

Palm_School_Ruiz_Michael_Foto_Voz_Transcript_Part_1

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SUMMARY KEYWORDS

Palm School, family history, elementary school, community involvement, Chicano Movement, Austin Chicano strike, education encouragement, political campaigns, family support, NASA career, STEM education, union activities, childhood memories, school traditions, community impact., St. Juan church, photos from 50 years ago, St. Julius church, award ceremony, new officers, Ramon, economy furniture, Victor Ruiz, furniture patterns, striker meeting, January 75, grandfather, presenting check, unknown individuals, recording stop.

SPEAKERS

Brittany Mendez, Michael Ruiz, Speaker 1, Speaker 2

Brittany Mendez 00:03

Okay, Hi, I'm Brittany Mendez. I'm here with Michael Ruiz. Today is January seven. Tuesday, January 720, 25 we are conducting a foto voz over zoom. Okay, and so we are going to get started now. Okay, okay, sorry, sorry, the little wheel spinning. Okay, so I guess we could start here with the school pictures. So I read the back of this image and it said David, but I wasn't too sure what the last name was. It looks like, t, e r

Michael Ruiz 00:57

t, e r r, a, z, A, S, David, T, Raza, David is

Brittany Mendez 01:09

you said T, E, R,

Michael Ruiz 01:11

double R, A, Z, A, S,

Brittany Mendez 01:17

And,

Michael Ruiz 01:20

oh, yeah. So how do you know David? David is actually my uncle who went to palm school before I did and yeah, he was very close to the family. Him and his brothers were very close. In fact, he had a younger brother. Two younger brothers, and one of them was Joe was Arturo. And actually Arturo was

younger than me, but that's why we were so close. But yeah, David and Joel and Artur, I used to play together when we were younger, and this must be a photo from when he was going to school, and I guess he gave it to us.

Brittany Mendez 02:13

So I guess it kind of sounds like you had a like, Wait, so you said that he basically went to palm school before you entered palm school, correct,

Michael Ruiz 02:24

that's correct. He was there probably about, I would say, maybe three years before,

Brittany Mendez 02:29

okay. But then he had a younger brother. He

Michael Ruiz 02:33

had a younger brother, Joel, also went there. Joel was probably two years older than me, and then he had a younger brother named Arturo, and Arturo was actually two years younger than me. Okay, I see so we were all like they were like brothers to me, because we were so close. We lived, we they lived on Holly street near Ih 35 they were probably a half a block away, and I was probably about three and a half blocks away.

Brittany Mendez 03:16

Oh, wow. What was it, I guess. What was it like to have like, like, well, I guess first, did you have any other siblings?

Michael Ruiz 03:29

I have one sibling. His name is Jim. That's the picture that you're showing right now. And he was a My brother was a year and a half older than I was. So he went to start at Palm school. And lucky for me, when I went to palm school, I was very apprehensive, but luckily, my brother was there, so we could walk to school together, which I really appreciate it, because I had someone there that I could walk to school with and come home with, and, you know, he could tell me what to expect. So I was blessed in that regard.

Brittany Mendez 04:13

And what made you kind of apprehensive was it just kind of like feeling alone or what? What would you say?

Michael Ruiz 04:21

I would say that the apprehension was mostly the unknown, not knowing what was going to happen, who was going to be there, and what to expect

Brittany Mendez 04:33

when I guess you and Jim would walk together to school, would you and would you and like aturo and the other boy? Would you guys walk together as a group? Or would it just kind of be you and Jim by yourselves?

Michael Ruiz 04:53

It would just be my brother, Jim and I by ourselves. Um. Because we walked in a different direction than than where my uncles were. And so, yeah, my uncles they, I believe. I don't think I ever saw them at Palm school. So it was really just my brother and I would walk to school together and then walk home together.

Brittany Mendez 05:31

I'm kind of curious, like, what, like, what was the process of, like, getting ready for school for you? Or, like, any memories that you have of like getting up and getting ready and go to school, or in going to school, or like, even, like, I don't know, like, your first day going to palm, or basically elementary school.

05:48

Yeah,

Michael Ruiz 05:52

Yeah, the first day going to palm was probably the scariest for me. Like I said, I didn't know what to expect, although he told me, you know, you're just going to go to a class and there's going to be a teacher and there's going to be other students, but still that wasn't sufficient for me to understand what would be going on all day, because I knew he was gone all day when he was in the first grade and I was home. So I guess in preparation for that, like a typical day would just be getting up, getting dressed, brush your teeth, wash your face and getting ready to go.

Brittany Mendez 06:35

And then also, this is like random, but so I remember, like whenever I was going into elementary school, I lived pretty close by to it, not in Austin. I grew up in The Valley, and I remember I used to live in this one specific place. And I remember, like a lot of the kids, or like some of my mom's friends, also lived in the same area, and so, like all of us would like walk together to go to school, but we sometimes, I feel like we had to get into some shenanigans. So I'm kind of curious if, like, you and your brother, ever, like, did anything funny or silly on your way to school at all?

Michael Ruiz 07:14

I would say if any shenanigans happened, it wasn't on the way to school, because there was a time constraint. So we had to get to school at a certain time and be in our classrooms at a certain time. Now coming home from school, definitely, because there is, there was no time constraint per se, to get home, you know, just walk home at your leisure. So the one thing in particular I remember walking home was we live, well, obviously palm school is right there at the intersection of I 35 and East First Street. It was called East first at the time. Now it's, I believe it Ceasar Chavez. So there was a lot of traffic going through there, so we had to be really careful crossing the streets. But I remember we were walking home one day, and right there on the feeder road of I 35 South bound. Maybe we're let's see. There's a road that goes to Rainey street right there. I think there's an IHOP there. So it would be in the

back of ihops. And as you cross that street, there was a a new small section, maybe about four feet of new sidewalk. So obviously we had to put our initials in the sidewalk. So we got a he got a stick, and I copied him, and I got a stick, and we put our initials in the sidewalk. He put JR, and I put MR. And I thought that was pretty cool, because, like, for the next two or three years, we could walk through there and see our initials on the sidewalk. They actually stayed there for a while. I think I even went back one day after I was going to junior high and high school, just to see if it was still there. And they they were wasn't until, I don't know sometime, maybe when I was in college, that they redid the sidewalks there and they took our names off, unfortunately.

Brittany Mendez 09:33

Oh, that's, that's a very nice story. It sounds like you and your brother very close.

Michael Ruiz 09:38

Yes, we were very close.

Brittany Mendez 09:45

okay, I'm so there wasn't any dates on this, or, like, what grade or anything, and I feel like it might be hard for you to also tell, like, when this. Possible this what grade Jim was in this image?

Michael Ruiz 10:03

Yes, I would estimate that he was probably in the fourth grade there, to put me in the third grade, which means that would have been around, let's see third grade would have been 65 maybe

10:23

good grade.

Michael Ruiz 10:28

I would estimate 1965. So if you could make a little change, there, Jim is Michael's older brother. Oh, yeah,

11:03

Oh.

Michael Ruiz 11:08

Yeah, we were a year and eight months apart.

Brittany Mendez 11:13

You said 1964, correct?

Michael Ruiz 11:18

I would estimate 65, 65

Speaker 1 11:20

i Five, the for, okay,

Brittany Mendez 11:48

it's the same thing. And then this, this is your, your eight years old, and this is your third grade school picture. So

Michael Ruiz 12:03

okay, yes, that's me with the flat top.

Brittany Mendez 12:10

Do you remember anything significant that happens in the third grade or, like, I guess, because I think this might be the because that's from the third grade. This is sixth grade. This is the fourth grade. So I guess, like, now you've kind of been in school for a while and stuff, so I don't know, like, did you start getting the hang of things by the time third grade went around? Or, like, I don't know, did you did anything significant happen? Or, like, I guess, how was your time at Palm school, since you started till the third grade.

