Moore, was great. But I think, and I really hesitate to even say this, because I don't want a relative of his to read it. He was so nice that sometimes people took advantage of him, and we had several teachers that were not good teachers. We had one that would he walk out of the school with the kids same time. That was the day the school day ended. His day ended. He never stayed behind. Other teachers would stay forever, like even my daughter stayed forever, doing things in the classroom and preparing. But Mr. Guerrero came in and he straightened things out. He did.

**Tracy Flores** 1:02:49

What else can you tell about? Tell me about Mr. Guerrero?

**Gloria Ramirez** 1:02:54

Well, unfortunately, he retired. He got sick. I about four or five years after I stopped working there, he got sick, and he passed away. And, you know, I didn't see him that often afterwards, but I would run into he and his wife because he did some work. I was go, I belong to Guadalupe church, and he was doing some work there at the church. I don't know what he was doing, but he got sick, and then he passed away, I think, at an early age, early 60s, possibly. I don't know how old he was.

**Tracy Flores** 1:03:37

And when he came to the school, did he make any what kinds of changes did he make?

**Gloria Ramirez** 1:03:42

Well, they were settled. They were not. He did not come in the first day and start throwing people out. You know, he's he talked to the teachers. He interviewed the teachers and and he just ran a little tighter ship. But he had a sense of humor. He he joked around a lot, and, and, but he had a serious side and, and he was a good principal, I think.

**Tracy Flores** 1:04:13

And how was, how did that community react, respond to him?

**Gloria Ramirez** 1:04:18

Great, especially the Hispanic community, they were very great, very glad to have someone who could speak with them and relate to them. So I think I don't recall any kind of problems because they had taken an Anglo principal out. They put him in a school that was in South West Austin, and the principal that left, Mr. Moore, so I don't recall any friction with that. I don't know the other principals very well the other ones, I can only speak for Mr. Guerrero.

**Tracy Flores** 1:04:59

And when you were in, working in the office. What kinds of what were your some of your duties? What did you do?

**Gloria Ramirez** 1:05:05

Well, attendance, there were no computers back there, and memos to the parents from the you know about holidays and school closings and just all kinds of secretarial work, ordering supplies, or making sure we had textbooks and just ordinary things that you would do, you know, in a school.

**Tracy Flores** 1:05:30

And what was it like to return in that role?

**Gloria Ramirez** 1:05:34

It was amazing. It was really, I don't recall that any of the teachers that I had were still there. I think they were all retired, but so it was. It was very nice. I mean, I I enjoyed it. And I don't even know how many people knew that I had been a student there and come back to work, but it was great. I enjoyed it.

**Tracy Flores** 1:06:06

How did the palm school fit into the larger Mexican American community?

**Gloria Ramirez** 1:06:12

Well, because it was probably, I would think that Zavala, because it was in East Austin, would have been more. That's where practically 99% was Hispanic. But we had our share of Hispanic people, and that I can recall very few Spanish Hispanic teachers, but we did have teachers and and so it was a large part, and there was a lot of people that were sad when, when they closed. I still, every time I pass by in that area, I always look and I tell my grandchildren, or great grandchild, I used to go to that school. It was a school. And so I really, I I love that it's still there. I would miss it if they tore it down. I really would. But you know, progress, you never know what's going to happen.

**Tracy Flores** 1:07:09

Did you and your family have a choice of where you went to school?

**Gloria Ramirez** 1:07:13

No. Except when I went to the 7/6 grade, and that's when I could have gone to Zavala, but for some reason, my mother didn't want me to go to Zavala. I could have gone to Catholic school, but I was scared to death of the nuns, and so I didn't want to go there. So that's why I went to John B Wynn, and then for Allen junior high that was the the area that we lived in. So we went to that school when I was in the eighth grade, the burn. The building burned. So we ended happen to share the building where UJH was University junior high, which, by the way, later on, had was the educational building where these principals came from. They were housed in that building that we had gone to school in. So we went, UJH, went in the morning, and we went in the afternoon, and we thought, oh my god, it's going to be bad, because they were our arch enemies. I think they had a lot of teachers out there. They just made sure that they left and we went in right away. So I'm sure there might have been some little frictions, but I don't recall them any.

**Tracy Flores** 1:08:29

And what do you remember most about the teachers and the staff at Palm?

