

Palm_School_Ruiz_Michael_Foto_Voz_Transcript_Part_2

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SUMMARY KEYWORDS

Austin Chicano Wilder, economy furniture strike, Michael Ruiz, Palm School, community involvement, Salvation Army Youth Center, family support, political activism, segregation, cultural impact, historical preservation, family memories, community events, leadership roles, union participation.

SPEAKERS

Michael Ruiz, Speaker 1, Brittany Mendez

Brittany Mendez 00:02

Okay, Hi, I'm Brittany Mendez. Today's day is Thursday, January 9. This is the second part to Michael Ruiz, photovos, the first one was conducted yesterday, January 8. Wait, no, was yesterday. Yes,

Michael Ruiz 00:23

Yes, yesterday. The 8th.

Brittany Mendez 00:28

Yeah, okay. I couldn't remember if we did it yesterday or not, or maybe it was Tuesday.

Michael Ruiz 00:34

You're right. It was Tuesday, right, right. It was Tuesday. Choose

Brittany Mendez 00:37

this. The first part was No, it's okay. The first part was done Tuesday, January six, either way, this is the second part. Um, okay, and so I'm here with.

Michael Ruiz 00:50

This is Michael Ruiz. And I attended palm school from 1963 through 1968 from the first grade all the way through the sixth grade.

Brittany Mendez 01:06

Cool, cool, cool. Okay, so Michael, I'm going to share my screen now, and you could see this correct.

Michael Ruiz 01:13

Yes, okay, I think we finished all the black and whites, and we were going to get ready to start all the colors. Yes.

01:22

Okay,

Brittany Mendez 01:24

so here's the first one,

Michael Ruiz 01:29

yes. This looks like some three gentlemen there looks like at the economy furniture company, and I recognize only the gentleman in the middle. That is Elias Ruiz, and I know him from the strike the Austin Chicano Huelga as well as we went to church together. You

02:07

Elias Ruiz?

02:08

that's correct.

Brittany Mendez 02:18

I guess it was just like, was, I guess, a factory or warehouse. It's, it's

Michael Ruiz 02:23

known as economy furniture company.

Brittany Mendez 02:35

I'm assuming the church was st Julius. I'm sorry, say again, I'm assuming the church was st Julius, correct.

Michael Ruiz 02:43

Oh no, it was actually Emmanuel United Methodist Church. Emmanuel United Methodist Church, which is still there in Austin, at the corner of by 35 and East Second Street. Elias was he was in charge of all the ushers, so he used to use the young people for for Ushering.

Brittany Mendez 03:49

This is the date. Here is May, 72, 72

Michael Ruiz 03:56

this looks like do you

Brittany Mendez 03:57

need me to make the picture bigger? I'm sorry, do you need me to make the picture bigger?

Michael Ruiz 04:04

No, no, that's that looks good. This actually looks like. It looks like my grandfather there on the not the one. So this right here, that one right there, getting ready to eat, and that looks like it's at the Salvation Army Youth Center. I'm not sure what the occasion was, but this is one of those that you know, it just happened to be in the role with the pictures with the other one. So it wasn't something that I necessarily wanted to submit. Okay, so it's up to you, if you want to or not.

Brittany Mendez 04:49

Um, no, I think it's good. I feel like all of these like, uh, it's like, um, Palm school. But also like, just like the community as well.

Michael Ruiz 04:59

Yeah, it's definitely in the community, because the Salvation Army Youth Center played a big role in in the community, because my dad worked there part time when he was on strike. So he was, he was the all of the kids in the community knew him because he was there working and, you know, they were trying to keep kids off of, you know, and back then it was like, you know, they were sniffing glue and stealing stuff so that this community center was there to give kids something to do, you know, besides that, maybe play softball, baseball, basketball, there pool tables, all kinds of organized games,

Speaker 1 05:49

I guess I'll just say, like a community events at the Salvation

Michael Ruiz 05:59

Army youth center that was located at The corner of Holly Street And San Marcos street. You Yeah, I'd say unknown, unknown Victor Ruiz and can't really see the Next person,

07:09

I guess, for ground. I don't know. I

Brittany Mendez 07:36

he said, part time friends,

Michael Ruiz 07:38

actually its Victor Ruiz was, he worked at the economy furniture, but it was my dad that, oh, yeah, so I don't know if you wanted to add that or not, or just, you know, Jim Ruiz worked at the Salvation Army Youth Center, serving the kids in the community, Something like that. Yeah, that looks good.

Brittany Mendez 08:24

You said economy, furniture, company, company, okay, and don't worry, I'll fix all of this later. Just, just write stuff. Oh, wait, I think that's a duplicate. Okay, yeah, it's a duplicate, and that's kind of the same thing, so I'm just gonna go ahead and copy that here. And do you recognize any of these people?