Michael Ruiz 12:46

Let's see that was at eight. So, yeah, third grade, yeah. Definitely started getting the hang of things, and I was definitely comfortable at school. Actually, elementary school was very easy for me. I really enjoyed school. I loved palm school quite a bit. I enjoyed going to school. I enjoyed being around the other students, making friends with all the other students. Yeah, I had no problems with elementary school. That was a great experience being there, especially with my friends. In terms of significance, I don't know if it's okay to back up a little bit to like the first grade. I remember that was in 63 and President John F Kennedy was in Dallas, and he was supposed to come to Austin, and he was going to actually pass right in front of our school, because he was going to be coming off i 35 make a ride on East First Street, now known as Cesar Chavez, and so he was going to pass by. And everybody was excited that the President of the United States was going to pass by. And fortunately, the those events happened where he wasn't he, you know, he was assassinated in Dallas and didn't get a chance to make it to our schools. And I just remember, you know, the teachers crying and teachers being upset, and that was a big deal, because I'm like, why is the teachers crying? Why? Why is, why aren't, you know, why are the they're talking amongst themselves and what's going on? So that was kind of a little scary. Of course, you know, you go home and you hear parents talking about it on the news, and. Stuff. So that was probably one of the most significant things. But of course, that was in the in the first grade.

Brittany Mendez 15:09

Yeah, that's Wow. That's kind of crazy. I guess I guess you probably just didn't realize until later on, like, what exactly had happened. Also, also, I could hear, like a TV in the background. Is it possible to, like, turn the volume down a little bit, just my bleed in with the...

Michael Ruiz 15:42

Yeah, let me hold on a second.

Brittany Mendez 15:44

Sorry about that.

Speaker 1 15:50

That's okay. Can you turn the volume down recording this and they can hear that?

Michael Ruiz 16:02

Okay. Thank you. I didn't know if you could hear it or not.

Brittany Mendez 16:13

No, it's okay. I don't think I heard it for a little bit, but then I started to hear so I guess you also mentioned, like, you know, you really enjoyed your time and stuff, and, you know, like, you enjoyed your time with your friends and stuff. So I'm curious, like, what, like, what were your friends? Like, who were your friends, since your brother was older than you, like, did his friends so happen to be your friends? Or just kind of, what was your friendship dynamic at Palm school.

Michael Ruiz 16:46

I never really thought about it, until you're asking me now, but his friends weren't my friends because he was in a grade above me. So I look back and I see that the kids in their own grade, hung out with each other. Of course, you're you're with, you're in a single class all day long. So you're going to be with those kids all day long. You're not really going to interact with other students in different grade levels. So, yeah, I was really close because, you know, because you're in class all day long with those, you get really close to those friends. Your Favorite Things are going to lunch and going to recess, those, those are, you know, the two most favorite things that you do, because you're pretty much on your own, you're eating with your you get to sit down and eat with your friends. Or when you go to recess, you get to play with your friends. So that that's, that's what I remember in terms of having friendships at at Palm school.

Brittany Mendez 17:59

What do you have, like, any favorite memories while eating lunch, or, like, outside at recess, like, just anything at all that comes to mind that you can remember?

Michael Ruiz 18:10

I do remember in the fourth grade Mrs. Reyes class, um, she didn't like the kids, you know, kicking each other, if you if you kicked another student, she had this little donkey tail that she would pin on you, and if you caught you kicking another student, she'd pin that on you. And so you would be very embarrassed wearing it, depending on, you know what time of the day it was, if you did it early in the morning where you're going to have to go to lunch with the donkey, to stand in line and walk your tray to your table with the donkey tail. So that was the definitely a deterrent to kicking. I remember one time we were going to recess and we were running and to recess, and for some reason, she thought that I had kicked somebody. I told her that I didn't, and I think we had just like, tripped and fell down or something. Anyway, she decided that I was going to put the donkey tail, that she was going to put the donkey tail on me, so I had to wear that through recess and walk back to the class with it, and I was just like, man, I was so upset that she did that, and I felt like it was just totally unfair. And then I had to wear that and I was embarrassed, and that certainly made me think twice about not just not kicking, but not

even trying to be around anybody that that had been kicking. That was that's one thing that still sticks with me today, actually,

Brittany Mendez 19:54

that's so funny. Wow. Oh. Hmm, so I guess that kind of makes me curious. Like, I don't know what kind of like, how would you describe like, what kind of like, like, student kid you were when you were younger? Like, were you like, shy, or were you like, kind of like out there,

Michael Ruiz 20:20

I was probably shy in the first grade because it was my first year there, but after I felt like I got the hang of things, I didn't feel shy anymore. I actually felt like I had a lot of confidence. I remember helping other students in the class, you know, when they didn't understand something or didn't know a word, and I would try to help them, you know, with the word when we were reading out loud, helping them with math or something. And probably I do recall being in I think it was the third grade, maybe the fourth grade, where some students came from University of Texas, and they were doing some testing. And I don't know why the teacher asked me and somebody else to go to the cafeteria with the students, and they were going to just, you know, give us a test. So went and took the test, and then, I don't know, maybe about six weeks later, they came back and sent a note to my parents, and that I was reading like at an 11th grade level in the in the third or fourth grade, which, you know, oh! I was really surprised. I mean, I just thought all the students were at that level. I didn't know that I was reading a little bit better than the other ones, and I believe I attribute that to my parents had purchased this child craft encyclopedia, and they bought that for us. So you know, back in the day, in our days, there was no social media, there was no Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram, so you spent all your time wherever you found something to do. So I would just spend my time reading. And I remember reading every single one of those volumes. I don't know if it was like 13 or 14, maybe 15. I remember meeting reading the last one and the last one, I recall it being like very, very difficult. And had words that I had to really struggle to try to pronounce. Some of them. I didn't even know what they were on. Turns out that that was the parents guide book for the for the student. I look back and I think because that that encyclopedia is still at my mom's house and there in Austin, and I look back and I think, man, I was reading this, and I wonder why it was so hard. It was the parents guide book to do this child craft encyclopedia. But yeah, school, elementary school was relatively easy for me. I think in the sixth grade, I think, I believe I was the teacher's pet, because she had this, she had this yard stick that when she wanted to grab your attention because you were talking and you weren't listening, she'd walk over and kind of tap you on the shoulder or tap you on the arm to try to grab your attention. And I remember one time some kid was talking, then I grabbed the yard stick and I tapped him on the arm, and she didn't say anything at all because he stopped talking. So she let me do that a couple of times. I felt like I don't think many teachers would do that, so I must have been her teacher's pet.

Brittany Mendez 23:58

Oh, my God, that's funny, I guess, um, I'm kind of curious. I feel like, you know, throughout like, whether it's like elementary school, middle school, high school, whatever it is, or not even just like in a school setting, I feel like, um, or, I guess, like in a school setting, like, I feel like there's always like, one teacher that kind of just really kind of makes like a difference, you know. And I was wondering if, like,

any teachers throughout your time at Palm school, like really stuck out to you, or just, like, had any sort of influence on you at all.