**Gloria Ramirez** 1:08:33

Well, the fact that they had had my sister the year before. They knew me already. A lot of them knew me. They were all and like I said, I don't recall any of these teachers being rude and ugly and and think they were all very calm and very good, strict. Some were stricter than others, but they were good. I they they were two teachers that were sisters, and the only reason we knew is because they mentioned it because you otherwise, you wouldn't have known that they were sisters. They didn't look alike, but they were all very nice. Our our PE teacher was strict, but she was good. And we had a couple of music teachers, and they were really good, too.

**Tracy Flores** 1:09:27

And how do you think your family and or your neighborhood felt about the palm school?

**Gloria Ramirez** 1:09:33

then or now?

**Tracy Flores** 1:09:40

However you want?

**Gloria Ramirez** 1:09:45

Well, of course, then it was very popular because, as I said, my aunt lived across the street from my grandmother, and all of her children went to palm school. And the neighborhood where my grandmother lived, there were a lot of children. They all went to palm school, cousins, relatives, the whole neighborhood, they all loved palm school.

**Tracy Flores** 1:10:27

And what about now?

**Gloria Ramirez** 1:10:30

Now, I think they were sorry, in a way, to see the new school Sanchez, but one of the things that we were very proud of was that Sanchez was named for a Hispanic person. Of it was an educator, so it was it was good. So they liked the school. They thought that Sanchez was a very good school. It was different too, because they had open classrooms. So it was a little strange to some of them, but he was good.

**Tracy Flores** 1:10:43

And then how do you feel people who care about palm school, remember the school and the surrounding neighborhood. How do I What? How do you feel people who care about palm school, remember the school and the surrounding neighborhood?

**Gloria Ramirez** 1:10:59

Well the neighborhood changed drastically over the years, drastically. There weren't as many homes, so there weren't as many kids that would have been coming to that school. But back in the day, it was a neighborhood school, and there wasn't a huge highway, so we could cross very easily Rainey street, which has a reputation now, of course, every way right close to two, and we had a lot of our friends that went there, and they were very attached and hated to see the school close. But I think most people that attended that school or had family that attended school, were very fond of the school and but they realized that progress happens, and there's change going to happen, and it was always for a reason. And things were getting busier, the traffic area was changing, and it was heavier traffic, so it was safer for our kids, since most of them lived on that side of the highway.

**Tracy Flores** 1:12:10

And what do you think the teacher's expectations were of you?

**Gloria Ramirez** 1:12:18

Well, as I said before, they expected us to listen, to do our homework, to bring in our homework. They that I can recall that never once said we want you all to think about what you want to be when you graduate. I can't recall that they said that they may have but i i I don't recall, though they may have, because I remember that I got a cash register as a as a Christmas present one time, and I love to punch the numbers. And I thought, I think I want to work in a grocery store so I can punch the cash register. But that's just me.

**Tracy Flores** 1:13:01

And overall, how did teachers treat you?

**Gloria Ramirez** 1:13:06

They treated us fine, I think, of course, like I said, my mother spent a lot of time at school, so they knew her, they knew us, and they were they were very polite later on, when I was working as a school secretary, things had changed a little bit. There were some teachers that were very rough, and they would bring in the kid to the office in the city. I want him to see the principal and but I don't always know what they did. You know, they might have done something that deserve punishment or something I don't know,

**Tracy Flores** 1:13:45

and then we've heard about the neighborhood also being a huge part of the experience of home school. What can you tell us about the surrounding area and its impact on your education?

**Gloria Ramirez** 1:13:58

Well, I I'm not quite sure how to answer that. We knew a lot of the kids that had come to palm school and had moved on to high school, and we knew that some of them had gone on to college, some of them still lived in the neighborhood, but we think that, I think that basically, the people that the families that live there all wanted their kids to be educated and go on to get as much education as they can, as they could. They probably figured that college was not for everybody back then, but I think it was expected that you were going to go as far as you possibly could, and I think that was something that ran in the neighborhood.

**Tracy Flores** 1:14:59

And did you feel supported in doing that on your own?

**Gloria Ramirez** 1:15:03

I'm sorry?

**Tracy Flores** 1:15:05

did you feel supported in that in continuing your education?

**Gloria Ramirez** 1:15:08

Yes, I did.

**Tracy Flores** 1:15:09

And were there any particular places you remember visiting that were in the neighborhood?