Michael Ruiz 08:57

No, no, I don't recognize any of them. That was another one that that was just kind of in the pack, probably on the same roll of film. Okay, this looks like it's an award presentation to Elias Ruiz from Gray Mojica on the right, Elias Ruiz accepting the award there for his dedication and in supporting the Austin Chicano huelga strikers. So. He was for being awarded for his dedication and participation in the In the economy furniture strike. i I was actually working on a documentary about the strike, and I interviewed several of the strikers. Elias was actually one of them. This was back in like, 2000, 25 years ago, and I have that footage somewhere, I need to probably give it to someone. Oh wow. I interviewed him. I interviewed my dad, Jim Ruiz. I interviewed some other activists in the community, community, some of the folks that we talked to about we talked about yesterday, I'm sorry, Tuesday. John Trevino, who was on the city council, Richard Moya, Gonzalo Barrientos, and another activist, Paul Hernandez, was with the Brown Berets. So yeah, I need to pull out that footage and give it to somebody for, you know, for historical purposes, because it's these guys. Well, at least Elias passed away, I think maybe four years after I did his interview.

Brittany Mendez 12:22

Well, that's, yeah, that's like, like, that's good footage, like that's or, like, that's important and stuff especially to be preserved and whatnot. So I guess I was gonna ask, or I guess I was kind of curious, like yesterday, you know, I we were looking through all these photos and stuff with both your grandfather and your dad, and especially at this picture of your grand where is it? Oh, this one yes, of your grandfather and stuff. And you said, you know, he would do the, or he would design the pattern, patterns and stuff for the furniture, you know. And obviously, I feel this strike, you know, I feel like, like, obviously, like it was a, like, a big or, like a chunk of time, you know, like both that both that affected both your dad and your grandfather. And so I was just kind of well one I was curious, like, in terms of, like, how old were you when all this stuff was happening? And like, what were your relationships like with both your grandfather and your dad? But also, like, what was it like? Just kind of like, you know, they were going through this, you know, strike sort of thing and whatnot. And like, you know, what was your kind of like, just, what were you seeing and stuff, and if, I mean, I don't know how old you were, like, any sort of, like, involvement and stuff.

Michael Ruiz 13:56

Yeah, I was when the strike started in 1969 I was 12 years old, so, and I actually did, you know, I walked the picket line with my dad. Since, especially, you know, in the summertime when there was no school, didn't want to leave me at home, so I would go with them and walk the picket line with him, and just kind of hang out there. That's how I was really involved with the strike and the strikers, because I was spent, you know, hours there at a time with them, just kind of hanging out by what they called the picket shack. There was two little storage units. I called them storage units. There was this little galvanized metal buildings that they had their quote, unquote offices right there next to economy furniture on McNeil Road in North Austin. So I. Spent a lot of time there. Got to know a lot of them. My dad was the treasurer at the time. He would write checks to the strikers for strike aid, they needed aid, since a lot of them, you know, had to go find other part time work to support themselves. And in addition to that, they would come to the picket line, and depending on the number of hours they spent walking the picket line, then they would get a check for, you know, \$20 \$25 \$30 so I recognized a lot of the names of the individuals, because I my dad, we would go through these lists of who got their checks and who didn't. So I was exposed to a lot of the names during that time. It was tough. I know it