Michael Ruiz 24:40

Wow, let's see first grade and second grade was Miss Melton. Third grade was Miss Franzetti. Fourth grade was Miss Reyes. Fifth grade was Ms. Adair, sixth grade was Miss Johnson. I mean, I have memories of every single one with little things that stick one, one that really, I guess, sticks out to me, was, was the the librarians aid in the library. Because I remember I had checked out some books and returned them, and I remember going back again to check out another book and the librarian, Mrs. Cyrus. She was, she was like military style. You did not dog ear the pages. You did not write in the books. When you pull a book out, don't try putting it back by yourself unless you knew where it goes, because you were going to get it all mixed up on the shelf. And says, I was, I was afraid of her. She was like, she was like, very, very strict. Anyhow, I went to go check out a book one time, and I recall trying to check it out. And she goes, Well, you can't check out any books because you've got one here that you haven't returned. And I was like, "I haven't?" she goes, "No, so you know what that means." And I said, "What does that mean?" She goes, "you can have to pay for the book". And I said, "Oh, okay", so you know, whenever I had, like, a nickel or a dime, then I would take it in and make a payment on that book. And I remember one time it was only like the third time. I don't know if the book was like, \$2.02 and a half dollars or something. I went in to make a payment, and she pulls up my she pulls up my little card where I was making payments, and she she says, "Well, you're all paid up". And I was thinking, "well, how can I be all paid up? You know, I've only made like, three payments". But I didn't say anything. I was just thinking to myself, and I looked over at the back and her assistant, who was a younger lady, kind of winked at me when she said that. And I was like, Oh, my God, this, you know, I was thinking. I at the time, I really didn't know what happened. And it wasn't until I thought about it, you know, maybe I don't know months later, maybe even years later, that she was the one that paid because I was wondering, why did that lady wink at me? I didn't know. I didn't know why she winked at me and but she was the one that paid it for me, and I will never forget that to this day, that the generosity of that lady doing that for me, which, you know, affected me in a way that now I when I see someone in need that can't afford something, I don't mind helping them or, you know, assist in them or paying it for them, because of the the generosity that she showed me so she had a lasting positive influence in my life. Wow.

Brittany Mendez 28:21

But yeah, I feel like there's always Yeah, Pay It Forward kind of thing. Yeah, that was very nice of her to do that. It sounds like I don't know, like books and reading were kind of like things that really revolved around you while you were, like, in elementary school,

Michael Ruiz 28:48

yes, yeah, reading was. Reading was definitely something that I like to do in elementary school.

Brittany Mendez 29:02

I if this was in the third grade and you were 8/3, grade would have been like 1965

Michael Ruiz 29:19

Yeah, would have been eight years old. I

Brittany Mendez 29:43

Okay, so this is your sixth grade picture. Uh, sixth grade, 11 years old,

Michael Ruiz 29:52

that's correct.

Brittany Mendez 29:58

So it probably would have been like nine. 1968

Michael Ruiz 30:06

that's correct, 1968

Brittany Mendez 30:13

this was fourth grade, nine years old, so that

Michael Ruiz 30:20

would have been 66, 1966

Brittany Mendez 30:35

see? Okay, so that's all of that, and then we'll come up here to your report, progress report. So this is just just, this is also, do you like to do? People usually refer refer to you as Mike or Michael, or what do you prefer?

Michael Ruiz 31:01

I don't have a preference, but most People refer to me as Mike. Okay. I i got the progress progress record instead of process.

Brittany Mendez 32:02

I Yeah. Okay, so, so we are looking at your progress record from the third grade and 1965 through 1966 I guess if you could just kind of describe what we're looking at and the notes and stuff.

Michael Ruiz 32:28

Okay, let's see. Can you make it a little bit bigger? Yeah, let me. I'll try to make mine screen bigger as well.

Brittany Mendez 32:43

I let me just open it up. What is? Is that better? Yes, that's better. Thank you.

Michael Ruiz 33:07

Yeah, it's looking at the first, let's see, first, second, third and fourth weeks looked like my reading was pretty good for the first and second nine weeks, and it went down to satisfactory the third and the fourth, everything, language, spelling, "handwriting needs to improve" on all of all of them, so I guess I

didn't have very good handwriting. It looks like, looks like I did everything else, music I did like to sing. Yeah, so everything's about, I'd say everything's about average, except for handwriting. I don't remember having a problem with handwriting, but the teacher must have had problems reading my handwriting. I'll be obviously. So, yeah, it looks like an average student there, uh, music, I guess the music teacher liked me, so she gave me excellent check marks there.

Brittany Mendez 34:39

Also I saw like, I think it was, I don't know someone else's pictures. I think there was, like a palm school choir.

Michael Ruiz 34:52

Yeah, there was a choir.

Brittany Mendez 34:54

Were you involved in that or not?

Michael Ruiz 34:59

Not, I don't recall. I remember singing. Then I think we, yeah, I think we did have, like a Christmas program at the end of the year, and I remember being in that. But I don't recall ever seeing any photos of the choir. But now that you mentioned it, I do recall singing in a Christmas program and in at Palm school.

Brittany Mendez 35:31

Do you remember like, I guess, like for music class? Was there any like, particular, like songs you guys would have to sing or learn, or was it just kind of just like whatever,

Michael Ruiz 35:46

yes, whatever the the music teacher was teaching us, That's what we would learn. I remember she did teach us some like Native American I remember one Native American song that she taught us. And I remember one, one particular song. I think I still know the words to it. It was like, I don't remember the tune, but it was like, "down by the station early in the morning. See the little puffer Billy's standing in a row. See this station master turn the little handle, chug, chug, puff, puff, off they go". Can't believe I still remember that

Brittany Mendez 36:44

that's funny. I think I remember, I guess in elementary, like in our school, I feel like the even the song now that I remember is like it was, like this one called "Hot Cross Buns" or whatever, but you would have to learn it on a recorder. Oh, kind of funny, because I kind of remember it too, like, what sticks in your head, I suppose, is funny. Yeah, let's

37:12

Yeah, let's see.

Brittany Mendez 37:24

Okay, this is the next part.

Michael Ruiz 37:33

Yeah, look at there. Mrs. Frensetti. I remember her.

Brittany Mendez 37:37

What was she like?

Michael Ruiz 37:41

Um, let's say she was a tall, um, of course, when you're young, the teachers look old. So she was probably in her, I don't know, maybe mid 30s, late 30s, I'm guessing, enjoy her class. I don't have like, let's see too, too many memories in that class, but I do remember her name for sure. Let me see arithmetic. Oh, that's just the conditions of the book. Looks like, looks like I did satisfactory work, attendance, height, yeah, I don't, oh, I know. I don't see any grades on there, because the grades are underneath that card that's stapled to the front.

Brittany Mendez 38:47

Oh, I see, I see, oh, yes, you're right. Um, we didn't want to unstable it. I think, um, oh, I was gonna ask something, um, oh, I guess I'm also kind of curious, like, like, I know palm school is mainly where a lot of like, like, Mexican students would go, and so I was kind of curious as to, like, what I don't know, I guess, like, what were the teachers like?

Michael Ruiz 39:26

What were the teachers like, yeah, like,

Brittany Mendez 39:28

or, I guess, like, sorry, I phrased that in poorly. Like, were the like, were the teachers also Latino? Or was it just, kind of just like a mixture of people?

Michael Ruiz 39:38

Yeah, the teachers, let's see, first grade teacher was white, second grade teacher was white, third grade was white, fourth grade was Latina, Miss Reyes, fifth grade was Mr. Odair, she was white, and six great. Miss Johnson, she was African American. So, yeah, it was mostly white. The choir, the music teacher was white, and the Swenson, the PE teacher was also white. But yeah, we did have, of course, you know, the custodian was Mexican American, and then another maintenance guy was African American. Mr. Kimball was African American, and Mr. Martinez, the custodian was Mexican American, and then Miss Cyrus, the librarian, was white, and her assistant was white.

Brittany Mendez 40:48

I'm just kind of curious

40:52

see

Brittany Mendez 41:03

and then I think this is just like the last page.

Michael Ruiz 41:07

The back page where the parents have to sign, looks like it. My mom signed it number one, my dad signed number two, and my mom signed number three. And oh, and I was so happy to see that back page where it said promoted to fourth grade. I was always worried. Oh, I got promoted. Yay, although I didn't, you know, I didn't, I think I did pretty well in elementary at least from my perspective, I did. It was never difficult at all. Um, I guess that's why I really enjoyed it so much, because it wasn't difficult,

Brittany Mendez 41:57

yeah, um, also I'm like, curious. Like, I think I

42:07

I think I

Brittany Mendez 42:09

like, I know you filled out a print of you beforehand, and I think you, your mom was a hair stylist, and your dad worked at a, like, at a furniture furniture company, is that correct?

Michael Ruiz 42:23

That's correct, yeah.