**Gloria Ramirez** 1:15:15

Well, there were several little grocery stores that were one of them was on the corner, and then another one was two blocks down. And it just so happened that the one that was on the corner was owned by a family that lived in the neighborhood where I lived on East Seventh Street. And so we were friends with a they only had one son. We were friends with him, and they were well off. But I think, I think the family used to donate things to the school, candy and things like that. But palm Park was a big part of the neighborhood too. And during the summer they had, they had, whether it was a swimming pool and they had games and they had on Friday nights, they would have mu... the movie, movie night out there. And so they would, the parents would make popcorn and candy and stuff like that, and we'd go to the movies and watch it there. And so the park was a big part of the neighborhood, and people would walk from all over to come and participate in activities there.

**Tracy Flores** 1:16:28

And do you remember what kind of movies you used to go watch at the park?

**Gloria Ramirez** 1:16:34

They were mostly black and white, mostly westerns. Probably, I can't remember movies, but there were a lot of cowboy movies. I'm sure

**Tracy Flores** 1:16:43

around the time of your attendance that the country in Texas was navigating school de segregation. Excuse me, how did you experience? How did your experience at Palm reflect this, and how did that affect you as a student?

**Gloria Ramirez** 1:16:57

at Palm school? Very little, because we were just Anglo and Hispanic, and nobody even really paid attention that the Anglo population was dwindling. We still had friends that were in the neighborhood, that were but I don't remember I happened to be going and I was in high school when integration came

and we had the first black students, and I remember seeing this young black girl and and I felt very bad for her because she didn't know anybody. And so I made friends with her. We became really good friends. But in Palm school, it didn't seem to affect me, because I don't think it was integrating at that time. It came later.

**Tracy Flores** 1:17:49

and in high school, when the students when their integration was happening. Do you remember how the students were treated?

**Gloria Ramirez** 1:18:01

I do not recall anything major. I like this young girl. She seemed real alone, because there wasn't a huge African American population coming in. There was just a few so I don't know. I never witnessed any kind of bullying or anything like that. It probably happened. Bullying happened when my kids were in middle school. They were fighting. There was a lot more fighting going on than when I was there, and I think population changed, and I think kids just got meaner, or I don't know, I don't know, I don't want to say that, but it just they there was more bullying and more interaction and stuff like that.

**Tracy Flores** 1:19:06

And we heard that there was different institutions and opportunities that were not available to Mexican Americans, such as the palm Park pool behind the school, the library and medical service. Do you have any memories about this?

**Gloria Ramirez** 1:19:23

for the African Americans? Yes. And again, it's a terrible thing to say is that. And I don't know that everybody was like that, but I was very naive, and I just that's the way it was. You know, that's way later on in the 60s, my husband and I protested. We were walked up and down Congress Avenue with a group of people protesting things that probably I should have been protesting as a young person, but we did do that. And, yeah, I even remember. Was working part time at a restaurant when they said, We're going to integrating people, the black people are going to come in, I felt a little apprehensive, not not that I scared of them. I was just kind of concerned there might be issues, but I never witnessed anything so

**Tracy Flores** 1:20:23

and you mentioned that you and your husband were protesting in the 60s. What kinds of things did you protest?

**Gloria Ramirez** 1:20:29

All the riots, the race riots, and the fact that people couldn't go to some colleges and these George Wallace standing on steps of the college, not letting the black people register and things like that. That's what really angered Us.

**Tracy Flores** 1:20:52

And did you have any experiences as a Mexican American not having access to any of the buildings or opportunities in your neighborhood?

**Gloria Ramirez** 1:21:03

I never did. I witness the fountains black and white and but we used the white so, but I never experienced and again, it could be that I was just so naive, I didn't realize I was being discriminated against. But outwardly, I don't recall,

**Tracy Flores** 1:21:30

and our research, as we've been learning more about the Palm school, indicates that around its closing in 1976 is that it was somewhat in disrepair. There was a lack of AC in the building. The building was falling apart, as well as a challenge of getting to school due to the newly constructed highway nearby. What do you remember about these challenges?

**Gloria Ramirez** 1:21:55

Well, I was, I was working there, as I said, So, I knew sometimes we had a book room right next to sometimes I was a little scared to go in there, because you could hear rats and mice going in there and and it was also a challenge because we didn't have intercom back then. So if I needed something, I'd have to either walk down there and tell the teacher, or the teachers would have to write notes and send them to the send a student to the office to get and then, I don't necessarily remember the building falling apart or anything like that. It was wooden floors, and we had, I don't recall excessive heat or excessive cold. The cafeteria was nice because it had been added later on, and so that was very nice the cafeteria, and that's where they had a stage. So whenever there was PTA meetings or programs, that's where they would do them. But yeah, it was, it was an old building, and they probably needed to do a lot of repair.