was tough because, you know, my dad didn't have a full time job, so he had to look for work elsewhere, and like we mentioned before, working at the Salvation Army Center was, was a part time work that he did mostly in the evenings. And then he got some other part time work, working at a, I mean, going to another picket line and getting strike aid for I think it was the the it was a drive in movie theater in South Austin where he would go walk the picket line there for, I think it was the guys that ran the film projectors and showed the films. And my relationship to my dad, I mean, we were pretty close. My grandfather and I were pretty close to he was the one that it, you know, it's, it was interesting. He was considered, you know, like a father figure there, because he basically was with Mr. Milton Smith when Mr. Smith started the company, and they grew up together with the company, and my dad was with the company, you know, even, even when it started. So they were pretty close. And I remember initially, this was when they were attempting to negotiate with the company to get better working conditions. My grandfather, Victor Ruiz, talked to Mr. Smith and told him the concerns of the workers and the Mr. Smith told him, "Hey, you know, we're going to go ahead and take care of all those things, don't you don't need to tell the workers that they don't need to go on strike. We're gonna, you know, we're gonna take care of those things". So my grandfather told the workers, "hey, let's not go on strike. Mr. Smith says that he agrees that, that we'll take care of, you know, we'll take care of wages and, you know, give you some sick leave and a little bit of vacation time and that sort of thing". Well, that never materialized. And when the workers said, "Hey, what happened? You know this, it's been a while and we haven't seen any results". So my grandfather went back to Mr. Smith and said, "hey, you know the workers are wondering, why, you know? Why? Why haven't? Why hasn't anything been done? Why have they not seen any results? And you know, better, work conditions, pay, sick leave and that sort of things as well." Mr. Smith tells him, "Well, I never said I was going to do that". And so, you know that really put my grandfather in an awful position to where he told the strikers initially, no, don't go on strike. Well now he they were upset because he told them that Mr. Smith was going to follow up with all those things that they promised and didn't happen. So so my grandfather was very upset, and had to tell them, Well, you know, Mr. Smith says that, that he never said those things. So a few years go by, and then they want to go on strike again. They want to be recognized. And so my grandfather was actually, I think, getting ready to retire. I think he only had, I don't know, two, three years to go, but he went ahead and went on strike with the strikers, because he felt betrayed that initially, when they the company said that they were going to negotiate with the workers, they never did. So my grandfather felt like, you know what? You know, I can't tell them not to strike again. So he went ahead, even though he was getting ready to retire, he went ahead and and went on strike with the workers, and that was a big deal. Because, you know, he was like, really? Close to to the owner of the company, Mr. Smith. So, yeah. So that's why he was a big, a spokesman for for the Austin Chicano Huegla, it's what they called it. And he went, you know, whenever they were having the rallies at the capital, state capital, there, right off of South Congress, I'm sorry, right off of Congress Avenue. And in Austin, well, he was there at the rally speaking about unity, about staying together, about, you know, the strike and Montopolis in Montopolis, I believe there's a monopolist community center in southeast Austin, where he spoke there with Cesar Chavez and yeah. So I was very aware of everything that was going on, because, I mean, there was immediate family, my dad and my grandfather, and then, of course, my uncle buddy got involved, my father's brother and my uncle Dan got involved my father's brother. And that's how the I believe that the Austin Chicano huelga kind of started the movement of the of the Mexican Americans getting into politics there in in Austin, Texas, and that's how they got a Hispanic John travino was the first Hispanic to be on City Council. We had Gonzalo Barrientos state representative, and we had let's see Richard

Moya, believe he was the county commissioner, and who else? Oh, yeah, Gus Garcia. I believe he got onto the school board, and I think he was also on city council at one point. But yeah, so that really, that's how I was introduced to politics in in the Austin area, and that's how I got introduced to being active in the community. So those things taught me a lot about, you know, helping your helping your fellow man. Whenever someone needed some help, that's just what you did. You went out there and you helped them.

Brittany Mendez 22:34

Yeah, it's up, because I know you mentioned earlier that whenever you're working on, like, your uncle's campaigns and stuff you were around 13, so, like, this was also happening at the same time and stuff, and so you're very involved in, like, The politics and stuff and whatnot. I guess, like, uh, two questions. Like, one, I guess, like, were any like, I know you were really young, but were any of your other friends kind of, like, I don't know, did you ever like, oh, like, I'm, I'm gonna go do this thing. Would you want to come with me? Or, like, what did any of that ever happen?

Michael Ruiz 23:21

Yes, I would ask some of my friends, hey, we're going to go pass out some flyers for this particular candidate that's running for you know, could be Richard Moya. It could be Gonzalo Barrientos. It could be my uncle Dan. It could be my uncle buddy. Do you want to come with me to help pass out flyers? Yeah, why not? You know, I remember we would do it for my uncle Dan, and once we were done, after about, I don't know, two, three hours, then we'd get a hamburger and a coke. So that was, that was kind of cool. So, yeah, I would, I would ask some friends, the some family members to to my uncles on the Terazza side would come and help. Friends in the community would come and they would assist in, in passing out flyers,

24:26

um,

Brittany Mendez 24:28

I guess, like, um, I guess you now, like looking back and stuff, like, you've had these, like, really great, like, male role models in your Life and stuff, and how do you think that's kind of, I mean, I know you touched a little bit on this earlier, but I'll just kind of ask again, how do you think that kind of molded you like, as you were growing up, and like, I guess even now, you know, I said like and stuff like that,