Brittany Mendez 42:27

Sorry. I was just kind of, oh my god. Sorry. I guess I was just kind of curious, like, like, I know you mentioned how, like, you know, you took that test where it was like, Oh, you're reading, like, at 11th grade level, your parents, you know, they like the the book that you're talking about, the encyclopedia that was, like, at your home, like, I was just kind of like, wondering, like, what kind of, like, not pressure, but like, kind of, like, like, what did your parents, like, inform you about, like, school and stuff, and like, I guess, how did they react? Like, you know, like, they're like, Oh my God. Like, you know, you you read at a 11th grade level. And like, like, you're doing, like, very good in school and stuff.

Michael Ruiz 43:18

Yeah, the family was always encouraging us to to pursue education. I remember in my uncles, Dan Ruiz, uncle, buddy Ruiz, you know they, they would encourage us to, you know, you're going to go to, you're going to go to college, you're going to, you're going to finish Elementary, you're going to go to junior high, you're going to go to high school, you're going to graduate, and then you're going to go to college, even at, you know, in the third grade, that was my motivation, that I knew that's what I was going to do. I mean, that's just what I was going to do. And I guess because that my reading was pretty good back then, in school wasn't difficult. I figured, okay, it was, it's, you know, it's going to be easy because, you know, it's because so far so good. No, no problems at all. So my, my, my dad went to he graduated from Austin High School. It's unfortunate that he didn't have a chance to to go to college. Think he would have really excelled in, you know, some professional job my mom, she grew up on the farm, so she completed second grade. I think she had a little bit of third grade education, but I don't

think she finished the third grade, so she didn't have much of an education. But, you know, they my dad's side of the family certainly encourage us to go to school and graduate and go to college, that that was always implied, and that was something that that we, my brother and I were planning on doing, of course, you know, they because they both had to work there wasn't a whole lot of time for them to help us with homework and stuff, because they both worked all day long, and then they come home, and you know, my mom would have to cook, my dad would go to his second job. So, but even even in spite of that, we were still motivated to finish high school and then go to the University of Texas, of course, because it was right there, you know, it was there in Austin. So, very convenient. Yeah,

Brittany Mendez 45:59

that's, that's good, that there was a lot of like encouragement and stuff, really quickly. Okay, you said that is because your your father's name was Jim, correct.

Michael Ruiz 46:29

James Vincent, James, oh, okay, but he went by Jim.

Brittany Mendez 46:36

Okay, so, James Reese, I you. So your mom signature, your father signature, and then your mom signature, that's correct, okay, um, What was your mom's name?

Michael Ruiz 47:29

Caroline or Carolina.

Brittany Mendez 47:42

Carolina Ruiz?

Michael Ruiz 47:44

Her maiden name was terrazas, and her married name was Ruiz, Ter

Brittany Mendez 47:55

Terraza, S, T, E r, E S, S, A, S or No, T, E R R A o t, e r r a s, s z,

Michael Ruiz 48:04

T, E, R, R, A Z, A S, take out the two S's and put a Z, Z A

Brittany Mendez 48:12

T, E R R A Z, A S,

Michael Ruiz 48:14

That's correct. Okay, all right, can you see me now, oh my god, I could see you. I just I took out the USB cable and put it in a different slot I've been troubleshooting over here. Oh my god, I could see you when we were doing this.

Brittany Mendez 48:35

Also, it's interesting that your mom just signed as Miss James Reese instead of her, her name,

Michael Ruiz 48:42

yeah, Mrs. James Ruiz. I mean, you know, that's how it was back then you you gave you respected, you respected the husband, and so you signed your name as Mrs. James Ruiz, you know.

Brittany Mendez 49:01

Yeah. Okay, and then this,

Michael Ruiz 49:06

yeah, I remember that thing.

Brittany Mendez 49:12

Can you tell me what I am looking at?

Michael Ruiz 49:15

This is a, I believe I made this in the third grade. I believe this was a the, I'm not sure which teacher or I don't know if there was like an arts and crafts or something, but I remember, in particular, they told us, you're going to make a a bowl, or whatever it is you want to make, and I we're going to put it in this kiln, and after you're done with it, we're going to put it in this kiln, and it's going to turn the clay really, really hard and and you'll get it back, you know, as something that you can take with you. So I was really proud of it. I mean. I remember getting the the clay and just rolling it into these like pencil sized little I guess, for lack of a better word, they were like pencil sized and they were about the length of a pencil, and then you just kind of stack them up until you had the size that you wanted, the height that you wanted, on the bowl, and then you were just kind of rub them together so that you wouldn't see any any marks between each of the pencil size clay that you were laying together. And I don't know, I just know that when it came back out of the kiln, I thought, Is that mine? It sure didn't look like that when it went in. I mean, it wasn't all glazy. Instead, it was just clay. And I thought it was definitely a lot smoother than, than what it what it looks there. So it was really surprised when it came back. But, you know, I'm like, Oh, well, okay, this is what I made. Of course, it didn't have any of the the glaze, or the any of the black shading that you see there when it went in. I guess that's all part of the the heat process. But yeah, that that's what we made it in one of our arts and crafts class there at Palm school and had it all these years.

Brittany Mendez 51:38

Well, it's crazy that you kept it like I also, that's pretty neat that you guys, like, did, like a little arts and crafts projects like that. Like, I don't even think I've ever even seen like a, what does it like a? What is it called to get a, the kiln?

Michael Ruiz 51:58

Yeah, the kiln. Yeah, that was there. That was, I guess, one of the teachers had one there. I remember it was at the school, because we would walk our our project over to it, and it was like this, kind of like a storage container, maybe about three feet wide, two feet deep, and maybe about three feet tall. And we would just put our our things in there. And the teacher would put it in and stack it up, but we got to see

where it was going, and it would that thing would get really, really hot. She told us we never actually saw it, but it would get really, really hot and stay there. I don't know I remember how long, but I'm guessing several hours and then, don't recall how long afterwards it took before we got it back, but that, there's the final product.

Brittany Mendez 52:59

Did you what other like, did you guys have any like, like, school, like, events, festivals, or anything like that. Because I also know, or, like, I heard that basic or the palm School Park was also, like, a really big part of the community and stuff like that. So I don't like the school would ever do stuff there, or just just in general, I guess if there was any sort of events, yeah,

Michael Ruiz 53:30

there was a big every year we had this thing called Mayfest, and it was at the end of the year where the students would learn several dances throughout the year, and then they would perform them at the end of the year they would there was this thing called a Maypole. I'm not sure if you're familiar with that, but you know, you got this pole. It was in the tennis courts there at Palm school in this pole in the middle. And there were these long, I guess they were like some type of material, different colors material, and the students would grab each student was assigned one of those long pieces of material, and then they'd start the music. And then one student would go over. They would go, one student, some students, half the students would go clockwise, the other half would go counterclockwise. And as you passed one student, you would take that long piece of cloth, and go over that student, and then you would go under the next student, and then you would go over the top the next one, and then you would go under the next one, till finally, at the end of the song, you had this Maypole, and it was, you know, real nice long weave different colors, kind of like a braid, so to speak, but very colorful braid, and it was kind of cool to see that that was always a big deal. I remember doing tumbling because I was in a I would take tumbling after school at the Austin Recreation Center, the PE teacher there at Austin at Palm school, Mrs. Swinson, encouraged us to get into tumbling. So my brother and I would after school. Sometimes she would take us to the Austin Athletic Center and drop us off, and then we would do our tumbling classes. So I remember one year, I was in the in the tumbling performance, and I remember doing like, a whole bunch of handsprings, front handsprings. I think I broke my record that year and did like five in a row. And I was just like, really, really excited and happy that the first three were pretty good, but the last two were, you know, not the not the best, but at least I was able to get through there was another guy named Frutoso Roberto, who was really, really good, kind of he didn't even take tumbling classes, but he was just naturally really good in his tumbling. I remember that, so I was trying to compete with him. But yeah, we did tumbling. Of course. They had these races that they would do, and then they would give out these ribbons, just all kinds of activities, kick ball. A lot of stuff happened in in, in the back there of palm school, and that park there that was a really cool place to be. And of course, in the summertime, they had the swimming pool, so kids would go there and go swimming, just hang out at the park. There's a big, huge oak tree in the back that where the kids I still when I drive by, I 35 and East Cesar Chavez, I look towards palm school without fail every single time, because I have such great memories of that school. And I'm not kidding you when I say without fail, I look over there, and I'm sure my wife gets tired of me saying, "honey, look, there's where I went to school. There's upstairs on the second floor is where the beehive was inside of our fifth grade class. And you know, there's in the back where we used to go next to the oak tree and pick up acorns and

