

Palm_School_Maciel_Anna

Mon, Jan 13, 2025 11:12AM • 2:12:11

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

Palm School, community education, political participation, childhood memories, family support, cultural traditions, desegregation, Mexican American history, community activism, educational challenges, family dynamics, cultural arts, community collaboration, historical preservation, personal resilience., Palm School, Our Lady of Guadalupe, first communion, community support, Waterloo Greenway, Red River expansion, Juarez Lincoln, family challenges, educational opportunities, Mexican American heritage, cultural preservation, housing issues, chronic illnesses, community collaboration, East Austin history.

SPEAKERS

Paulina Serrano, Anna Maciel

Paulina Serrano 00:00

Today is Saturday, December 14, 2024 My name is Paulina Serrano. I am interviewing Anna Maciel in Austin, Texas for the Travis County oral history project. We are at the University of Texas at Austin campus. Thank you, Ms Maciel for agreeing to this interview. 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 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 we discuss it. Please let us know if you need to pause the interview. Today, we are going to talk about your life experiences, particularly as it relates to palm school. We'll also discuss your relationship to community education and political participation, and if you're ready, Miss Maciel, let's begin. Okay, can you please tell us your name and your relation to palm School?

Anna Maciel 01:05

My name is Anna Marie Maciel, and I lived on at nine oh 66 Street, which was maybe about four blocks away from Palm school. And so I'm an alumni 1962, 1962 and all my family members went to palm school, 12 of us, so we know palm school pretty well.

Paulina Serrano 01:34

Can you tell us a little bit about what your childhood was like?

Anna Maciel 01:39

at Palm school, or just my childhood in general?

both,

well, it was it was beautiful. I can honestly say at the time, I might have not thought it was perfect, but I had two wonderful parents that were both from Mexico, one from Guadalajara and the other one from Guanajuato. My mom didn't know how to read or write, so she would hire this man to come and teach us how to read and write in English and in Spanish. So from the very beginning, I knew how to read and write Spanish, because that's the only way I could communicate with my parents. And there were so many of us. There were 12 of us originally, and then my mom had possession of four other children that were her cousins that passed away, and she raised them. So there was a lot of us in a two bedroom home and slept on the floor. And I can never say that I felt I never knew what poor was. I never felt it. I just knew that there was a lot of love in my house because my parents, my mom and my dad always were working. My mom was always cooking. She always took care of us the best way she could, and when I needed to help her to fill out papers, I would have, I would help her, and I would try to teach her how to how to write her name. And it was such a wonderful experience for me. It brings back a lot of wonderful memories of how my family stuck together through hard times and in good times, even when we received food from Holy Cross Holy Cross Hospital used To be right here on campus here you in University of Texas for a while, and there was a sister that used to help us, and my mom. My mom used to make us, she used to save cans. And, um, any those cans, they would tell us to bring them. And they would put, like, soups and fruit, whatever they could give us, and we will all be so very grateful so we always had. We always had good family time, regardless. Again, when you know I didn't know what poor was. I just it was just wonderful to know that I had such a wonderful, loving mother and dad and going to palm school, it was great. I loved it. It was a time for me to learn different things and know about more different people. I was in the choir and I joined band in the sixth grade, I had a wonderful band teacher. Her name was Miss Anglin. When I was very young in the fifth grade, I had a paralysis my left side of my face so kids used to make fun of me about when I would blow my clarinet, my eye would close and Miss Anglin was so wonderful. She said, "we don't make fun of people here. We're all going to do the best we can". And if it wasn't for her saying that, I would have felt left out. You know, had wonderful teachers at Palm Oh, wonderful Teachers. Miss. Odair we had a beehive right outside my window on the second floor, facing what is it called Lincoln Juarez. And she taught us a lot about bees and Mr. Conde. He was my sixth grade teacher. He would always help out at UT, here at University of Texas, at football. He was really involved with that. I remember that all the time. I remember Ms Foot, who taught us about how to conduct ourselves, how to be respectful, how to be involved with different things at school, I learned a lot. Learned a whole lot at Palm school, and then we had Miss Winston. She was a PE teacher. She is the one that would have all these fiestas. She would help us with the Fiestas there, we used to have a maypole. Who used to have, you know what a maple is? A Maypole is. It's a long, long stick that's up in the air, and you weave in and out, and it just, it's beautiful to see, because you see all the children just following each other. It's just really beautiful. And we used to dance at the Fiestas and during the weekend, since my mom had so many kids, and we just, we used to walk. I used to walk to palm every day. There, there were free movies at the little stage there at Palm school and that's that was our entertainment. And the swimming pool. Well, the swimming pool was a great place to be, but you didn't have to pay to to get swimming lessons. But I didn't get swimming lessons until I was older, but all my my brothers and sisters now, I used to go swimming there, and it was, it was great because my uncle there were houses behind the pool on the not behind on the side of the pool in the back, and my uncle lived there. So we had a lot of relatives that lived around Palm school and as and also on Sixth Street. On Sixth Street, there were like six houses right there on sixth Street. And out of the six houses, four of us were related and and we live by we live

next door to a bar The Guerra and where my little grandfather used to go and and we'd have to go pick him up, because he was a little bit too had a little bit too much drink. But he was, he was a wonderful man.

Paulina Serrano 09:13

And that's Guerras, G, U, E, R, R, A, S,

Anna Maciel 09:17

And and so we lived on top of the hill, and when my parents got that house, they rented it, and later on, it was bought by my sister, and my sister still lives in that over 100 year old home, the only house on the block on East Sixth Street. And my mother, my mother, at the time, she said, I have only this one. This amount of money to to help you buy it. And so she gave her \$3,000 at that time.

Paulina Serrano 10:09

And what time was that?

Anna Maciel 10:13

Oh, my mother, that was before, well, my sister's 82 you imagine that? You know? So that was a long, long time ago. The house is over 100 years old, so it's still there, it's still there, it's still functional. There's a for sale sign on it, finally. And it's great memories, great memories of six Street

Paulina Serrano 10:39

and so going back to those memories, right? What? And your mother's kind of emphasis on bringing someone to teach you. Can you tell me a little bit more about who was coming to teach you to speak Spanish

Anna Maciel 10:57

and English and English? El senor se llamaba. His name was Chanito,

Paulina Serrano 11:06

and that's C, H, A n, i n,

Anna Maciel 11:09

I G O, chanito. I don't know his that same, but he was the nicest man. So we would after we came home from school. At home school because she could help us, because you know how to read or write. This man would come every day, and she would make food for him, and he would teach us how to read English and Spanish. And he was an amazing man. It was really important for us to for her, for us to know how to read and write, because she didn't know how. And at that time, we couldn't speak Spanish at Palm school, who were not allowed to. And so we had to learn pretty quick, you know, at least make the effort to to learn that way, in a very quick way.

Paulina Serrano 12:08

How did your mother know him?

Anna Maciel 12:13

Oh, I don't know. I can ask my my family, that's a good question. I just remember, I'm so vivid, because we were all connected on Sixth Street. You had the little Pharmacia, the Lopez Pharmacia, which is about two blocks down from my house. We walk down there to get guillertas, and, you know, whatever he had available, that was Mr. Lopez. And then there was green and white groceries. John Cassares and his family, every time after school, after we finished our our lessons with with him, we would have to go to Our Lady of Guadalupe church, to go to school, to get you know for First Communion classes. And after my mom picked us up, we would go to green and white to get our penny, our penny candy. Never did that... pennies. Wow. And he was, Oh, here. There were so many of us here. Take this little bag. He would have little brown bag, little bitty brown bag, and he would put candy in there for us. And he was the nicest man. He was very active at Our Lady of Guadalupe, and so was my mom, and so was I,

Paulina Serrano 13:58

and was it just you, your family that was being taught by chanito,

Anna Maciel 14:04

yeah, all of us. There was 14 of us, you know, but not everyone could finish Elementary. A lot of my sisters, not all of them finished elementary, you know, up to maybe the fifth grade, because they had to go help my father, who was a farm worker, and he would go out of state to Wisconsin, Sheboygan, Wisconsin, to pick up whatever vegetables it had or and he would stay there for a while. Actually, he died in sheboygan. He was brought back here because he was very ill. What year was that? I can't remember. I just remember. I was in sixth grade. I'll always remember that because we passed palm school from Mission funeral home on sixth Street. We passed through palm school, and I remember looking at the school while we were taking my dad to Maria del la Luz cemetery, one of the oldest cemeteries for Mexican Americans. And there's a lot of history there at that, at that, uh, cemetery, because we used to go every Sunday my my mom and dad used to make us go and clean up the cemetery and mow the lawn, and they would meet, and people would make food, and we spent the day there at the cemetery at Maria la luz, and we would have lunch together, and we would talk there. There was a picnic table, and then there was a meeting, like a meeting a little a little bar, and it was little, and we'd go in there, and they would talk business, wonderful memories about growing up on in the east side and on Sixth Street, especially near Palm. And to this day, I have a lot of my friends that went to Palm school that I stay close to, that we go out and have breakfast or we still get together. It's wonderful.