Michael Ruiz 24:59

how that molded me? Yeah, the male role models, I guess it in terms of the male role models and education, I know I mentioned this before they were even as early as the third grade. Was encouraged to pursue, you know, getting to the school, going to high school, and then go to college. I mean, even in third grade, I remember like, I want to go to college, and I want to, you know, graduate like my uncles did and all of that now, in terms of the politics that to me, I think it had kind of a little negative impact on me, because I think at the time the in the Austin community, you know, there was segregation, the blacks and went to one school, and the Hispanics went to another School, and all the whites went to the other schools. Other schools. So there, there was that was going on, not probably more in when I was in high school, junior high and high school. So there was a lot of one of the Mexican Americans

there in Austin started organizing. There was, like negative publicity in the newspapers about them. There was negative publicity about the strikers that were striking, because I think I want to say, probably the owner of the company, the news and folks at the newspaper, so it was always kind of negative towards the strikers, or maybe some political person, someone, some Hispanic person that was running for some office. So in that regard, I kind of felt like that, that the white, Anglo Americans kind of looked down upon the Mexican Americans, and I felt like, kind of like I wasn't good enough, because, you know, I wasn't white. So I felt like there was always some some discrimination and that sort of thing. So to me, that was kind of the negative impact it had. I, you know, I I thought when I was growing up that all whites were were, were prejudiced against Mexicans. I just thought that, because that was my experience at the time, and it wasn't until and so I went to school. Palm school was predominantly Mexican American. I don't think, I don't remember a single African American. I don't think there was one that went there when I was there for six years, other than the sixth grade teacher, Mrs. Johnson. There, I remember there being at least one white girl. Remember her name was Rebecca Daley, and she was, if I recall correctly, the only white person that went there throughout my, you know, first through sixth grade. So that was predominantly Hispanic. Then junior high school was pretty much the same, probably half and half, half Hispanic, half African American. And then I went to Johnson High School, and that was about the same, half Hispanic, half African American, a few whites. So I was, when I during, you know, first through 12th, it was all, you know, predominantly minority students. But when I got to UT, who, boom, man, that was a culture shock, because it was, I was the minority then, and everybody was white, and the only majority, only Hispanics that I saw were, you know, cutting the grass or cleaning the hallways at UT, I didn't see a whole lot of Hispanics. I mean, I had to actually go look for an organization, pi, sigma, pi, an engineering organization to find people that that were Hispanic or that looked like me. So it was a culture shock, and that was one of the big things that so when I got to UT, you know, already, with the mind that, you know, the white people don't like me because I'm Mexican American. It was, it was a it was, it was foreign to me, because I just wasn't used to being around that many Anglo Americans. And it was like I said, it was just a huge culture shock. Right? So I think being in the politics, because, you know, like I mentioned before, holding up signs for, you know, like buddy Ruiz or Dan Ruiz or Richard Moya or Gonzalo Barrientos, and going, you know, you be at the street corner, holding up the sign, trying to get people to vote, and then you get these cars of white individuals coming up to you and throwing the finger and yelling at you and saying, you know, go back to Mexico or something like that. You know that that had a negative impact on me. I remember going when I was a student at UT. I remember going to a restaurant, and I didn't feel accepted in the College of Engineering at UT, and I could talk about that, but that's probably not a part of this palm school thing. So I went to a restaurant, and I remember walking to the bathroom, and there was a group of guys that were white guys, probably fraternity or something. And he said, "Hey, you can you bring us some more water?" And, you know, assuming that I was either a worker that clean tables or somebody that was, you know, serving, and, you know, it was that kind of stuff, you know, not feeling accepted in the College of Engineering, like just those kind of things, had a negative impact on me, and I think it was because of the politics that the negativity and the politics which still goes on today had that impact on my mind, thinking all whites were were prejudiced. But in reality, I, you know, after working at NASA that NASA was a lot of white people there when I first started working, but that was the first time that I felt accepted as an individual by working at NASA, because, you know, I was like a Mexican American among all these white engineers, but I was I never felt, ever, never, never, never felt ostracized at NASA, they accepted me who was as who I was, and that was probably a big, huge

blessing for me, because that took away my ideas that all whites were prejudiced against Mexicans. Yeah?

Brittany Mendez 32:34

Well, that's yeah, I can imagine, like, that's like a lot to go through and stuff and just kind of like experience. But I'm also glad that, you know, like you working at NASA and stuff like that, kind of just, you know, you didn't feel any of those things anymore. And, yeah, so I guess, kind of going back a little to, I guess, like, this might be kind of like a silly question, I guess. But like, if you were trying to describe your grandfather to me, for example, just like his characteristics, his personality, like, like, how would you describe Victor?