throw them at our friends and hug the tree and run around” and, yeah, just, just wonderful memories of palm school, without a doubt. In fact, I still have, I haven't had one, maybe in, I don't know, two or three years, but dreams of being at Palm school, you know, not, not just being inside, but usually on the on the perimeter where that there's still that structure in the back right there on the south bound feeder Road, made out of stone of where kids used to play. That structure still there. Think it had like a men's and women's bathroom on either side, and it was made of all stone, yeah, I have, I have dreams of being there. Have dreams of walking in the back of the school where the we used to play kickball, yeah, even, you know, as like, two or three years ago. So that's, that's, you know, obviously it must have had a huge impact on me if I still have dreams about it,

Brittany Mendez 58:43

yeah, um, I'm like, I, you know, I know they're like, you know, this whole project and stuff is like, so that the building can be preserved, you know, what would it mean for you to like, like you said, you know, you whenever you're driving by on I 35 you look, you're like, oh my like, there's a physical place where it's like, Oh my God. Look, that's where I went to school, even if it's not a school now, like, you still have the physical space. Like, I don't know, how would it make you feel, you know, like, if they were like, just like, no, like, we're like, this building is not going to be anymore, or whatever. Like, how would that make you feel?

Michael Ruiz 59:22

Yeah, I would be really heart broken if that building were to be torn down. And, you know, if they build high rises, oh, it doesn't make any difference what they build. It's just, I would be heartbroken if they were to ever destroy that building, because that just I'm no, I'm sure I'm not the only one that really has wonderful memories of that building, but like a ton of people went to that school, and I'm sure there's lots of great memories of not just being at the school, but being at the park in the summer times or whatever. You know, on a weekend or something. Yeah, I, in fact, I love that school so much that when I was in junior high, started when I left the sixth grade at Palm and I went to Martin junior high, which was only a block away from where I live. I remember in the seventh grade missing palm so much that there was like two or three times that I would walk after seventh grade, I would walk all the way to palm school just to be inside of the school, because I missed it so much. And I remember doing that until one time, teacher says, “What are you doing here?” And I said, “Well, I'm just, I was just going to use the bathroom.” “Well, you need to hurry up and go home, because, you know, schools get ready to close.” And I was like, okay, so that was probably the last time that I that I went to palm school. But, I mean, that's how much I missed it. Actually leave the junior high and walk to palm school just to be inside the school and have that feeling of being inside palm with the real tall ceilings, the wooden floors, the real long, tall windows, the smell of the school, you know, walk into the cafeteria, just, You know, I just, I really loved that school.

Brittany Mendez 1:01:26

That wow, I'm, I'm glad that you had, like, a lot of good memories and stuff and whatnot. And, yeah, that's very nice. And almost also, like, you remember a lot, so, like, like, you said, like, obviously, like, you know, those moments were precious and stuff and whatnot. Wow, that's so nice. Yeah, I third grade would have been,

Michael Ruiz 1:02:18

I'm sorry say again,

Brittany Mendez 1:02:20

Third grade, you would have

1:02:24

seen okay here.

Brittany Mendez 1:02:39

1965, I design so I guess you would just call it, just like a clay bowl,

Michael Ruiz 1:03:09

okay? And that thing, that thing came out so weird that it almost looks like something made in prehistoric times.

Brittany Mendez 1:03:25

It kind of does.

Michael Ruiz 1:03:28

It's like, you know, I've been to some of these museums, like, you know, you see some stuff, oh, 2000 BC, that's what this one, this one looks more like 3500 BC,

Brittany Mendez 1:03:41

nope. It's just Mike's third grade project. Yeah, that's cool that I think that's really cool that you that y'all did that.

1:03:51

That was yeah, that was

Brittany Mendez 1:03:55

okay. And then Okay, so now

Speaker 1 1:04:00

i Okay, so

Brittany Mendez 1:04:03

I guess these, these three papers, kind of coincide. So you said, was your uncle? Correct?

Michael Ruiz 1:04:17

Yes, good. Dan Ruiz, he was very involved in the community there in Austin. And yeah, unfortunately, I I remember him working for the state of Texas. Unfortunately, he had a heart attack and died at a young age. So they decided to name because, because he was so involved in the community, and they

decided to name a library after him. I. Yes. Can you still hear me if I am on another on, yes, okay, cool. Just trying to look up more information on Uncle Dan. And then,

Brittany Mendez 1:05:59

oh, and then I have this,

Michael Ruiz 1:06:06

yes, this is his. Yeah, I remember he. He was running for justice of the peace, precinct four, and I remember doing lots of campaigning for him, going door to door, trying to get people registered to vote, passing out flyers and preparation prior to the the voting date, putting up Signs, small signs, big signs, four by eight, plywood signs just in strategic places, trying to get people to go out and vote for him. Yeah, I spent a lot of time doing campaigning he ran for justice of the peace, his brother, little bit older brother, uncle, buddy Ruiz ran for state representative, and then, of course, I did campaigning for Richard Moya and Gonzalo Barrientos, Gus Garcia, all of those Mexican Americans that were in the community that wanted to really help the Hispanic community there in Austin. So this was one of the bumper stickers that he had. In fact, I was in Austin last weekend, and I had a second one, and I took it and gave it to my cousin, his son, who didn't have one, so he was really excited to see a bump bumper sticker, just like this.

Brittany Mendez 1:08:02

So I guess, like, during, okay, so during this time, while, you know, you said you worked on a lot of different campaigns for a lot of, you know, important people in community and stuff, I guess, like during this time period, like, how old were you, I guess, like, how did you end up, kind of, in this and this kind of side of things?

Michael Ruiz 1:08:30

I didn't hear the last part,

Brittany Mendez 1:08:31

I guess. How did you end up, like, on, like, you know, working on campaigns and stuff.

Michael Ruiz 1:08:37

Oh, yeah, well, that's the that was around. Otzi, I would say the quote, unquote, Chicano Movement in Austin was probably starting around the late 60s, early 70s, and that's when the Austin Chicano huelga happened, and that's when folks like Uncle Dan, Dan Ruiz, buddy, Ruiz Gus, Garcia, Richard Moya, John Trevino, city council, they were all starting to get into politics and say, You know what? We need representatives in all these different areas to represent our community in East Austin. So, you know, once I started campaigning for my uncle Dan Ruiz and my uncle buddy Ruiz, which I believe that was probably I was probably around in junior high school. So that would have been, you know, 13, 14, 15 years old, 16, when I was doing this, probably 13 through 17, until I graduated from high school, I did lots of, you know, block walking. I mean, tons of block walking, just going house to house, like I mentioned, trying to make sure people were registered to vote, getting on the phone and calling people to make sure that they were going to go vote and that they were registered to vote, passing out leaflets at the you know, from house to house, encouraging people to go to a campaign rally where they would,

you know, try to register them there. So making signs. And I spent a lot of time making signs, those silk screen signs for, you know, not just for Dan or for Buddy, but, you know, for Richard Moya and John Trevino and all the others at that time that were, that were running for some, some kind of a government office.

Brittany Mendez 1:10:55

Oh, wow. So you're, like, really young, getting into, like, I guess, like, the political, political field and or political world and stuff. And, you know, you said you spent a lot of time, just like walking around and, you know, you know, basically campaigning and stuff, I guess, what are, what were some things that you noticed, or whatever, like, while Dan Greece, or, I guess uncle Dan was like, running and stuff and like, while we're going out and talking to people and stuff.