**Tracy Flores** 1:23:07

And then how do you think palm school and the neighborhood helped shape you into the person you are today?

**Gloria Ramirez** 1:23:15

It's hard to say, but because I always think that our family shapes us more than but the fact that we went to palm school because it was a family thing may have helped you know. It taught us how to get along with other people that were not family, because we're you can play around with your family and argue and everything. But with school, you made your friends and you didn't know whether they how long they would last, they would move the next year or whatever. So it's hard to say how I think it impacted, but I think it was a positive impact.

**Tracy Flores** 1:23:59

Can you say more about that?

Can you say a little bit more about that?

**Gloria Ramirez** 1:24:03

Well, the fact that most of the people treated us very well. There were not any kind of fights against certain groups of people in Palm school. And so I that's how I think was so

**Tracy Flores** 1:24:22

and what lessons did you learn from attending the palm school and from your neighborhood and family?

**Gloria Ramirez** 1:24:29

Well, the lessons of listening and learning and using what you've learned to help others or even help your family, because my parents were not well educated, so some of the things that we learned could have helped them, and then our younger siblings, but it's hard to pinpoint, but it's, you know, I'm sure there were. Are other things that happened to us in Palm school that made our lives different.

**Tracy Flores** 1:25:08

And what can you tell us about Palm Park and its impact on the other students at Palm

**Gloria Ramirez** 1:25:17

Well, the park itself didn't the the kids would go out there and play during the day. They'd play kickball and they'd play different things, but so it was good to have that park there, and it was good to be able to go out there and play tag and and whatever with while you were student, and then, but the impact we came on weekends or summers, when we could go swim and we could play ball or attend the programs that the the recreation people would present.

**Tracy Flores** 1:25:59

And can you describe your life after finishing your palm school education?

**Gloria Ramirez** 1:26:04

Well, after going to palm I went to Wynn, John B Wynn, and it was a little different. It was I'm I had to make friends, and even my cousin that was there. We were not that close, and besides, it was a he and he had other interests, but I did make some good friends that lasted through the year, not Bosom Buddies, but the people that I met there were very nice, and the teacher was very nice, and A lot of us were looking forward to going to to junior high. And then, of course, some of them went to UJH, and so we met up again when our school burn, and we were sharing the school. So it was all it was positive. I think I would have rather have stayed at Palm school, because I just miss my friends that were there. But you do what you have to do that so.

**Tracy Flores** 1:27:10

and what kind of educational and leadership opportunities were provided from the school and the surrounding area compared to palm school?

**Gloria Ramirez** 1:27:20

What can you repeat that again?

**Tracy Flores** 1:27:23

Were there other educational and leadership opportunities that were provided from the school and the surrounding area as compared to Palm did you have other opportunities in your neighborhood?

**Gloria Ramirez** 1:27:34

I'm not sure. I'm sure that back back then we couldn't work anymore because we were too young, but there was, I'm trying to think of, there was a library near by. I don't recall a library near we had a library at the school, and later on, there was the Terraza library that was built. But that was much later. But I don't think it was later on in life. There were jobs that people could take, like at grocery stores or drug stores or whatever so, but at the time, at that age, there wasn't much we could do, I don't think

**Tracy Flores** 1:28:22

and what were some of your accomplishments and highlights that you're especially proud of?

**Gloria Ramirez** 1:28:27

Well, I'm most proud of my children, but I'm proud that I am proud of my children and the fact that they are very close together. They as teenagers and as youngsters, they work together. They'd go out together in groups, which was very comforting to us, because we knew they would look out for each other. And they're still very close, and their children are following the same path to their my grandchildren are very close, and they spend a lot of time together, and we make friends. We have a lot of friends, and we include them in part of our family activities, and they feel like they're part of the family. So I just, I think the fact that that we encourage our children to do their best, to follow their interests, and then we help them along the way, sometimes you have to help you have to help them. You know, we were empty nesters for a while, and then we started so one of the couples came and lived with us for a few years, and they move out and come back. You just do what you have to do to help your family along and hope that they can succeed and follow their plans and their love and then pass that on to their kids.

**Tracy Flores** 1:30:01

Yes, and what does the palm school symbolize to you?

**Gloria Ramirez** 1:30:05

Well, it just symbolizes the beginning of of so many things. Because, as I said, it was the school that we all went to all my cousins, so we felt a closeness. And so it just felt like home, and it was a little sad when it closed, but I was happy that there was a new school coming up, and that we had teachers that were Hispanic and could relate, and that the parents there was going to be parent involvement, because they started hiring what they called community representatives who would go into the neighborhood and check on families when the kids would be absent, check on problems. Excuse me, so it makes me happy to know that there were things that happened there that helped the lives of others and myself as well.