Paulina Serrano 16:33

That's amazing. Can you talk a little bit about those friendships and what it was about them, if there was anything unique about them that you remember growing up on six street with friends?

Anna Maciel 16:46

well being so many of us, my mom was real strict. When my dad passed away, I was young. Was like seven. When he passed away, she was very, she was very, very protective of us, but she I didn't get to go to a lot of friends houses, okay? Because there was not a lot of small children on Sixth Street, the more lived on the other side of palm school, rainy street, on Rainey street and on First Street, which,

which is called Ceasar Chavez, and second street, different friends, I didn't. She didn't allow us to go and perhaps play time. You know, my, my, my older sisters were always helping her cook and wash all the time. I do remember at sixth Street. The fun part about East Sixth Street is that my dad raised dogs and roosters and chickens. My mom used to raise chickens because she used to make them for us, and I couldn't stand the fact that she would, you know, make the chickens for us, you know, that's the desaplunaba and you know, she would bring hot water, and she, well, she, she was a pro at it. But we also became close family members, because we used to help my mom so much with laundry. Daniel, you know, and you would have to pin up our clothes on the clothes line. We used to have to help her make tea. And how she made tea is by using the pecan tree leaves. And she and, and I would tell her, what are you doing with those things? And she said, "pues voy hacer te", and it was the best tea ever. And she would leave it in a picture outside to get it in a warm because it would release. That's how we had tea, you know. And then when we needed food, we would have to go to Humpty Dumpty. Humpty Dumpty was on Sixth Street. It was on the other side of ih 35 lh 35 was not built of course, but we would walk to Humpty, Dumpty. But first we would go to fairies. Fairies. Fairies was that corner corner business that that was owned by Fairies and he also would would give us candy and stuff like that. You could get, you could get ice cream there. And so he would help us a lot. So we would stop there, and then we would go to the grocery store to Humpty Dumpty to get what my mom needed. That's where lard was introduced to me, you know and harina. They used to have different styles of the outer part where the harina was, and she used to make us dresses from that material, weird, huh? But my mom knew how to sew. She knew how to cook. Oh my gosh. She was a great cook. And then there were so many of us. Of course, we needed help to get back home. So there was two nickel. Two nickel was right, almost like a block down. And so she we would, she would send one of us to go get the two nickel to take us home, and we'd pay the man for, what a quarter, 50 cents.

Paulina Serrano 21:21

It's like a taxi, like a before?

Anna Maciel 21:23

Before Roy's taxi. You know, people don't know these things because, you know, we live on Sixth Street and but I don't remember. I only remember hanging out with children at school, because we were always so busy after school, she made sure we had those classes, the Chanito. Then we had to go to Our Lady of Guadalupe, Father Gusik, who helped us a lot too. And then Holy Cross. The nuns there helped us a lot. And then Salvation Army used to help us a lot. You used to get free shoes, brand new shoes from salvation that was like the treat, you know, that was like the the highlight of Christmas, we would get free shoes at at different places, you know, but we would always have to wait in line to to get things. But it's funny how we didn't see it as anything less than for what it was, and we just learned how to really embrace love and respect, which is something we don't have nowadays. But that's a wonderful childhood for me. It was, it was, it was never disappointing, because my mom used I learned how to I'm going every which way, but forgive me, when I was 14 years old, my mom says you can have to learn how to drive. And so my brother was in the Marines, and when he came, he said, Okay, we're gonna go one time. So he took me on the highway underneath the bridge, Town Lake. He says, Now you drive. I thought he was teaching me how to do things, and so I learned how to drive at 14, and at that time, I got my license, because my mother was very ill, sickly, just like I am, and she had a heart attack. She had a stroke. I mean, I meant my mom went through a lot, but she never

complained about it. Never complained it was she cried because we used to sleep with her, me and my sister, she had a big bed, and so we slept with her. And if we see anything wrong with it, you know, but you know, she always could hear we could hear her cry at night, sometimes, but very... But that's how she dealt with her hurt or sadness, you know? And of course, there were a lot of i. I learned a lot about rats. Rats, rats, a lot of rats in the house, you know, on sixth Street. I mean, that was a old house had a big old chimney. It's a beautiful home. The chimney is to die for is huge. And my mom, my dad, always kept it warm. Had a chimney on and then I remember she also had these little iron things that she would put in the chimney, on this on this thing to heat them up. And then she would put a blanket or something, wrap it to keep us warm,

Paulina Serrano 25:49

put it in your bed?

Anna Maciel 25:52

yeah, but she would just say be careful, you know it, uh, she was she was amazing. She's my hero, my mama.

Paulina Serrano 26:03

And how did it feel growing up in such a big household? I'm guessing it was a lot of trips were together and and can you talk a little bit about your siblings?

Anna Maciel 26:20

Of course, my mother, the first time I can remember her taking us, is she "vamos a la capital". You know, I didn't understand what the capital was. Que era capital. But we'll walk from my house to the capital isn't too far. And so we would go there and take pictures. I think, yeah, told her, one day I want to, I want to. I want to work there one day, "pues andale, si puedes dale", and then my brothers, my brothers and sisters as well. My mother ran a restaurant, and so my sisters took over to help this man. His name was Mr. Cook, and it was right there on Fifth Street across the pit barbecue, and it was called mi Casa su casa. And so my whole family, even the Cook, who was my uncle, my uncle, Joe Ortiz, he was a chap, and they used to have long lines of people from the from after the UT games, and they would go and eat there all the time. Was a buffet. It was called Mi Casa es su Casa, and all my brothers and sisters worked there. So it was like family run. It was a great experience, because I also went to to work there when I got out of... I was in high school and and I went to Austin High. That's the year that they transferred me to Austin High segregated, and that was, that was a eye opener for me, and I learned a whole lot about it because Austin high is because Anglos were very mean to me in the band, there was only, like maybe three Mexican Americans in there, the drummer myself, as a clarinet person, and then another friend of mine that played a saxophone, and they used to call us names. And at Austin High there's a dungeon and and if we didn't do things right, they would take us downstairs and they would have big whips, big belts, big belts, and we wanted to get out if we didn't, if we didn't run the whole course outside Austin High School, they would punish us.

Paulina Serrano 29:42

What year was it?

Anna Maciel 29:43

1972 1972 say, I graduated 74 and I told Mr. Mr. Cook, who used to own the restaurant, he would help my mom a lot, because he, I think he liked my sister a lot too. But anyway, so he was waiting for me after after school one day. I mean, these these students get off to go into limousines, right? And I would wait at the corner for Mr. Cook to come pick me up anyway. I have not gone to any of my reunions, and I'm very active as I'm a community activist. And to the 50th anniversary was last year. I didn't go, and they even called me some of them individually. Why don't you come everybody? We see you on Facebook all the time. You're very active. You're very involved with politics. I said, I have my reasons. I'm not ready to tell you, but you're probably, you're probably the first one I've told I have. I never go. I never went to my reunions. They were painful for me. I didn't like the way they treated me. But you know what? I was first chair as a clarinet, and there was like 12 other Anglo girls, but I was, I was the first chair you had to, you had to fight for your chair you wanted to be in. And I didn't have no private lessons like the other other other kids had. I just, I just practiced a lot, and I just wanted to be better. That's something my mother always told me, you know,

Paulina Serrano 31:51

what did it mean to you to be first chair?