Michael Ruiz 1:11:29

Yeah, I recall, I recall, I remember, you know, sometimes they would put us at a street corner holding up a sign. I remember being right there on the north bound feeder lane of I 35 and East Cesar Chavez, holding up a sign, you know. And the things that stick with me are probably the the not so good things, like bunch of guys in a vehicle going by, white guys shooting me the finger because I had a Dan Ruiz sign that I was holding up and, you know, like, we're not going to vote for him, you know, stuff like that. That's the kind of stuff that you remember. Remember newspaper articles, they were not very positive, talking about my uncle, Buddy Ruiz. You know, I remember hearing talk about when we had the Austin Chicano huelga rally at the state capitol. And it was, you know, tons of people there. And then we walk down Congress Avenue towards east Chavez Street. And I remember hearing talk about, you know, people saying, Oh, these guys are communist, you know, stuff like that, just lot of negative stuff. Maybe it's just part of the the politics of it. But I remember, yeah, I remember a lot of the negative stuff. Of course, I remember the wins too. And we did, we did have wins with Richard Moya, Gonzalo, Barrientos, John Trevino, Gus Garcia and those guys.

Brittany Mendez 1:13:29

So, okay, so, so, essentially, you made this. I'm sorry you made the bumper sticker Correct?

Michael Ruiz 1:13:37

I didn't make the bumper sticker. That one was actually printed by a company there Austech Duplicators, Duplicators, the signs that we made were either silk screen, which were probably maybe, I would say maybe, two and a half feet by foot and a that you could put in a yard. And other ones that we made were actually four by eight sheets of ply wood where we have a stencil and we would paint the lettering on on the wood.

Brittany Mendez 1:14:21

Well, yeah, you were really young, like 13, 14, whatever,

Michael Ruiz 1:14:26

yeah, when it first started, yes, oh,

Brittany Mendez 1:14:37

yeah, the same. I I guess I'll go here, and then I'll go here. Okay, so there's this photo.

Michael Ruiz 1:14:58

Yeah, this. This is, this was kind of like the Austin Chicano huelga, which was a big deal back then, when the workers that were working at economy furniture were striking against the company for better wages, vacation time, just, you know, better working conditions. And so they decided to go out on strike in 1969 that lasted about three years, very, very long strike, which was really, really challenging for the Mexican Americans who went down on strike because, you know, they needed income, so some of them had to find other jobs when they went on strike. The the the company kept appealing. The the company did not want to recognize them as union. They finally they had to after, I believe it was three years they finally did. So they a lot of a lot of a lot of sacrifice was, was done by, you know, the big players in the union, like Lencho Hernandez, Frank Ramirez, a cowboy. Real name was Margarito Saucedo but he was known as Cowboy, and Greg Mojica, a lot of other players, my dad, Jim Ruiz, and my grandfather, Victor Ruiz, his dad. They both work there. So, yeah, that's this. This is kind of after the fact. This was just like a reunion, like a, I don't know, 30 what, 33 year reunion, I guess. Yeah, 33 year after, after the after, they finally settled. So this is kind of a get together. I think Gonzalo Barrientos hosted this. We were starting to lose a lot of the strikers, so it was nice to it was nice to have something like that in 2004

Brittany Mendez 1:17:44

Yeah. Was your dad able to attend?

Michael Ruiz 1:17:48

Yes, okay, Dad was there. Unfortunately, my grandfather was has already passed away by then, some of the other strikers had passed away by then,

Brittany Mendez 1:18:02

yeah. Also, don't worry, I will fix this later. I'm just writing down notes, and then we have this, yeah,

Michael Ruiz 1:18:14

this was just like the pollsters International Union that was the this strikers were UIU locals, International Union. Their number was local 456, and that was just one of the little key chains that they could pass out to the strikers, or, you know, folks who wanted to support the strikers. And yeah, this here is a button that the strikers would wear similar just to, you know, kind of encourage other folks to get involved so they could see these buttons and see that they Were part of the Union, the pollsters, International Union.

Michael Ruiz 1:19:29

And this is uncle, buddy Ruiz. He was running for state representative, and like the other campaigns that did a lot, a lot of campaigning with him, as for him as well, I remember these, you know, back then, I mean, it was kind of cool to have a picture. Uh, somebody you knew on a button. Now, you know, you can print on anything, but back then that was, to me, that was kind of cool to have something like that

Brittany Mendez 1:20:12

also. So what was it like for you, like, two of your uncles were, like, ran for, like, positions and stuff like, what was that like for you to see, like, you know, people that you know running for like, thing, like, important positions and stuff?

Michael Ruiz 1:20:29

Yeah, it was. Makes you proud that you know, that you not only know someone, but it's a family member that's running for a position like that that wants to help the community better, the community, you know, a folks that really need aid in whatever areas it is, and to be a representative of their of the community. So it was like, kind of cool, you know, like, wow. You know, people would say, oh, that's your uncle running, yeah, that's my uncle. Wow, that's really cool. Get a lot of support. And, yeah, I just, I thought it was really neat, definitely. And

Brittany Mendez 1:21:11

I guess like them running, or anything like that, did that like influence you in any way or like, like, it kind of just like, oh yeah. I was like, like, you know, cool to see and stuff. But I guess, like in any other areas today, and a

Michael Ruiz 1:21:27

positive sense, it, it, it, it influenced me that I needed to get out there, that I needed to to help the community, that I needed to participate, that I needed to do something to help the community, just like they did and, you know, and I ended up doing that. I was a member of the Society of Mexican American engineers and scientists, the Houston chapter here in Houston, while I was working at NASA. I did that for, oh, man, I was probably a member for over 20 years. Served, as you know, the president of the chapter, the Treasurer, the Secretary scholarships. Our main goal was to raise money to provide scholarships for students that didn't have the money to go to school, but, you know, we wanted to get their foot into the door to give them a chance. So we would raise money to provide them scholarships to at least for their freshman year of college, just to help them get in. So I did that for many, many years. I did a lot of outreach for NASA, going to the different schools, talking to the students about getting into STEM careers, you know, talking to them and encouraging them, you know, to graduate from high school and go to college. We started learning that, hey, you know, some kids aren't going to graduate, are not going to do very well in high school, so we need to start them younger. So we started going to junior high schools, talking to the kids and encouraging them there. And then we're like, hey, you know, we need to even go to elementary schools to start them at a very, very young age. So I did a lot of lot of outreach, a lot of outreach to to schools to help, you know, encourage them. I mean, because education was always important to me, and learning from family members that, you know, giving back to the community was very important. So I spent a lot of my years while working at NASA doing that. And then, of course, what better, what better entity to have like NASA? I mean, everybody knows who NASA is, and kids get excited about NASA stuff. So to be able to represent the Hispanic community at a predominantly African American or Hispanic school and and go over there and tell them, Look, you know, if I can do this, you can do it too. So, you know, using, using my my job, working at NASA was, was very, very beneficial. And, you know, and I owe a lot to NASA for allowing me to to be able to do that, to to reach out to students,

Brittany Mendez 1:24:32

yeah, well, that's that's really cool and really important. Yeah, so what was your main job at NASA?

Michael Ruiz 1:24:53

My main job at NASA, I worked at NASA for let's say I worked. It for 42 years. I'm retired now, but my main job was navigation systems, working on different navigation systems for space vehicles. The first one I worked on was the space shuttle navigation system, just kind of analyzing the data that came back from the navigation system, making sure everything was working okay, and also working on X 38 navigation system, which never really, you know, we did a lot of tests, flights and stuff, but it never was really attached to the International Space Station like we wanted it to be and flown back down to the ground. Let's see. I worked on the Orion navigation system, some lunar Mars stuff that we did some tests with and in Arizona. But the last thing I worked on was the Orion they had a camera that was going to be used to to to be able to, you know, detect where you are in space. And we had an experiment on board the International Space Station where the astronaut would go into the cupola of the space station, that's the little, kind of like round area that you could see towards the Earth, pointed towards the Earth. And so we would have them set up a camera and point towards the stars, so that we could use the stars as navigation. The software would look at the stars and kind of determine where you were in space. It's really, really impressive software to do that, you know? Yeah. And so I remember, right after I retired, my supervisor, Tim had sent me a photo, and I'm like, wow, that's a cool photo from the Orion spacecraft. And he said, that's actual, you know, that's the, that's the photos from the cameras that you guys used and analyzed and in the lab and worked on. So that was really, really cool to see that, even after I retired, you know, photo that was really neat.