Michael Ruiz 33:22

Oh, let's see my grandfather, personality characteristics. He was, let's see. How would I describe them? He was? I would say he was like, probably a little on the strict side, probably with this kids, which would be my dad and uncles and Aunt growing up. But he was never strict with me as a kid, because we used to live, they lived on the corner of East third and and Waller Street, and we lived on in the backyard, and a little, little, small, little house there. And so I would see him quite often, and he was always, he was always like, friendly to the grandkids, my brother and I, and of course, you know, we had family get togethers, and he was the one that taught me. He really enjoyed filming the the parties and stuff. So he really liked getting his eight millimeter camera, pulling it out and and filming a lot of the stuff that went on. And I actually do have some films that he that he had taken. Them, and I transfer those to VHS tape, but VHS tape is now old, and I need to get those to do a digital file formats. But anyway, he really enjoyed, I remember he would get a kick out of watching those films over and over again of my brother and his diaper dancing back and forth with his bottle in his mouth and going back and forth. He really enjoyed that he was, can't say he was more on the serious side. But then again, he joked too. So not sure how would you describe that he wasn't mean. He wasn't a person who cursed, he he was a person of respect. A lot of people respected him. I remember a story about him, you know, seeing he was the person who cared about other people. I remember story about him seeing some guy in there in Austin, and the winter time was very, very cold, and the guy didn't have a always, just in a T shirt. Guy didn't have anything to keep him warm, or grandfather just, you know, gave him his jacket and told him to go ahead and keep it just the kind of person he was. He's he was a he was a caring person for individuals. He was the person who respected others, and he was the person who people also respected as well. I don't know if that gives you kind of a summary of his characteristics.

Brittany Mendez 36:47

Yeah, it does. It does um. And also, I guess, something else that I'm curious about, um. So I guess, like, around, you know, the time of the strike and stuff like, I was kind of curious, like, about both your dad and your grandfather, like their wives, like your mom and your grandmother, like, you know, like, what were they doing and like, just kind of like their, their kind of experience throughout this also, okay,

Michael Ruiz 37:21

yeah, my grandmother, her job was, you know, to maintain the the household, cook for my grandfather when he came home. Have you know, his dinner ready? Have his lunch ready in the morning? You know, that's, you know, this was back in the 50s, so it was a little bit different than, you know, that's just,

you know, that was just her job. She didn't have another job outside of the house. But her job was to, you know, maintain the household, the kids and and she would go to, to, you know, some of these striker meetings sometimes and and the marches, because I actually have some pictures of her marching down Congress Avenue when my grandfather spoke there at the Capitol, because, and I remember her being there as well. So she was supportive of all that. My mother was too, because I have pictures of her being at some of the same functions. I don't think, I don't ever recall my mom going to the picket line because she was busy working supporting the family, because she was the, you know, she had to support the family with the bread winner. Since my dad had to, he went on strike, so he had to quit working. So she was the bread winner. He was the one bringing in the money for the household during the strike. My dad had a part time job that would help, but it was primarily her, so she played a big role in that. She also helped put together the the Austin Chicano huelga banner, which is now located in the Natalie Benson Latin American collection there at the University of Texas. She, my dad and her created that banner. I remember, you know, standing right there next to him, when they had this big, huge banner on the floor. And they, they, my mom, I believe, cut all the letters out. My dad designed it, and then he placed them on the banner, and then my mom just sewed each one by hand onto that banner. So I saw the banner last year when I went to the Benson Latin American collection, and it was kind of cool to see it again and look at it. I'm like, wow. My mom and dad made this, you know, and I was standing right there next to him, watching them when they made this, and now it's in the collection here. So that was really kind of cool.

Brittany Mendez 39:59

I. No, that is really cool.

Michael Ruiz 40:03

Also, she basically supported the family, you know, while, for three years, while we were on strike. So, you know, without her, and that, to me, is pretty impressive for just having a second grade education. You know, she was a hair stylist. She went and studied everything. I don't know how she did it, you know, just having a second grade education, reading all the books on cosmetology, and then studying everything, and then go, going, taking the test, and she passed all of that. So, you know, thank goodness for that.

Brittany Mendez 40:40

I, also, you said something earlier that reminded me. So I guess, like whenever you were attending palm school and stuff, I'm curious as to basically, like, where you lived in, like, yeah, like, where you lived in Austin and like, what your neighborhood was? Like, yeah,

Michael Ruiz 41:13

let's see, we lived relatively close to palm school. Palm schools is on the corner of I 35 and East, First Street, now known as Cesar Chavez Street. It's on the northwest corner of that intersection there. And then if you go from there, if you go south on the feeder Road, all all the way down to Holly street. You make a left, and, I mean, that's the street we lived on, Holly street, so we were probably about four blocks from I 35 so you could probably walk to palm school in about, oh, I'd say maybe 12 minutes, something like that. Maybe 15 minutes, if your kid takes a little longer because you're kicking stuff along the way. But yeah, we were relatively close to palm school. The neighborhood was, you know,

predominantly Mexican American. It was just the UT kids in the neighborhood, and we would meet up at the Salvation Army Youth Center to go participate in all the activities that they had there, like baseball, football, softball, basketball. They even had Hot Wheels competitions. They raced Hot Wheels. And I remember that because they used my hot wheel set to do that. So, yeah, so it was a it was a neat community. It was nice growing up there. We were close to the Colorado River. At that time, it was called Town Lake. We were probably like two and a half blocks away, so we could go to the river and go fishing, or we would go to, you know, the long horn dam, which was maybe four minutes, five minutes away in the car, and go fishing there. But yeah, it was, it was a nice community to grow up, and sometimes you'd hear gun shots, but hey, you know that was just, that was just part of of being in the community. I know it was considered the quote, unquote, bad part of town, but I never felt unsafe going to walking to the Salvation Army Center, from there to the house at night time the Salvation Army Center was probably only about, you know, three blocks, three and a half blocks away. So, yeah, it was a, it was a nice community to grow up in.