Anna Maciel 31:56

that I was the best, that I was good, that I could that I could do things better than other people, that maybe I could teach one of my other, my other friends how to how to play beautiful music. Music helped me with math. You know, you have to know math if you're gonna read music. And you know, so it helped me with math, you know? I mean, there's a lot of pros and cons going to Austin high but, you know, I took calculus. I took, I took, I took a lot of courses that a lot of my friends going to Johnson High School didn't take, you know. And taught me a lot about English, taught me a lot about wanting to do something. And when I graduated, was the first year ACC opened, and it was at the old Anderson High School in East Austin. That's where the first ACC school was. And my mother told me, You're going to go to ACC because I want you to go to the University of Texas. Well, I did go, I did go to ACC, but I didn't only, only when I finished high school, I had gotten a scholarship right to go to UT, but my mother said it's too much money to see if we can get you at this other school. I really wanted to go to UT. I always wanted to be an attorney. You know? Anyway, what finally did happen is that after I, after I finished school, there for a while, I worked for a little while, then I went to I went to work at the Capitol because I was, I first worked at the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce. It was called the Mexican American Chamber of Commerce. That's what happened. Yeah, Mexican American Chamber of Commerce. I was a receptionist there. Then I met a woman from El Paso. Mary Margaret Navar, she was from El Paso. She was from she had just graduated from UT and I met Hernando Merino, who was a tourism director, and then me the receptionist. I. I worked there for many years. And so Mary Margaret said, Anna, you know everything, what Hernando does? An honestly why don't you take over? Is it me? Yeah, you so at the Mexican American Chamber of Commerce, I met a lot of people. Gus Garcia, okay? Which was an honor. I met Gilbert Martinez, old Austin community activist Francis Childers, she own the only Mexican... she was in Spain, but she had a tailor shop in the building where the Mexican American Chamber of Commerce used to be. I met a lot of people. Lena Guerrero, okay, I met Lena because when Mary Margaret left, Leo Aguirre took over her position, and they were married, Leo Aguirre and Lena Guerrero. So I could write a book about Lena Guerrero and you know like I could

write a book about all of them. But the beautiful thing is, I met a lot of people, and when, when someone said, Why don't go work at the Capitol? And I bet Gonzalo Barrientos at that time, at the at the his band, at the Mexican American Chamber of Commerce, he says, "go to the Capitol. He said, you'd be good at it." Okay, but I never asked him to help me. I went on my own, and I went to go see what was available, and I applied and applied for a whole year, and then I went knocking on doors. No one told me to go knock on doors. I just did it. I said I've been applying here for so long. I mean, I know how to do receptionist work and stuff like that. So they finally hired me. Finally hired me a senator from Bob McFarland, from Dallas, Texas. I got to know so many people, and I got to work with Gonzalo, because eventually I learned how to do a lot of things at the Capitol. I became a committee clerk for congressional senate and education redistricting, and I traveled all all states here, all the state, all the cities here in Texas, and had meetings with new senators, constituents, and I learned so much about responsibility, how to about how to bring people together, how to listen to both sides of things, how to observe, but the most important part was how to listen.

Paulina Serrano 38:30

Where do you think you learned that from?

Anna Maciel 38:39

My Mother. because if we didn't listen, you know, let me tell you how it was. All she had was belt, you know, you see, no, I had long hair down to my to my bottom. And hey, I by va la mano con, you know, pull the hair or something, but I never saw it as an ugly thing, but I didn't know why things had to be that way, but I learned a lot of a lot about respect and a lot a lot about following rules from mom and she says, "you want something, Don't wait for other people to get it for you. You got to go out and get it yourself, because nobody's going to get it for you". So as I was growing up, I I always went for it, I always reached out to make sure that things happened, you know, so after being in the Senate, then for eight years and I went to the house because a friend asked me if I could take her place. For the meantime, that was kind of bad experience for me, working in the house. What year was that? Oh, she Woah. I can't remember. I had it all written down. I had a stroke that's why I can't remember a lot of stuff. But he was, he was an attorney from San Antonio. Who was he John Longoria. And even though all the other senators that I was work for, they were all kind of they were all Anglo except Gonzalo. I felt that that working there shut the door in my face really hard. Because one, I was a woman. Secondly, it was because I Yes, I could speak for myself, and I didn't like lying to spouses. No, I had a direct line, you know, down in on the floor, on the on the Senate floor, the House floor, you know, pick up the phone, you know, and go direct to them. But it's hard when your own people mistreat you or I because I'm sure that's the way they were. He was tough.

Paulina Serrano 41:46

And this is again, John, there's

Anna Maciel 41:53

Longoria. There's things that I would not do for him, that you'd he got angry at me, so he fired me. I had my own beliefs. You know, I had my own work ethic that I learned in which I had the honor of meeting Barbara Jordan on the Senate floor speaking about ethics, the wonderful. Never forget that. And she met with us and had lunch and things like that that I never thought that I would ever do. Lauro Cruz, he

was, he was a rep for the state of Texas. He said, Ali, you know, I want you to come and and take a class at the LBJ School of Public Affairs. It's going to be a leadership program for Mexican Americans. I want you to come. And I did, and I went to that leadership program for a whole two years at LBJ School. That was great. I met a lot of wonderful people. Frank Rodriguez, you know, I met a lot of good people that are are leaders in this community. But I learned, I learned, I listened and I learned, and I also became chair of the Emma S. Barrientos Mexican American Cultural Center. And one of my one of my nicest experiences, was going after a bond for 38 million to continue building the cultural center, because it's not totally built. There's three phases, and we only have one phase up. So I was able to get 27 million pass the bond and the expansion is going on right now. That's, that's, that was an accomplishment for me, a little Barrio girl, you know. But I fought. I fought very hard, and I fought city council that wasn't helping us, not one bit, because they were not helping the Mexican American community have what they needed, and what Emma Barrientos wanted for the community to have a Cultural Arts Center. And to this day, I'm still am going to work on building phase three to get that built, and get some stakeholders together and see if we can get that done before Gonzalo leaves us. You know, I've learned so many wonderful things from Palm school. I. To me, just the fact that these teachers cared enough of me, and that I would say, well, you're gonna go, you know, you're gonna go a long ways. You're gonna you have to go to school. You have to do good in school. All that, then going to Martin junior high school, Martin Junior High was brand new. But, man, all there was at Martin was just a lot of fighting. A lot of, you know, like the African Americans against Mexicanos was there were not a lot of Anglos there. But from Martin, I went to Austin High. Can you imagine that was a culture shock for me and then to be treated that way at Austin High? I said, No. What eventually happened with at Austin High after they hit me with the belts, I went straight after I got out, I went straight to the principal's office, and I told him what happened, and he didn't do nothing about it.

Paulina Serrano 46:10

Was that the first time that had happened?

Anna Maciel 46:14

in your well, in that manner? Yeah, the second the first time? No, now the first time was when I had this Anglo girl tell me. They used to call us snipes. Okay? We used to, if it was a senior and they saw you that you in the band, and if you were a freshman, they would have to, they tell you, "Oh, can you carry these books to my next class for me?", no matter if I was going to be late. And she gave me the books. This girl gave me her books, and it was a lot of books, and I had my own books, and back then we didn't have backpacks, and I could barely I said, I can't do that, so put down. She said, "Put down your books." So I did. And then she gave me her books. So I dropped them. I let them go. "You pick them up". I got my books and went to my class. I got punished for that. I had to run around the field 10 times, by who, by the by the band. She went and told the band members. And I could, and I was, I was chubby, you know? I I did it. I did it. And my brother was, he was involved in at Austin High, and I told him about it, and so he went and talked. He went and talked to the principal with me, and he said, "Why? Why has nothing been done?" and nothing really happened. But that's those are the memories that when you when you have good memories of something, you have good memories, but when you have when some something's hurtful, you just don't forget. And I had a lot of hurtful experiences in my life that I can tell you that affected me as I was going on, and I don't know you might, you might, you might. I don't mind telling you one thing, because I think a lot of what happened to me as a child

affected, affected me a whole lot, I know I did, and that was that I was molested by one of my own family members. Never tell anyone house of a girl I was only six years old

Paulina Serrano 49:04

at Palm school. You were going to palm school?