Brittany Mendez 1:27:20

Wow, I feel like you've done so much. That's crazy. I'm assuming this is also just like another,

Michael Ruiz 1:27:33

yeah, that's just another button that they had. Upholsters International Union of North America, the AFL CIO American Federation of Labor. Yeah, somebody was a shop steward. So I don't recall exactly what that meant, but I think it was that you were important because you were on a button.

Speaker 1 1:28:00

Let's put that for now, okay, oh, this,

Michael Ruiz 1:28:13

yeah, this is the book from Palm school. Maybe this is the one I lost, that that very sweet lady paid for for me. It

Brittany Mendez 1:28:33

probably is, honestly,

Michael Ruiz 1:28:38

yeah, but if you open it up, it you can see the the inside this palm school, it's got the date on it, very, very old book. But it was, I mean, I mean, look at there even as even being, you know, second grade,

third grade whenever. I don't know when I acquired this, but I was already interested in science, so yeah, worked out really well for me.

Brittany Mendez 1:29:11

Wow, I see everything in your life connecting, I don't know, after watching this or looking at this book, I was like science. NASA,

Michael Ruiz 1:29:21

Good little theme there, huh?

Brittany Mendez 1:29:25

Yeah, that's funny. I really wonder if this was the book that you lost

Michael Ruiz 1:29:28

me too. I don't know. And, and then, you know, I guess engineers, maybe not all of them, don't have the best handwriting, like doctors, so that's why my report card said "needs to improve".

Brittany Mendez 1:29:48

Okay, so I guess we'll move on to these subset of photos, because I'm pretty sure they're all from the same thing. Correct. Yes, that's correct. Okay? And then so. I'll write it on one. Okay, okay, so, okay, if you could tell me what all these pictures,

Michael Ruiz 1:30:09

Or like these look like. They're pictures from an award ceremony that the Austin Chicano huelga was hosting and and in this photo here, the man standing closer to the camera has an award in his hand, and I believe his name was gray. Mujica, Greg, uh huh. G R, believe, yeah. G, R, E, y, I think it was m, U, j, i, c, a, and then to his left is my grandfather, Victor Ruiz, who they were presenting an award to. It didn't had to do with the with the Austin Chicano Huelga, the strike striker, and let me see if I can get a I'm gonna try to Yeah. Looks like you blew it up for me. Thank you so much. And actually, to the left of Victor Ruiz, yes, it's Lencho Hernandez, and he was very, also very involved in the strike. How do you l, e n, C, H O,

Brittany Mendez 1:31:40

L, E, N, C, H, O,

Michael Ruiz 1:31:42

Lencho Hernandez, and then yeah, and then next to him was Frank Ramirez, Frank, and then quote Pancho Ramirez, because that's how most folks knew him. Yeah. And then I can't really tell who's to the right of him, because it's a little too dark, yeah, but to the to the left of Grey Mojica, the lady sitting right there. That's Caroline Ruiz, aka mom. Recognize her. And then, of course, I can't see the person sitting next, yeah, they're cut off. Yes, it kind of cut off. But, yeah, that's in that photo. Says it's an award ceremony. And this looks like it's at this appears to be at St Julia's church, because we the circus, had a lot of meetings at St Julius church.

Brittany Mendez 1:33:06

I'm assuming it's in Austin, in East Austin. Do you perhaps maybe know what year this would have been?

Michael Ruiz 1:33:17

Ooh, man, that would have,

Brittany Mendez 1:33:21

if not, that's totally fine. Yeah,

Michael Ruiz 1:33:23

I would, I would be guessing. I could give you plus or minus 10 years, but I would be guessing,

Brittany Mendez 1:33:30

yeah, it's okay. Okay. Also, so your mom, is it C, A, R, o, l, I N, E, or is it with an A? God, Olina?

Michael Ruiz 1:33:39

It depends. I mean, she when you know she had her, hair styling business, she had Caroline, but I believe her, her birth name was Carolina,

Brittany Mendez 1:33:52

okay. Do you want me to use an E or an A?

Michael Ruiz 1:33:56

I would just leave the E, okay.

Brittany Mendez 1:34:01

Okay.

Michael Ruiz 1:34:19

This just looks like, I believe that's probably this same time there. I don't I don't record. I recognize two of the individuals, but I don't remember the name of one of them. The other two, I don't recognize. It's okay. So the one starting from left to right, I don't remember, remember this gentleman's name, but the one, that one there, that's Jim Ruiz, aka dad.

Brittany Mendez 1:34:59

Mm. Wait this person right here?

Michael Ruiz 1:35:01

Yeah, that's my dad, Jim Ruiz. See now, if I went to the strikers list, I could figure out what the name is of the gentleman on the far left, but I don't have that in front of me.

Brittany Mendez 1:35:22

I Okay, so this was also see,

Michael Ruiz 1:35:30

but I remember Schlitz was the beer Mexican Americans drink back then. I'm not sure why, but that was the beer if you had a beard, it better be a Schlitz that was sitting there on the table. You see it? Yeah.

Brittany Mendez 1:35:51

Okay. Wait, so your dad is this person right here? That's correct. Okay, Schlitz, I get. Okay, do is it s, H or Schlitz?

Michael Ruiz 1:36:10

I think it was S, C, H, L, i, t, z, yeah. All right.

1:36:39

Yeah,

Michael Ruiz 1:36:42

oh, and I just confirmed by looking at that picture on the chair that it is at St Julius church.

Brittany Mendez 1:36:48

Yeah. So this is at the same event. It looks like it. I

1:37:05

Yeah,

Michael Ruiz 1:37:08

I know it's the same place, but I'm I don't know if it's the same event. I don't know if they would have had a beer there, but it could have

Brittany Mendez 1:37:20

okay, just to make sure. Okay, so this is gray. This is your father, correct. That's my grandfather there. I'm sorry, your grandfather, correct. And then here, the person with the hand against their mouth is your father. That's correct. Okay, see here's this.

Michael Ruiz 1:38:00

Yeah, this one luckily has a date on it. This is number 73 Yeah, this looks like I don't recognize the person, but it's definitely a worker at economy furniture, with the furniture factory. I

Brittany Mendez 1:38:38

Same. Same for this one, also, yeah, same thing. Was economy furniture on the east side also, or where is it located? Somewhere else, I'm sorry, say again. Oh, okay, was economy furniture, economy furniture on the east side, or was it somewhere else? Oh,

Michael Ruiz 1:39:06

the economy furniture originally was at the intersection. It was in East Austin, and it was at the intersection of Cesar Chavez and Fifth Street. And they were there for a few years, and then they moved to North Austin, near the intersection of Burnet road and 183 and three, right off of, and I don't, you know, this is how much I was involved in it. I still remember the address, 9315 McNeil road. Oh, my God. So um, this photo here, however, is when it was at 9315, McNeil road you this looks like, again, a photo at

Brittany Mendez 1:40:35

St Julius, at

Michael Ruiz 1:40:37

St Julius church, and it might have been during a striker meeting. I don't recognize the two priests there, and I do not recognize anyone in the audience, either. I there was one priest in particular, Father Joe Zanodes, who was very, very supportive of of the Austin Chicano strikers, very supportive of them. And he helped them quite a bit. And I think one of the things was using The Church as a place to have meetings and

Brittany Mendez 1:41:47

uh, Father, This,

Michael Ruiz 1:41:50

yeah, this looks like the same award ceremony as that one, with my grandfather in the middle gray Mojica on the left, and Lencho standing. This one is not of the same day, but it too, looks like it's at St Julius church. There was probably another striker meeting on the left hand side was a union representative that assisted. His name is Jimmy Johns.