44:09

I'm glad.

Brittany Mendez 44:21

Okay, here's the next image.

Michael Ruiz 44:23

Wow. Okay, this is definitely economy furniture. And I kind of want to say the guy on the left is Jesse Romo, but I'm, I'm not exactly sure. Okay, that's fine. The gentleman in the middle, I don't recognize, and the guy on the right is Jim Ruiz. That's my daddy. And it's kind of weird, because I had never seen these photos before up until I started looking for stuff at my, my mom's house and I and I found these maybe about three months before I heard about this palm school interview. So, oh, really, yeah. Oh, I had never seen them before, so I thought that was kind of cool.

Brittany Mendez 45:20

Yeah, I guess whenever I look at older pictures, like seeing my mom or like my grandma and stuff, it's so crazy. It's like, Oh, my God. It's like a whole other different time, when they were so much younger. And like, yeah,

Michael Ruiz 45:40

there's another picture of my grandfather, Victor Ruiz. You can see where he had already made the pattern, and now he's putting together the you know what the chair, one of the new chairs that they were going to be designing, what it was going to look like?

Brittany Mendez 46:27

so there's your dad again, and then this person's unknown.

Michael Ruiz 46:35

Let's see. Let me go back to where I I see, I gotta go back to this. There we go. Sorry about that. That's okay. Yeah, that's definitely another picture at the economy furniture company. And that's my dad's on

the right, that looks like, if I have the name correctly, Jesse Romo in the middle, and the gentleman on the left, I don't know who that is. I

Brittany Mendez 47:26

should I put Jesse Romo or should I just leave unknown?

Michael Ruiz 47:30

Yeah, I would say unknown for now, if I was trying to look up to see if I could find something here on the Austin Chicano huelga to see if I had some additional pictures with the Jesse Romo in them, but I don't see those right off hand. It's funny to see. You know, I type in Jesse Romo, Austin, Chicano huelga, and then I see all these Instagram things pop up and like, okay, there was no Instagram in 60. I know I can eliminate, I can eliminate those that's funny. And this is another picture of Elias Luis on the left and Gray Mojica on the right. Why does

48:29

he put Victor? My bad,

Michael Ruiz 48:33

yeah, Elias Ruiz and gray Mojica.

Brittany Mendez 48:36

Why do I keep wanting to put

Michael Ruiz 48:39

Oh, we've been talking about Victor quite a bit. I don't know if this is at the same time that they were giving him that award. I think we had another picture, yeah.

Brittany Mendez 48:54

Oh yeah. It is. They're wearing the same, uh huh.

Michael Ruiz 48:58

So it's, yeah, look like he's got the same shirt and pants on. Yeah?

49:16

Think this is also,

Michael Ruiz 49:20

yeah, there's the actual award itself.

49:26

No you can't read what it says um...

49:43

16.

Brittany Mendez 49:57

Then we have this one.

Michael Ruiz 49:59

Yeah, there's another picture of the This looks like a every once in a while they would have a little picnic for the strikers from the economy furniture. And that's what this looks like, because I see a lot of kids there, and that's when the strikers would bring their families and just have a little get together.

Speaker 1 50:22

Yeah, would this be at um...

50:34

Oh, my God,

Brittany Mendez 50:38

I think it was called Palm Park. Or would this be?

Michael Ruiz 50:44

This looks like um , we would usually have these at um, it could have been at Barton Springs park or this could have been, yeah, to me, this one is that Barton Springs, because of all of the trees and the parking lot, sometimes we had them at the what they call Town Lake, which is right there behind Martin junior High School. There's a little area there known as Fiesta gardens, but this definitely looks like Barton Springs because of all the trees and the parking lot there. So that's probably where it was at Barton Springs Park. Ya it was the picnic for the strikers and families. Um hm

Brittany Mendez 52:00

What was the name of the school behind the...

Michael Ruiz 52:26

Town Lake was behind the school, the school the school that was near town lake was called Martin junior high school.

52:44

is this Elias?

Michael Ruiz 52:46

That's Elias Ruiz right there. And I don't remember the name of the guy sitting on the right with this.

Brittany Mendez 52:59

I don't know why she looks familiar, but she does.