Anna Maciel 49:14

Yeah, yeah, I am. I I got a paralysis. Remember, I tell you that I had a paralysis, that's when it happened. And my mother would always tell me that it was because I would play outside and I got in front of the in front of the band window unit we had, I could never tell her. I didn't tell her, never told her, not until I got married and went to Over eaters anonymous. A class and learned about 12 steps, and I learned I lost 100 pounds, and, you know, then I had to face reality. You know, you know, I think I left it at size four for about 10 minutes because I started eating again, I didn't like the fact that people were looking at me, and that the opposite, you know, men were looking at me. It was hard, it was hard, it was hard, it was hard.

Paulina Serrano 50:35

Do you feel like your time at Palm school helped you?

50:42

Oh, yes, playing that instrument.

Anna Maciel 50:49

My teacher is telling me to read, read, read, read, read books, read books, read books. Miss Anglin, pushing me to participate. To participate in my activities.

Paulina Serrano 51:07

What sort of activities did you do?

Anna Maciel 51:10

I danced, I sang choir. My mother was great at sewing clothes. I always had these. I had some pictures of some of the quotes she made that I brought in today and inside the girl like they were store bought. You know, she was wonderful seamstress. Oh, my God, but I learned a lot. I learned a lot from all this, but learning how to respect myself, how to how to go on in this world with not being acknowledged and knowing my self worth. Know what I'm worth. It all comes it all comes from when I was settled when I was at Palm school. I really think that's what really happened, is that I had that that support, that I needed to know, that I could do more things, that I that I couldn't do, and pushing and pushing and pushing on my own really taught me a lot. It did, you know, I don't have to be acknowledged by people. I acknowledge myself. You know, people like Velia Ruiz, you know, Anita Quintanilla. I mean, it's just amazing. It's amazing how life is, but it all works out eventually, right?

Paulina Serrano 52:58

Can you tell us about what an average day at Palm school would be like. Was like,

Anna Maciel 53:09

I'll never forget this. My average, okay, my, my, when we would come into school, I remember that they would weigh us in the classroom, in front of all the kids, and then the teacher would be there to see how tall you were when you first started school. And then they would take your weight, and they would say how much you wait out loud. I hated that. I hated that. That was worse thing. Then came Miss Winston and and I would tell I would talk to her and tell her, I wish I could run faster. And I wish it could. I wish it could do more things like play kickball, and because that's what we did, I did a lot of kickball when we were little, played in the practiced for the Fiesta, a lot that we had at Palm school, we've made bamboo. There was a dance that you had to step into the bamboos, you know. And we used to make the bamboos and and, and they would tell us how to fix them to be ready to we could use them just just teaching us about responsibility and respecting whatever we had at Palm i. Never saw any fights at Palm school, even though there were some trouble makers in sixth grade, one of them was Alex. They used to call him Hondo, Alex, Alex Duarte. Duarte, and in sixth grade, he told the class. When Mr. One day stepped out, he told this, he told us, I can, I can make myself faint. He told us. He says, "you want to, y'all want to see me faint?" And so he held his breath and he fainted. And Mr. Monte came and helped him, and he went straight to the principal side, where, of course, they used to pedal us. Okay. I think the beautiful thing about palm school was that you had superior dairy right next door. We used to go and and check out the the ice creams, the factory there ice cream factories where a lot of Mexican American people used to work, right there at Palm school, I mean, at Superior dairy. So, you know, it was, it was all good. It was all a learning experience. And I just don't see those good, good things to practice, like discipline and respect being practiced very much in our schools today. Everything's too easy. Everything's too too easy. You don't, you don't, you don't. There's no pride in going to a library and getting a book and reading it. The beauty of it. Used to love to read, go to the library and get books. And I used to always take them home, because, you know, we could check them out. You know, those are beautiful things that I thank palm school for. You know,

Paulina Serrano 57:15

how often would you go to the library?

Anna Maciel 57:17

Every day you were good. We would go every day to library. You know, that would be one of our things we had to do, you know, go to library. Yeah, that's why I loved it so much. Then, when I went to Martin, it was a bit different. Even though we did, we did have time to go the library. It wasn't as much as as we needed to, you know, but that's something that was taught by our teachers here at Palm school.

Paulina Serrano 58:01

What other things were taught? What was on the curriculum at Palm school?

Anna Maciel 58:05

Oh, learned a lot of math, you know, how to read history. Okay, even in the choir, we used to sing these songs about, oh, God, I can remember all these different songs "deep in the heart of Texas". I was in the choir and band, and that's why I love music so much. I respect it a lot, because it taught me a lot about me. You know, would you

Paulina Serrano 58:46

what did you learn about? Did you learn about Mexican history? Mexican American history?

Anna Maciel 58:51

The one that taught me Mexican history was my mom, how to keep those traditions going. Some “mijita es muy importante que no te olvides, de donde visite, okay, de tu cultura”, my fam, I still have family in Guadalajara, and they use Zapata sin o boots and my, I never forgot what my mom would tell me, the importance of, you know, she would dress us up in her Cinco de Mayo things. And they had a lot of stuff like that at home school. You know, that's one thing they do. Did have, and I've never forgotten, because I became president of the AB Cantu Pan American Recreation Center for 12 years. And they had a tradition there. It's called hillside. The hillside concert series, and the city of Austin would not, would not sponsor that activity, because there was not enough funding for the Mexican American cultural arts. So I went to City Council every year for 12 years, and I knocked on doors, and to this day, we still have the hillside concert series in the month of July, every Tuesday. And that's a Mexican American tradition here in Austin, I have never let it we've gone through wonderful people like man, you don't, oh, my goodness, we have all these old I mean, look at Ruben Ramos todavia, you know, I bring him back every year. He's history, you know, history. There's just so so many old musicians. I have even gone in front of the of the music commission for the city of Austin, said, “Hey, why are we not supporting the cultural arts, you know? Why? Tell me why.” It was very important for me when I was growing up, you know, and it made a big difference in my life and and up until two years until two years ago, I resigned, because that's a lot of years, and nobody wants to really step up to the plate. And I was trying to teach younger people to to know, learn how to take care of their community, to be hands on to to make sure that that, that we teach our kids the importance of how important our cultural arts are. And I think I, I think they did a good job with with the Pan Am recreation center, because I got, I was able to get funding for the recreation centers by sitting down with the executive director, for part, the assistant director, and saying, look, the MAC is going to be closed because they're going to use that, that 27 million that I raised for for the MAC, they're going to be closed for these years. So why don't we collaborate with Pan Am Recreation Center? Let's utilize some of the money that they're not going to be that the Mac is going to be using and use it for the Pan Am Hillside, and besides, that closure is going to hurt the MAC, and that would be a great opportunity to collaborate that Mexican American Cultural Center, to collaborate with the community and establish themselves with the community to let them know who they are and where they're going to be. That's exactly what happened, and it's been a success. You know, collaborations are very important, and it's happening. It's happened. It, it. It was a big success. We saw like maybe 5000 people go to Pan Am Recreation Center for concerts, free concerts. They're free concerts. They're family traditions. And that's the thing that I've always wanted to to make sure that people never forget, is those family traditions that meant so much to us when we were growing up, like all of us on Sunday, you know, all 14 of us, we had to be at home. We had to be at home right after church, because my mother would have cooked a wonderful meal, and we'd all sit down and have a meal together, no matter what it was, even if we had to have little mesitas here and there, you know, we ate together, you know that that was beautiful. That's beautiful stuff. Those are things you can never forget. And that's another thing Palm school taught me to the respect of the of the lunch ladies that used to serve us there at Palm school. Do you remember their names? I le chihuaha, if I, if I talked to my brothers that probably remember my brother remembers everything. My brother, Robert. He's still alive. And I mean, they would treat us like if we were gold,

Paulina Serrano 1:05:11

you know, were they Mexican?

Anna Maciel 1:05:16

Guinness, then, then "they would be like ten mija, come, eat" they would support the effort to eat. Not just throw the dishes at you or the plates to you. They would hand them to you.