Brittany Mendez 1:43:01

Jimmy John's. Jimmy John's

Michael Ruiz 1:43:03

the union representative.

1:43:08

And

Michael Ruiz 1:43:13

in the middle again is gray mojica, and then on the right is Lencho Hernandez. It looks like some kind of striker Meeting at St Julia's church I yeah, let's see here.

Brittany Mendez 1:44:15

I could try to make it bigger.

Michael Ruiz 1:44:17

Yeah, this one looks like another striker meeting, but let's see. Thank you. Trying to see if I recognize anyone. Right off hand I think there's only one person, but I can't remember his name, it's okay. Otherwise, it's just another striker meeting at St Julians church. I. Work. This looks like, looks like the same award ceremony at St Julia's church.

Brittany Mendez 1:45:31

Oh, kind of just like a different angle. It looks like a different angle.

Michael Ruiz 1:45:51

Yeah. and it looks like the two priests who are, I'm guessing one of them is father Joe Zenodas, but I'm I'm not 100% sure. I'm only guessing because he was very involved with them. So I don't know who those two priests are. Okay? And then gray Mojica standing,

Brittany Mendez 1:46:13

and that's your grandfather, correct?

Michael Ruiz 1:46:17

My grandfather, Victor Ruiz, sitting. And in the back to his right, the lady to the right that one is his wife, Victor Ruiz, his wife and my grandma, Jenny. Jennie Ruiz,

Brittany Mendez 1:47:10

is it J E n n i or j e n n y,

Michael Ruiz 1:47:14

j e n n, I, E I, yeah,

1:47:28

let me open this one up. I

Michael Ruiz 1:47:44

Okay, so I believe trying, I think the guy on the left is Andres Sonica. I saw him in another photo. I couldn't remember his name. I think that's him. This is, I think these were some of the officers of the the strikers. Okay, that's because I see, I see my dad in there. I see gray Mojica. I see Ramon Zamilpa On the far right. So this is a, don't know who the person is to the left of, yeah, unknown. And then gray Mojica again, and then Jim Ruiz. And then, don't recognize the young man there, it's unknown, and then the farthest right would be Ramon Zamilpa,

Brittany Mendez 1:49:09

That's?

Michael Ruiz 1:49:14

Go ahead and type it out, and I'll look at it, and I'll tell you, I think I need to see it.

Brittany Mendez 1:49:18

You said, some key said, M,

Michael Ruiz 1:49:21

I L P, A, C, Z, A, M, I L M, I L P, A, put an S there instead of the Z. Oh,

Brittany Mendez 1:49:36

some, some NEPA,

Michael Ruiz 1:49:40

no, I think it's the Z. Ill have to look that up. Maybe I can do a quick look. I.

1:50:01

Let's see.

Michael Ruiz 1:50:04

Yeah, that's why I wanted to to have the photo so I could do a quick look. Yeah, it's a Z. Well, wait a minute, that's somebody that's on LinkedIn, and I know he's not on LinkedIn.

1:50:31

Let's see. Let me change it to

Michael Ruiz 1:50:44

Yeah, it's a s. It says Zamilpa was a past president of a locals at pollsters International Union, yeah, so I think those were some of the officers of the Union. Believe I was correct. I Okay, this is uh another photo at economy furniture showing the one of the ladies that was working there.

Brittany Mendez 1:51:29

This looks like that same photo.

Michael Ruiz 1:51:57

Yeah, it's with the same meeting. yeah, I don't recognize any of those folks? Yeah, it looks like it's they were at the same meeting,

Brittany Mendez 1:52:08

so just like another striker meeting.

Michael Ruiz 1:52:16

Yeah, same it's the same date, so I'm guessing it's the same same meeting.

Brittany Mendez 1:52:24

Yeah, this is Jonathan

Michael Ruiz 1:52:26

Jimmy John's and Lencho Hernandez. Yeah, st Julia's church.

Brittany Mendez 1:52:41

Also don't worry, I'm gonna fix everything later on.

Michael Ruiz 1:52:44

I'm just typing it out. That's interesting. We are exactly looking at photos from 50 years ago, 75

Brittany Mendez 1:52:55

Oh, wow. I didn't even realize that

Michael Ruiz 1:52:59

this is look like some more guys inside of the economy furniture. I don't recognize either one of them. You and another meeting at St Julius church. Click, the same meeting, January, 75 i and this is also probably at the at the award ceremony. Oh

Brittany Mendez 1:53:55

yeah, let's see, because that's

Michael Ruiz 1:53:59

Frank Pancho Ramirez standing up,

Brittany Mendez 1:54:02

and they're wearing the same thing.

Michael Ruiz 1:54:17

And then Lencho Hernandez right there, to his right, sitting down, yeah, yeah, that one,

Brittany Mendez 1:54:24

okay, I got that right here.

Michael Ruiz 1:54:33

And, oh, this is the same, uh huh. This is, like the maybe these guys getting swarming as new officers, probably, yeah,

Brittany Mendez 1:54:53

it was Andres, and then then it's actually Ramon.

Michael Ruiz 1:55:04

Oh, I'm still on, honey. Are you ready to leave? Okay, you think we could pick this up again some other time, Brittany, or yeah, we can.

Brittany Mendez 1:55:17

Um, okay, so this is Ramon, just to finish this one off. First Ramon, my dad.

Michael Ruiz 1:55:24

I don't recognize the next guy.

Brittany Mendez 1:55:32

I think he was unknown. Then gray and then

Speaker 2 1:55:43

yes, correct, okay, okay, cool.

Michael Ruiz 1:55:50

How many more of these black and whites do we have left?

Brittany Mendez 1:55:53

We're almost done. Are

Michael Ruiz 1:55:55

Are we?

Brittany Mendez 1:55:58

Yeah, so just a couple more, and then we finish those.

Michael Ruiz 1:56:03

Okay, maybe we'll finish those. And then,

Brittany Mendez 1:56:06

well, if you have to leave right now, we could just, well,

Michael Ruiz 1:56:12

we only got what, 1,2,3,4,5,6, 7, yeah. And then the one, the one that you just did right below it, it looks like it's a same thing, different angle. Yep, same thing just is

Brittany Mendez 1:56:38

also, I'll just get The this one. Is that your grandfather?

Michael Ruiz 1:57:32

Yeah, this is looks like it's somewhere else because my grandfather got a different shirt on because he's on the left and not sure who the gentleman is on the right. On the left, kind of looks familiar, but I'd have to see a list of names, but you know, it's the same date, though, January, 75 but his shirt looks

1:58:10

different. I think so.

Brittany Mendez 1:58:12

These the ones on the wait. Okay, I think the ones with the award, those don't have a date on time, okay,

Michael Ruiz 1:58:25

you're right. You're right. So that was just part of a striker meeting at St Julius church.

Brittany Mendez 1:58:41

St Julius church was seemed very pivotal.

Michael Ruiz 1:58:50

And this, of course, another photo some worker at economy furniture. I Yeah, this is definitely at economy furniture. This is my grandfather, Victor Ruiz. He was he would design the patterns for the furniture. So this is a one of his designs that he was making.

Brittany Mendez 1:59:28

Wow, it's really cool.

Michael Ruiz 1:59:45

Yeah, I this is looks like my dad is. I don't know if he's giving a check or to a striker, not sure, but he's presenting something's being presented there. Yeah, definitely a check. I don't remember the gentleman's name on the left, but that's definitely my dad on the right.

Brittany Mendez 2:00:14

I'll zoom in up later and see if I could look. I Yes, okay, cool, so we finished all of these. Okay, cool, yeah, okay, so I guess would you be able to meet again to do these, yeah, okay, so I'm gonna go ahead and stop recording now. So I'm going to start up.