**Tracy Flores** 1:31:10

And you mentioned that it felt like a home. What does that mean to you?

you mentioned that palm school felt like a home to you. What does that mean to you?

**Gloria Ramirez** 1:31:19

Well, it means that I was comfortable there, that I knew people there, they knew me. I could if I had an issue or a problem, I could go to somebody and they would help me out. If there was somebody that would come to me, I could help them out. We just felt close.

**Tracy Flores** 1:31:43

And then you mentioned about the school beginning to high, the schools were beginning to hire community representatives. Can you talk a little bit about that?

**Gloria Ramirez** 1:31:52

Yeah, in fact, my mother ended up being one of those at Zavala. These people were parents, mostly of children that went to the school, and they would hire them to come and they that work in the office, or they'd go to the classroom, or they would a teacher would say, look, Johnny has been coming to school sick every day or or he hasn't been coming to school, or this has been happening, so they would go and check, excuse me, on what was happening at home, and bring it back to the school. And if we could, like, one of the jobs of the school secretary was to I would sew the hems or sew a button, or even glue a shoe together. And so they helped a lot. They brought the community closer, and they ended up getting schools helping them get PTAs and or parental organizations involved. So to me, it was a great thing.

**Tracy Flores** 1:33:05

And how long did your mother have that role?

**Gloria Ramirez** 1:33:09

My Mother worked there for about three years. My kids were happened to be going to school there at the time, and she worked there, and she liked it a lot. She did real good, and my kids felt comfortable having her there and and she enjoyed the work.

**Tracy Flores** 1:33:32

And didn't you mention she was kind of doing that stuff before with,

**Gloria Ramirez** 1:33:36

Yeah, sort of. Not paid.

**Tracy Flores** 1:33:39

So yeah, and is there anything else you'd like to share?

**Gloria Ramirez** 1:33:50

Well, I think I've mentioned a lot. It just, it's sad when you know, when they asked me to come and do this. And they said, and if you know anybody else that could come and and I started thinking, as they've already passed away, or they're too sick, they can't come, or different reasons why people could not come and participate in this. So that was a little bit sad, but I'm glad that y'all were able to get a lot of people here to talk about, you know, you don't have an opportunity, normally, to sit down and discuss all of these things with other people, unless you know somebody that went to school and you say, remember When such and such happens. So it's good. I'm sorry I had been very busy and then I'd

been sick. I should have researched more on things that we did back then, but because it was very important, I forgot to say one thing, that because I was a year behind my sister, I would get out earlier than she did, so my mother would give me whatever it was. The superior dairies was right next door, and they had a fountain where I could get a malt. And every afternoon I'd go get a malt there, because I was real skinny as a child. I know it's hard to believe, but anyway, so I'd go in the afternoon and get a malt. We couldn't tell my sister, because she would be upset. First of all, she was heavy set all the time, and so if she knew that I was getting a malt, she would not be happy. So I had to not say a word. You got

**Tracy Flores** 1:35:33

You got one every day?

**Gloria Ramirez** 1:35:35

Just about every day.

**Tracy Flores** 1:35:36

Is there anything else you want to share?

**Gloria Ramirez** 1:35:38

share? No, I just I remember some of my friends from Palm school. I still remember them. I can see what they look like, but they're gone. I don't I don't know where they are. Every now and then, like this young man that I know his sisters and then we went to school together, excuse me, I see him, but I don't see too many, too many other people that I knew from way back then. Of course, it's I'm 82 years old, so it's been a while, and so I'm not going to run into people like I might have if I was in my 50s.

**Tracy Flores** 1:36:17

And what are their names? Well,

**Gloria Ramirez** 1:36:20

one of them was Judy Cisneros. There was another one, Mary Helen Rocha. There was Carmen brado, although she said Prado, and I thought she was Anglo, because she was real light. It wasn't until a year later, that part was Prado. And, well, there's just to name a few. There was a there were a lot of them, but, but anyway, I can still remember them, but we can live in the past unfortunately, we have to move on.

**Tracy Flores** 1:36:35

Anything else?

**Gloria Ramirez** 1:36:37

No, I thank you all for the opportunity to to bring back these memories and talk about these things, and I appreciate being asked and wish that some of the people that I had known had been able to come.

**Tracy Flores** 1:37:09

Thank you for being here today. Thank you. Appreciate you. Bye.