Paulina Serrano 1:05:37

You know, would they have children that would go to palm school themselves, yeah. So they were, there were family of of students that were in at Palm

Anna Maciel 1:05:48

Yeah, like grandmothers or pues si. Yeah. And I remember too, mescalindo. Mescalindo, I forgot to mention that the big, the big, the biggest business, not the big businesses, but the businesses that were open around palm school helped palm school a lot like El Galindo, la torteria, okay, that used to be on Sixth Street for a long time. Step out two blocks away from my house. Escalindo, her sister taught at Palm. No Lopez de Lopez family. I mean the Lopez la Lopez family are the ones that sold. They sold their house on the hill on Ninth Street looking down at the Capitol on Ninth Street. She sold the house to Waterloo Neighborhood Development Corporation, where I was on the board. We were both on the board together and with me being on the MAC board as well, I was able to get that collaboration going to use the Rainey street historical fund to move the five houses that were on Rainey Street to move them to Tillery, and they are now owned by people. They renew the homes. They redid the homes. I mean, you know, those are such important things, to take care of our community, take care of each other, and it's wonderful to know that Waterloo Development Corporation is still doing that. They built a lot of houses for people to move in, to their homes, to their homes. They might own the home, but they do not own the land. That's the only thing about it. You know, the trust land, but it's a start. It's a start. You know, they can move their house somewhere else. So much work to be done in some real time. But I believe that we were placed on this on this earth, to do God's work, to teach each other, to love each other, to to try to help each other. In many ways, I've tried the best that I can. Like my mother would tell me, I would feed over 1500 people at Pan Am. I would get free turkeys from from the food bank, but I would get 500 turkeys, and then I'd get another 500 turkeys and give them out, there would be lines. Oh, I mean, there would be lines all the way to the highway from Pan Am and make sure they had green beans, had corn. But you need a you need a whole team. You know, we had people that really cared about about the Barrio, the and not forget that, that it's it's not, it's not the same anymore. The Barrio is not the same. Do you know it's just not the same? And it's sad to see, because you can't recognize the Barrio anymore. Gentrification took over was inevitable, especially when we don't have when we don't have select city council members that we think that are on our side, that sell out. It's sad, but it's the truth. You know what? But I'm very excited at being on the steering committee at Palm school.

Paulina Serrano 1:10:07

So a lot of a lot of what you've said already in communities has come up a lot, and what do you think palm school like fit? How did palm school fit into the larger Mexican American community when you were going there, like, and throughout its history, Oh, yeah.

Anna Maciel 1:10:28

Has to be a reflection, a reflection of where we want to get to, where we want to get to. Do you know, we want to, we want to. I want to be well, I'd like to see an institute of some kind, you know, have classes there, you know, of history. Have have the park to to have the names of teachers and have a picture of the teacher that taught at Palm school, and give a little history of what they did there in the park, right? I know that's what the community wants to see. They don't want to see another museum. We have a museum around the corner. You have Mexiarte out there, right there. You know which they're trying to get historical money so they can preserve what they think, what they think needs to be preserved. But they never lived on Sixth Street. They never went to palm school. I mean, I respect all these people. Marta Cotera, I respect Celia Orosco I respect them all. The thing is we, I want to pivot and make sure we ask the community, what do you want to see? Because they don't want to speak out anymore, because they don't think that anything can be done. And I do, I do think that we still can do something that's going to be a reflection of all the things that we want to do. One thing too. We can't forget the indigenous people, you know, because, you know, my parents are never going to be celebrated in this in this community. I'm not a I'm not a Saldana, or I'm not a Renteria, yeah, or I'm not a camera. Salmaripa, okay? I worked with with her brother at the Capitol. He was an attorney, but he never heard and the Lemons. I will never be highlighted. Maciels like that because my parents were from Mexico, they will never be acknowledged. Not it. I'm going to try the hell to try to make sure that we acknowledge the people that actually came here first. You know, they're the ones that that started it all. They started the foundation sufieron pero lo hicieron. you know,

Paulina Serrano 1:13:26

growing up was that something that you noticed?

Anna Maciel 1:13:32

Yes, yes. If they had to work hard, they were always working hard. I mean, my mom would get up at four o'clock in the morning. She'd be at the restaurant by five. She wouldn't get home till about 10 or 11, and we would walk along with her. You know, hard work, hard work, hard work. We just don't know nowadays how to do that, how to how to respect what you do. And I think palm school has to be a reflection. Of how we learned all that, all the beauty of our culture and and how we all stayed together, regardless of how the hard times we had, we accomplished a lot. You know, comissioner DeLeon. You know marcos deLeon. You know Hortensia Palomares. These are all people that she's got a lot of history. She's until you better start handing over all that, all the material you have, and make sure that we acknowledged because, because a History Center, the Austin History Center, doesn't, doesn't know how to respect our community, excuse me, I had to fight with them. They had nothing on about Pan Am. Nothing, just pictures of musicians. That's it. That's how they thought it was. You don't see, you know, women. Women used to get together to make quilts over there at Palm school. They don't know how to sew together. They they knew how to make Tamales. They taught each other how to do traditional, cultural stuff, you know? Ah, there's so, so much no time left.

Paulina Serrano 1:15:30

How can you can we talk a little bit more about the palm school and the community during the the years that you were there, and what you remember about the community, their involvement with palm school?

Anna Maciel 1:15:54

That's a hard one, because the majority of the people that I that went to palm school at the time I did, they had a had a big living, they had to work, they had families, and at that time, had a lot of children. You know, my father had like, three or four jobs. You know, living in a rental home that is now ours, but he was renting that house. All those houses on sixth st were rented, and I just remember not seeing a lot of the only time that I would see families get together at Palm school were when we had the Fiesta, and when we and when we had to make outfits, when we had to sew. My mother used to sew outfits for for us to wear for the events. Make them traditional, like from the Mexican, you know,

Paulina Serrano 1:17:04

and the Fiestas were more traditional, yeah? Celebrating holidays like Cinco de Mayo, yeah,

Anna Maciel 1:17:13

yeah. Well, not so much Cinco de Mayo, but there would always be a little celebration, okay, you know the Al Go, get this, yeah. Oh, well, these are Mexican children, you know? I mean, it wasn't always like that, because we couldn't speak Spanish when we first got there, you know. But I guess as a kid, I was always complaining or always asking questions.

Paulina Serrano 1:17:43

What kind of questions?

Anna Maciel 1:17:46

Well, like, why can't we? Why can't we speak Spanish, you know? Porque? Why? You know? Before I could even say why. you know? what my mother used to make me when I was 14, she used to make me drive her to to the Mesa drive and all that. "Porque, le Gustave venir acá ma?" "Oh, pues mira las casas tan bonitas acá. Tan bonitas. Nosotros no podemos tener eso." "Si podemas ma, si podemos, tenemos que ir a la escuela". I remember a lot of faces parents working hard just to keep their kids alive. Ma'am, I if all we could do is go to green and white or Guajardos, right there by Lady of Guadalupe, where they would tell the best Barbacoa at Green and White, if all we could do is go after church to Guars..., because it was across the street from our lady de Guadalupe, and get that, and get the salami from green and white and the cheese. That was our outing, if we could, if we could afford it, if my mom could afford it, getting that penny, penny to buy a candy was our outing, was our joy. And you learn how to appreciate what you have. You learn and you accept it, and you don't complain. You. Yeah, I just, I just, it's, it was, it's an honor. It's an honor. Kept gone impossible, because it taught me so much. Taught me the beginning of how to have a better life. Nothing's ever perfect, but you can always work on it, and that's something my mom taught me how to do to keep on working on it. You know,

Paulina Serrano 1:20:49

yeah. So we know that during the time that you may have been at Palm school, there was desegregation happening and and you talked a little bit about your experience at Martin in Austin High School. Can you talk about, I guess, in broad terms, about desegregation, but how in Palm school may have been your experiences with desegregation at the time and then later on in your education.

Anna Maciel 1:21:31

Thank God we had teachers, Great teachers at Palm that didn't make you feel like you were different, you know, it was more like, you know, like if a shoe doesn't fit you and you walk in them, they hurt your feet. Well, they made me walk in shoes that make me feel that that I could get better shoes, like, like I, like I, because we used to have to wear shoes I like, what we had. I mean, we could choose what shoes we wanted, but at Palm it was like I never felt like I was different, not until I got to the real difference was when I went to Austin High. Martin was like, I started, I started, I started to feel like, like the Africans and Americans were against the Mexicans.