Michael Ruiz 53:03

No, that's that's not Elias his wife, because I remember her from church. Elias' wife was quite thin and a gentleman on the right. And I want to say Ramon Samilpa, but I'm not, I'm not 100% sure

Brittany Mendez 53:26

wasn't here, here somewhere.

Michael Ruiz 53:28

We did have another picture of what I thought was Ramon Samilpa not right for glasses. Now tell me if he looks like the other guy without the glasses. Oh, he's got glasses on. So

Brittany Mendez 53:52

nah, I don't think that looks like him, not the same one. Yeah, no, I think that. Yeah.

53:59

Okay. I um,

Brittany Mendez 54:03

well, I think that's, like, really cool that, you know, that they would also, like, you know, besides, like, you know, like picket lines and stuff like that and whatnot. Like, there was, like, just like kind of family events and stuff, or just like events to just, kind of just enjoy yourself. Yeah,

Michael Ruiz 54:23

yeah. Because the families, you know, the families, struggled quite a bit. I mean, just, you know, I know Ramon Samilpa had a big family, so you know, you, you're, you're, you're really sacrificing a whole lot when you decide, okay, I'm going to go on strike and I'm going to stick with my fellow brothers and sisters at this union. And you know, you're going to have to find other means to support the family. And you know, this is where the the wives came in, and the strikers had to find, you know, other jobs where they where they could part time, or I. You know, some of them may have gotten full time jobs, but they had to do something else. You know, for three years. That was a that was huge sacrifice, very, very, huge sacrifice.

Brittany Mendez 55:21

Yeah, would , I guess, like the time that all these pictures were taken, like these, and these black and white ones, I guess, like, if you had to put like a year, I guess it would be in the in the 70s, right? Just like a general year, just in 1970

Michael Ruiz 55:47

Yeah, I would say,

Brittany Mendez 55:50

I'll just write a note to myself right here.

Michael Ruiz 55:52

Yeah, definitely 70s, because the strike went from 69, 70 and 71 and then, you know, they probably gave the awards, probably after the strike was finished,

Brittany Mendez 56:13

because these, these say 75 and stuff. Yeah,

Michael Ruiz 56:19

this was the looks like Saint Julius church again, yeah,

Brittany Mendez 56:26

um, okay, so I'll just give, like, just a general, like, circa 1970s and stuff.

Michael Ruiz 56:33

Yeah, that that would pretty much cover it, and collect another gift they gave to Elias Ruiz.

Brittany Mendez 56:39

Oh, he looks so happy.

Michael Ruiz 56:43

He's probably laughing because that's the kind of plaid clothes that he would wear. I remember, you know, even at church, I'd see him wearing stuff like that, so probably laughing because they knew his style.

Speaker 1 56:59

That's funny. Let's see. Let me just copy. I

Michael Ruiz 57:36

I worry a lot of that. Yeah,

Brittany Mendez 57:42

Also, do you by chance know, like, all, like, all these different, like, obviously, your grandfather was awarded, Elias was awarded, and stuff, Do you by chance know, like, you know, did awards happen very often. I mean, also, I know, like, from what you've said so far, you know, your grandfather had, like, a very big role in this, and then Elias was also, like, a very important person as well. Do you like, I guess, Do you by chance, know, like, perhaps, like, what exactly they were awarded for, or is just their dedication, participation, kind of general things. Yeah,

Michael Ruiz 58:28

let's see, my grandfather was usually, it was like, he was like the, you know, kind of like, quote, unquote, father of the strikers, because he had been working for the company since its inception, so probably awarded for his participation in encouraging the strikers when it was tough, you know, going up to the podium and and talking about The strike, and talking about sticking together, and talking about, you know, you know, going out to vote for, you know, the Mexican Americans at the time, just encouraging them. So I think they awarded. We gave him awards for, for for doing that sort of thing,

and for, you know, help, help the movement. Stay strong and helping the community and being a leader in the community. I might have an award somewhere that actually has on there. And I think, if I remember correctly, it says something about dedication to to the Austin Chicano huelga, which what it was known as, now for Elias Luis, probably his, his work in the strike, I believe. I don't know, I don't think that he was an officer, but I think he did a lot of work and a. Uh, helping the the the strikers and encouraging the strikers to stay together. I don't know if you could zoom in on that plaque to see what it is. I mean, that one looks kind of washed out,

Brittany Mendez 1:00:18

yeah, I think the flash and my, that one is kind of covers the

1:00:25

of it.