Paulina Serrano 1:23:05

Did you have to drive to these schools?

Anna Maciel 1:23:09

I walked, I walked to Martin with my best friend, Garza. To the Garza she lived, she lived on top of the hill, and she would come down, I meet her at the hill, and then we walk to Martin, but my but my brothers, my brothers would take me to walk with me to palm school. And at that time, at that time, you know, there was a lot of there was a lot of homeless people, but you wouldn't call the homeless. Homeless. You would call them. Gotta watch out for those whinos. Okay, the whinos are the ones that were you would take care of us. They would look after us and say, No. Mexicano no te vayas para all" I had more faith in them that I have people that are on six street right now. You know, going to palm school is always safe, even though we had to go under the bridge and stuff like that. But, but going to Martin was where I started to really feel the tension, the tension between blacks and Mexican Americans. So we were always fighting. over what? Well, that was during the that was the time during the Black, Black Panthers, you know, 1950 No. No. 1960, yeah, cuerdo, pero I remember that they were not let us. There was a time when we couldn't go out because the African American people were out, and we couldn't go out after a certain time. I. Uh, like after five o'clock or six o'clock. There was a time here in Austin, it was not, it was not nice, because we used to get poked on, I mean, we picked on at martin junior high. One of them wanted to bite me in the alley. And I was was a chicken. I mean, I didn't wanna fight, nobody. I just wanted to go home, you know, like, see you, a bunch of people surrounding us, and then my some friends stepped in for me, and, you know, protected me. But it's not easy growing up like that. And when it got to Austin High was, like, even, even las mexicanas at Austin High. She, one of them was Miss Gonzalez. She, she was a secretary there at Austin High. She would look down to you, at you, like, if you were trash. I mean, you know, people teach you ways that you understand, why are you supposed to be better than me? Well, I don't know. I don't see no difference here, but I've always been that way. I've always wanted to know, "okay, why you treat me that way? You know? Why? Why are you looking at me like if I can't do it", you know, and it's just my mom just taught me a lot of wonderful things that would be strong woman,

Paulina Serrano 1:26:32

yeah, how many? How big was the Mexican population at or students at Austin, at, Ed, where in Austin, at Austin High School.

Anna Maciel 1:26:44

Oh shoot, oh, not too many. I would think that it was about maybe everybody went to Johnston in my class, there were only 10 of us.

Paulina Serrano 1:27:07

So when you were the first chair clarinet, you're probably the first Mexican American person.

Anna Maciel 1:27:14

Oh, and the girl, the girl that was first chair, she had a private, a private teacher, you know, she had a she says, "who you taking lessons from?" I said, "nobody. I think actually, from you, because I'm watching you and see what you do." She says, "oh", and actually, she invited me to go to her home on Enfield. She had a beautiful home on Enfield and and she invited me to go over. He says, "We'll take you home." Well, I didn't know I was going to go into limo. Come on. I was going in the bus. I was going to school bus, and I had to walk rest away to my house, you know. But things have been put in front of me to learn to observe, to take it all in and, and, and it's taught me how to enjoy my life, not not not not be sad about it, but look at the reality of what it was and the beauty that came out of it. You know, that's what I learned.

Paulina Serrano 1:28:40

similar along the lines of kind of, you know, different opportunities that are getting opportunities and being, perhaps feeling like you don't belong. We've heard a little bit about the like the pool and as a recreation and sometimes not being allowed, Mexican Americans not being allowed to use the pool. Do you have any memories of the pool?

Anna Maciel 1:29:08

My brothers would tell me we couldn't get in the pool at certain hours, you know, just, you just, you just couldn't go in there and just dive in, you know, just couldn't do it.

Paulina Serrano 1:29:28

And then just real quickly, the mic is sometimes it doesn't catch you when you lean forward. I'm sorry. The video just, just letting you know, sorry about that. Okay, I'm sorry, yeah, no, no, it's okay. But I think the camera and the boom, but so your brothers had some memories of the pool and not being allowed to go in the pool?

Anna Maciel 1:29:51

Yeah, they did. I never wanted to get in the pool because they told me that I didn't want to get in the pool. That's why I never learned how to swim. Just went. I said I would tell him, that's mean, it's there for us. It's our school, but my brother's my brother. One of my brothers became a APD Austin Police Department. Worked there for 35 years. He's gone now. Love My brother. My brother Isidro Maciel is work with Charles Villasenor and and his wife on six Street for 20 years. Okay? My brother, Robert, he's a, he's a, he's a real estate person, and his wife and him run Joe's bakery, and she's had it. She's

had it more than 65 years. That little Mexican restaurant, you know. And let's see my brother, Jesse Ortiz, that was from the other family that my mom raised. He went to Vietnam, and he's passed away, but he worked for Region 13 for a long time, and so that my brother Sid worked at region 13. My sister Lupe worked at Region 13. My sister Deedee worked at Region 13. Me, almost everybody worked at Region 13, you know, and they, we all respected each other enough to to support each other in the ways that we needed to. But we never, we never that tradition to have getting together. We still get together for Christmas and Thanksgiving and but, yeah, yeah, a lot of my family members have died. Yeah, I'm sorry. They have died. They have passed away. And a great place to go, that I like to go to and spend time is Maria de la luz cemetery. My dad's there, my mom's there. My dad's brother's there. Wow. And my grandmother, my grandfather. Wow, there's some really wonderful people in that place, and just disrespected. I want to do something about that, to to do something with that, to get it the city to to clean it up. A lot better than that it needs to my sisters are buried there. I had two sisters that passed away, one at child birth, another one at two years old. Yeah, and my sister, my sister, Minnie, she worked for the city of Austin for 30 years, and she's the one living at the house on Sixth Street, asking 5 million for that house. He got one bite, but not for that much. But I, my brother Morty, my brother Martin. He worked for UT. He was a dish washer for one of the houses, one of the dorms. He they loved him there. Oh, my brother was he loved music. He loved music, and he would play it every I think that's why I learned how to love music the most, because he would always play it every morning in his room. He was the only one that had room in the back bien chiquito. But he would play all these sunny in the sun liners, and I just a lot of different Old, old musicians, you know, anyway,

Paulina Serrano 1:34:33

How do you think that palm school influenced your family, like, outside of what you've shared a little bit?

Anna Maciel 1:34:49

how do I think my family,?

Paulina Serrano 1:34:50

Yeah, like the experiences that you all shared, like, as a result of you being at at Palm School?

Anna Maciel 1:34:58

You know, when Marta cortera came to me and wanted to interview me, I said, You know what? You know? Who you really need to talk to is my brother Jesse, because he was one of the boys that planted that palm tree in front of palm school. But because he couldn't remember the names of the other three boys, he says, "No, that's not fair to them". I have a lot of respect for palm but they, they, I think they grew up a lot faster than I did, and had to take on a lot more responsibilities, and then, then I had to, they had to get out and work make money, which you really could right there, on on, on Calle sies on six street, there used to be a marketplace, just like they have one in San Antonio, and it was on Fifth Street. It's where the old Lottery Commission used to be. On six Street, where La Tienda used to be long time ago, and my father used to sell fruit. Vegetables, all kinds of stuff they could rent out a little place. And my tia used to do that too. And I think they learned the value, they learned the value of respect. And how to appreciate, how to appreciate where we were from, working twice as hard that I did, growing being right next to my mom and dad all the time, because they're the ones that, some of them didn't graduate from high school. I had, I had, like, six that six of them that went to Austin High

and graduated, you know, but the rest didn't, but man. My sisters are smart. My sister Julie man that she's a calculator. She's smart and great at math. My Brother Jesse was excellent. Now, his daughters came to UT. They were in the dual program, and they had their bachelor's and master's degree at the same time. Smart Girls, smart chicks, all in Math. I think if I would have pursued, I would have been a great attorney. You know, I still think about it. You know, never too late. But I think, I think that, I think that, uh, they didn't have the opportunity to socialize as much as I did. You know, working at the Chamber, getting to know different people, you know, I respect them for that, because they knew they knew what they knew what they were capable of doing and not doing. So I respect them for the life they've given me by holding back

Paulina Serrano 1:38:35

apart from, you know, these kind of internal family barriers. Where did you witness any difference in the ways that boys were being treated at Palm school as opposed to girls?

Anna Maciel 1:38:48

Of course.

Paulina Serrano 1:38:51

Can you share a little bit about that?

Anna Maciel 1:38:53

Well, first of all, I started at home because we used to have to iron my, my, my, my, my brother's boxer shorts and their T shirts and their pants, and have them all folded up with them, until I told my mother one day I wasn't going to do it, and that's when I got a whoopin you know? You know that that told me a whole lot they had to eat. They were served before we were served. You know, we had to feed our brothers first before we ate. I mean, growing up, was we? Were we the home the home care takers, you know, I hated it. I hated it, but it was what it was, and we didn't do it well, you know, there was consequence, you know, our house on sixth street, there's about maybe 20 stairs to go up. It has a really big porch, and when our time out was sitting out in the in the on the porch. We used to have pecan trees. We had like eight of them in the back. We would crack pecans all the time. That's what we used to do as punishment. Or we had to go out there or and read, or it was always outside. We would never be in she never wanted us inside. She wanted us doing something, feeding the animals or feeding or making help my mother do food or go pick up something at the store, something always, always. But visit, it was a great opportunity to learn how to live life on life's terms, you know, at the time. But I don't, I don't see it as a bad thing. But as I, as I grew up, and then I became chair of the MAC. There was nothing but males on the board, and what I got on, I was totally disrespected. It pissed me off. And so I said, Okay, I'm going to learn everything I need to. So I became chair, you know, just like I did at Pan Am, you know, I learned a lot from from AB Cantu do, and his daughter, Dina Cantu, who is still part of us, you know, she's still here. I learned a lot from a lot of people, the Galindo family, you know, from the Moreno family that used to have the corn tortilleria right there on the corner of comal. They used to, they used to have inside this little room, and they had this big old pan of corn and and they would have a molino, and it was just beautiful to see, beautiful to smell fresh corn tortillas. You know, that you could go in the hood and just ring the bell. There was another place where you could get corn tortillas that they would make them at their at your house, you just ring the bell that would bring

them out. "Cuantos queries?", you know, beautiful, beautiful things that we used to have. And superior dairy used to come and deliver milk to us. That's one good thing my mother. That's why I love milk so much, I think, to be honest with you, but you know, those are, those are special things that that that were done back then

Paulina Serrano 1:43:07

Anyway, did those translate to palm school? Did I... like those sort of, like, like, those same sort of community activities translate to Palm School?

Anna Maciel 1:43:22

yeah, because we had, we had, we had the help who was serving that knew the traditions and and you just felt more at Home. Gentes mexicanas, you know, they would cook, make it there early, and they wouldn't make the snack. There was only one snack because, I mean, you know, and some, I mean, you had to bring your own food from home if you didn't have no food, you know, that's where the galindos came in and gave money to to the school superior dairy would send his milk. I mean, there were volunteers who were the galindos volunteered a lot at the in the office. You know, there was a lady named Miss foot. She was, I think she was a social worker, because she would give us certificates for the best dress, or if we had made an accomplishment or joined a club, she would give us a certificate.

Paulina Serrano 1:44:38

Was she the same one that weighed you?

Anna Maciel 1:44:42

No, the teachers would do that. Individual teachers would do that, whatever classroom we're in. Yeah, my brother knows a lot of names of teachers. I gotta send them to somebody. I can send them to you, but I. Yeah, I'm still, I'm sure that we need to go get those names so they can be recognized and be honored somewhere in the school. Yeah, about it,

Paulina Serrano 1:45:17

were there any, any, I think, challenges to delivering instruction, we have, you know, some some research there was, like, a lack of AC in the building. Did that impact the way that you learned? Or do you remember any barriers in terms of for like that, the teachers may have experienced to teaching the students?

Anna Maciel 1:45:47

always leaking in that school. There were a lot of leaks. water would rain sometimes, You know, I think, I think they utilize the resources as much as they could under the conditions they were under. But the majority of the events that we had, or meetings, we would have it in the cafeteria, right? And if we had, if we had, like a concert, the choir would have in the cafeteria all the time. But as far as...two things I didn't like about Palm that you that they would that they had a paddle, hated that damn paddle, because everybody would cry, and just like seeing them cry,

Paulina Serrano 1:46:55

did it ever happen to you? Huh? Were you ever paddled?

Anna Maciel 1:46:58

No, I never was paddled, but some of them got some of the guys did a lot

Paulina Serrano 1:47:08

for what reason?

Anna Maciel 1:47:12

Oh, being disruptive, saying bad words, putting things on kids chairs before they sat down on them, hiding books. You know?

Paulina Serrano 1:47:26

Were most of your classmates Mexican American?

Anna Maciel 1:47:31

except for maybe two bolias. You know? Yeah, there wasn't, because one of them lived down the street, across the highway. Yeah, and she lived there for a long time. I don't know what happened to her. I gotta ask around see what happened to her.

Paulina Serrano 1:47:54

Bolias, yes, you mean white girls.

Anna Maciel 1:47:59

Gueras, yeah. Thank God you need whatever. Yeah, so, but they were always nice to us. I mean, they fit in just like anybody else. It's I didn't. I don't remember a lot of African American kids going there,

Paulina Serrano 1:48:17

yeah, and you said you didn't like two things, the paddle, and then the second thing,

Anna Maciel 1:48:27

wait, weighing me and telling the whole school how much we weight

Paulina Serrano 1:48:33

weigh? Why didn't you like that?

Anna Maciel 1:48:34

Because, I was a chubby little kid and I think, and I think a lot of it had to do with my incest. You know, yeah, I was very self conscious. I didn't know what was going on. I didn't I think my teachers do more than I did, but I know no one ever told me anything about it.

Paulina Serrano 1:49:04

You know? How do you know they knew more? How do I know what? Yeah, you just said your teachers knew more about what had happened to you.

Anna Maciel 1:49:15

I always felt Miss Anglin did. That's why she had more. I think she, she would tell me, because when I had the mouth palsey, she says, Don't be embarrassed. She would tell me," don't be embarrassed if it when you blow your the the read, your eye closes, don't worry about it. You just keep on playing", you know. And she said, if this, she told me one day, she says, "If you ever want to, you. You ever want to talk, you can talk", you know, but she never pushed it. But I always felt like he followed me to Martin Junior High. She was my band teacher at Martin junior high. I was in choir in junior I was in I was always involved, like in high school too, even though I would be involved in different different things, but it's just the lack of respect from from the Anglo community there that was harsh. They would make fun of my gay friend. I knew he was gay, but they would make fun of him, and I hated it. I hate he would. He lived around the corner from where I lived, the guerros. He was a guerro, and they would laugh at him. And I couldn't stand it. I couldn't. I was just, come on, Roy, let's go. Come on. His name is Roy Guerra. He's passed away. I still, I still, I still see his his sister all the time, and it's just Palm school had a lot of people from from Our Lady of Guadalupe area, even though, in back of Our Lady of Guadalupe There was, there was a school, it was a house. It looked like a house, a big three story house, and I used to go to first commune there. And there were nuns that you would teach, that would teach there, but there was a lot of the kids that went to Palm school, that went to to get their first commune there. And they would, they would walk, but you didn't see a lot of parents walk with their kids. They would walk by themselves.

Paulina Serrano 1:52:12

Yeah, in the mornings or after school?

Anna Maciel 1:52:14

And then after school, you didn't have, I mean, they didn't have life step or wait for your parents to come pick you up. It was time to leave. It's time to leave. You know, that's why my mother was always very careful with us, because she never wanted us to get in trouble, or my brothers were always around me. That was take care of me.

Paulina Serrano 1:52:50

And what do you think is the the the impact of that palm school had on on the students themselves,?