Michael Ruiz 1:00:26

There's my grandfather, Elias, and Grey Mojica again, yeah. Just probably something, you know, just dedicated to his it, mean, it was awarded to him for his dedication to the to the strike, yeah, and you know, it's possibility that I don't think it was his retirement, although it's a possibility that that it could have been his retirement, but you can't tell by looking at the scroll. Just you know, I have no idea who these individuals are. Photo that I probably would have not had included if, if I had a chance to go through them, I recognize the Schlitz beer, unknown individuals and as you know, part of the the economic venture strikers.

Brittany Mendez 1:02:12

I guess this would be also the same thing, huh?

Michael Ruiz 1:02:14

Yeah, this is also same thing. St Julia's church, Economy Furniture strikers, the gentleman on the right, if I look through all the names that I have, I could probably get his name for You, but right now, I don't have that. Okay.

Brittany Mendez 1:02:47

Okay. I this is probably the same thing, huh,

Michael Ruiz 1:02:49

copy and paste.

Brittany Mendez 1:03:00

I'm assuming this is the same thing as well. Yeah, I guess Elias' award ceremony happened at St Julia's.

Speaker 1 1:03:15

Yeah.

Michael Ruiz 1:03:27

Yeah, yeah, there's your dad, Elias Ruiz, and my grandfather, Victor Ruiz. You You got a good memory on where to cut and paste from.

Brittany Mendez 1:04:27

That's funny. And that goes here....

because, yeah, I don't think you knew. You didn't know who this person was, and I

Michael Ruiz 1:04:31

don't recognize those individuals. Okay.

1:04:42

Oh, I Oh,

Brittany Mendez 1:04:44

also, who was gray Mojica, like, he's like, in all the pictures, and is, like, the one kind of presenting the stuff to people.

Michael Ruiz 1:04:55

Yeah, he was, I believe he was one of the he might have been the union president for a few years. And it might have been, he might have been the President when he he was making these presentations here. Oh, I see hence his, you know, his making the presentation. I know he was, I know he was in a, I know, he played in a band. I know that too. Okay, so this is the food they were eating with the Schlitz beer.

Brittany Mendez 1:05:38

Oh, I guess this was also at Elias. Yeah,

Michael Ruiz 1:05:40

it's probably with the or Elias' award ceremony, oh, don't recognize. Any of these guys.

Brittany Mendez 1:06:05

Does that beer still exist or, no, I'm sorry. Does that beer still exist or is it?

Michael Ruiz 1:06:13

No, I saw it not too long ago, and I was I was very surprised. I asked the exact same question, question you did, wow, slitsz, beer still exists.

Brittany Mendez 1:06:27

Why that beer? I'm so curious.

Michael Ruiz 1:06:30

Oh, you know how? You know how things become a fad? You know?

Brittany Mendez 1:06:39

Yeah,

Michael Ruiz 1:06:43

and I'm looking on online right here. And, yeah, you can still get Schlitz beer total wine and more has it in stock. Instacart has it, and you can order it through instacart.

Brittany Mendez 1:07:00

Wow, that's crazy.

Michael Ruiz 1:07:10

Yeah, it is crazy, because it's still around, you know, um, I think the the the beer now is, you know, of the quote, unquote Hispanics, seems like it's a Miller Light

Brittany Mendez 1:07:30

I'm gonna stop sharing. Well, okay, so that was all of it. Um, I'm gonna go back and just like, fix my notes and stuff and in the captions and whatnot. Yeah, I guess. Well, I'll just ask this, like, for the recording and stuff. But if there was anything else that you wanted to add about, like, your time at Palm school, or anything like that, or just just anything in general about palm and whatnot in your time there, or just just attending and stuff.

Michael Ruiz 1:08:10

I think that the only thing that I would add, and I'm pretty sure that was just covered in my video interview, was that I had a wonderful experience at Palm school. I had a, you know, first through sixth grade was, was really great. I would say I loved going to school at Palm school, and I have wonderful memories of palm school. And like I mentioned before, you know, whenever I drive by there, without fail, and my wife probably gets tired of it, and I say, "Look, honey, that's how I went to elementary school". And I'll point to the school. I'll point to the little structure in the back where we students played, where we played kickball. I'll point to the oak tree that's still there, where we ran around it, threw acorns at each other, had fun. You know, those are just great memories. And I know that it's true because I still have dreams of of of being there at the Palm School Park. I haven't had any dreams about being inside in a while, but I still have dreams, you know, about being there in the back of the school, walking or somewhere in that area. So palm had a huge influence on me in that regard. And I hope that it's that they preserve the school. I know it's probably a challenging to it's a very ideal place to have a hotel or, you know, maybe some other structure that developers would like to have. But, man. It's a it's just brings back wonderful memories. And I'm, I'm sure I'm not the only one that that has really, really wonderful memories of palm school. And I just hope it stays there as long as it can.

Brittany Mendez 1:10:14

Okay, I'm gonna stop the recording now. I.