Anna Maciel 1:53:02

that we were all the same color, that we were all we all knew we were, you know, we could understand each other for a reason, and after a while, you just know that, hey, You kind of look like me. You know, make you feel better. My I trusted my sisters going there before me, and still, my sisters have friends that are still alive that went to palm school. You know, I've connected with a 97 year old man that lives in in Dallas that went to palm school, and he calls me, he said, I have his picture. I have his picture and and he was to come down. He says, I want to go. I want to go and see palm school. I said, Well, let's see when that's going to happen. It's going to be a while, because it seems Waterloo Greenway is everywhere, taking over. That's another thing. That's another thing. I tried to protect the MAC from Waterloo green way they want to dig 200 feet down in the back. And I made sure that they didn't. I got a lot of stakeholders together and and we fought also getting red river run through the MAC, by the

MAC, expanding it. I mean, we, we constantly had to be fighting for things. You know, my sisters are mad because UJH is, is going to be torn down, you know, the UJH, the building that's being torn down. No, here at UT, it was the old, LA, oh, what's it called? They're gonna, they want to make a field on there?

Paulina Serrano 1:55:12

to do the the new sports complex.

Anna Maciel 1:55:16

That will you UJH, that's, that's history, right there. I know that Raul Valdez and Alma Valdez, I talked to them all the time that they were trying to keep it because it has, I think, one of Raul's paint mural there, you know So anyway,

Paulina Serrano 1:55:45

well, thinking about buildings being torn down, there was, I think it was Juarez Lincoln. Can you tell us a little bit more about your relationship to that?

Anna Maciel 1:55:59

I remember, because I my where I sat in fifth grade, would face Juarez Lincoln, and there was the bees right outside my window. They would come in all the time. I was scared. She said, don't pay attention to Okay, whatever. I didn't understand why they, they tore it down, you know, because there was people, oops, there were, there were, there were, one of my sisters went to Juarez Lincoln, okay, but she didn't finish and have a friend that went to waters Lincoln, and she said it was a good experience, but yet she didn't like the curriculum there, she said that she just didn't, but she didn't. She didn't think that they just put this together and that was it. There's nothing good about it. But it was nice to see that there was hope outside my window

Paulina Serrano 1:57:19

in what way?

Anna Maciel 1:57:21

for the future, you know, You get it brings back memories going to the store, and my mother telling me, all of us, you know, you can only have y'all can only have one thing, all of us, one thing, one thing, what? And so I was a most outspoken one, I think, because I always would get a book, okay, then you had those little, little books and or a magazine, you know, whatever paper, whatever I could read, you know, You

Paulina Serrano 1:58:15

remember. What kind of books do you remember? I

Anna Maciel 1:58:23

you already called Golden something, golden knuckle.

Paulina Serrano 1:58:32

Do they have the golden red like, yeah, okay, what do they call?

Anna Maciel 1:58:37

I don't remember anyway. They were just anyway and then we could order some from school, okay, but we can only get one thing. So, you know, we just almost read a lot. Actually, to be honest with my sisters, they all read books. And I just, I just went in and took a whole four boxes full of books to Half Price Books. You know, even though you get 40 or \$50 you know, depending what you're eating. But, you know, I don't know why we don't have libraries open more. You know, don't know why. Anyway, I forgot the question you asked me.

Paulina Serrano 1:59:34

You were talking about Juan. Is Lincoln in the old curriculum. Now,

Anna Maciel 1:59:52

what I remember most is that my my my my brother, my older brothers and sisters wanted to go to continue going to school. I. But because my mother was ill, they had to drop out of school. Some of them did, and I hear it all the time from my sisters and brothers that at least you got to go to school, you know, at least you got to finish school.

Paulina Serrano 2:00:18

And they would have dropped out at what grade?

Anna Maciel 2:00:26

Ninth, eighth grade, because my mother would, my mother would also make food at home, and she would have homeless people come and ask for food. And so she would get food from Holy Cross and whatever we didn't need, she would make it taste better and give them food. My mother was She was an amazing woman, a strong woman. I think that's why like her actually, like she's she's always wanting to help others, you know, and and I think my, my, my, my, my older brothers and sisters that are left, they had, I felt like they didn't like me very much because I had so many opportunities and they did like,

2:01:36

go ahead. You can go ahead.

Anna Maciel 2:01:37

I don't want to. I thought I turned it off.

2:01:42

I yeah,

Anna Maciel 2:01:51

I thought like they were jealous of me, and to this day, because I got, you know, he'll say, Anna, help me on this campaign. Or I don't do this. Or, you know, or is, you're always, you're always doing something. And I said, Oh, hell, I was supposed to be somewhere. Sorry.

Paulina Serrano 2:02:25

I'm sorry. No, it's okay. It's okay. So we can move a little bit about wrapping it up. I guess what? What does the palm school symbolize to you?

Anna Maciel 2:02:40

The first word that comes to mind is wealth, joy, a destination of imagination. That's what it was for me. I It gave me opportunities to to to think outside the box, you know, to think outside the box that I was this poor little Mexican Barrio girl who couldn't get anywhere. I was told that we weren't gonna amount to nothing. And and Palm showed me different.

Paulina Serrano 2:03:27

And who would tell you that?

Anna Maciel 2:03:30

my whole, met, my own family, my older brothers and sisters in you can work just like the rest of us now "nomas trabajamos como burros", you know, I said No, no, I will always say no. And there's, there's a lot of challenges that that you go with your, you know, do with your own family, about the way that, that, that we learned, like, I'm telling you, you know, the the criticizing, the the the lack of opportunities that that they didn't get, they they have to blame somebody, you know, and it was always me, because I was a little one, you know. I think that's why I'm such a fighter, because I always had to fight. I always had to fight the I had to fight the the people in the community, people in government, you know, especially when it came to housing. I mean. And I've had to readjust my life because of all my chronic illnesses that I have, my but that doesn't stop me. I may live in a low income housing right now, but hey, I'm alive. I'm here. I'm talking to you, I'm showing up for me, and that's something palm school showed me is to show up for me that I had a responsibility to be part of this world and that I could be something no matter where we were, no matter how my family was, no matter how many people were in my family. You know, it takes courage to to climb out of a deep hole. You know, takes a lot of courage. The unknown is not easy. You know, not know what to expect in the next few days and next few hours, but just for right now, it's all I have, and all I can tell you is what I lived what I lived through, and it was just, it was wonderful. It was really wonderful. I don't see anything bad about it. Not one thing just gave me a lot of hope. Palm school gave me a lot of hope. You know, even though there was a lot of negative things going on, no

Paulina Serrano 2:06:58

wait, is there anything you want to add and ask. Anything else you would like to add before we wrap up.

Anna Maciel 2:07:09

Well, Palm school didn't stand alone. What I mean by that? It just wasn't the students there that kept it alive. What kept it alive was, was the community. The community kept it alive by making sure that we worked together. Even though we didn't know a lot of things about utilizing each other, we did. We really did know how to utilize each other, and that's by not knowing enough to criticize like we do now. All the all that love is still there for our community. It's still there. It's just, it's it's been pushed back. And if you can find 10 people that can can bring, bring that happiness again, that to keep it alive, to make sure that that our kids can appreciate with where they they come from, where they come from. That'd

be wonderful if we could just work together and and make this a place where they everybody, can enjoy it and teach our culture to other cultures. You know, it'd be beautiful. And then do you have a Mexican American, you know, Institute, you know that that these, that that this Austin area, know that East Austin is not a was not a bad place to live in. Teach them that that it was people that didn't know how to read or write that brought all this together and make made it alive and brought up and brought up and brought up families that make things happen here, you know that's what I want people to understand, is that it's not over. It's not over, not over at all. I want my my grandchildren to know, even if they live in plugerville or in round rock, I want them to know my mom, my grandma, when she she lived here. You know, this is what she did here, man, that that's that's a beautiful feeling to know that that part of you is still around, and that's what palm school is for me. Part of me is still around. Just thought losing palm school i...

2:10:23

It's like putting a hole in my stomach

Anna Maciel 2:10:32

when they when, when I learned that the swimming pool from Palm school was taken out. That's how it felt to me. A big part of me was gone, the memories, you know, that's why, that's why I'm still on Waterloo Greenway. And then we turn around and the very see the very man, the CEO that that ran Waterloo greenway. We just got selected as a part, as a part director. That's a stab in the back to the Mexican American community. But I will be there, God willing, to to fight every every way I can, to make sure that we don't forget who utilized palm school. It's ...that's our treasure right there. That's our everything. ...(sighs).

Paulina Serrano 2:12:01

Thank you. Thank you so much. Anna,

2:12:06

no, thank you. Thank you very much. Thank.