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CENTER FOR MEXICAN AMERICAN STUDIES

Noticias*Dr. Tatcho Mindiola***FROM THE DIRECTOR**

In this issue, we feature several scholars and several students that represent the various “firsts” in our 40-year history.

We begin with former State Representative Román Martínez, who is featured on the front page. As an elected official, Román helped the Center obtain funding, first, with an amendment to the University budget, and, second, with a line item appropriation from the legislature. In between these two events, he spoke on our behalf with top UH officials to ensure that we would receive funding until the line item could be secured. The monies not only allowed the Center to develop the programs featured in this issue, but it also brought us respect and recognition. Román continues to be involved with the Center by continuing to help us raise much needed funds. Currently, he is a member of our annual Noche Cultural Banquet Committee. We are eternally grateful for his support and role as a significant chapter in our history.

Dr. Guadalupe Quintanilla became the first director of the Mexican American Studies Program,

as it was named in 1972. At the time, she was a graduate student pursuing an Ed.D. in Bilingual Education. As the director, she quickly and assertively obtained space for our program office, hired three prominent people in the Mexican American community to teach courses, and began publicizing the program to the broader community. Today, she stays connected with her students through continued teaching.

We also feature our first visiting scholar, the eminent Professor Arnoldo De León. Prior to 1986, people could not read about the history of Mexican Americans in Houston because it had not been written. CMAS created the Visiting Scholars Program and structured it to pursue two objectives of equal importance. First, to undertake research on our community with a priority on Houston. Second, to identify scholars who had an interest in remaining at UH in a tenured or tenure-track position. We invited Professor Arnoldo De León from Angelo State University to be our first visiting scholar and asked him to undertake the writing of our history in Houston. The title of his book is *Ethnicity in the Sunbelt: A History of Mexican Americans in*

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Román Martínez: Champion of Education

In considering the details surrounding the founding of CMAS, there is no more crucial of a person than Mr. Román Martínez. While Martínez’ name has been familiar to Houstonians for decades as a state representative and businessman, in 1982 then Representative Martínez was elected to the Texas House of Representatives from District 148. Martínez secured a spot on the powerful Appropriations Committee and was in a position to obtain funding for the vision at UH now called CMAS. Throughout the extensive and exhausting budget meetings, Martínez stayed true to his goal of getting approval for the “line item” that would ensure funds for CMAS. Fortunately, Martínez’ tenacity and superb skills in negotiation won the day.

He credits his parents for instilling not only a love of learning in him and his siblings, but a life-long commitment to obtaining the best education possible. Says Martínez: “Both of my parents

*Román Martínez*

were born here in Texas and didn’t have the opportunity to become educated. But one of their important gifts to all of their children was a commitment to get a good education.”

Martínez’ scholastic success took him from the small town of Cuero to the bustling city of Houston for a scholarship at Strake Jesuit College Preparatory High School, then to Yale University. While at Yale, Martínez became interested in politics through his participation in MeCHA, a student group, and eventually he was elected its president.

As Martínez’ participation in politics at Yale grew, he was exposed to an influential leader in one of Yale’s top administrative posts who wished to bring additional Latino students and faculty to campus. It was not a lesson that Martínez forgot: how a person in a high place can utilize financial resources to accomplish stated goals.

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CMAS Staff

<p>Tatcho Mindiola, Ph.D. <i>Director & Associate Professor of Sociology tmindiola@uh.edu</i></p>	<p>Fely Aguilar <i>Special Programs Counselor Academic Achievers-High Schools Faguilar@uh.edu</i></p>
<p>Lorenzo Cano, M.A. <i>Associate Director lcano@uh.edu</i></p>	<p>Sonia Ramirez <i>Office Assistant II smramir9@central.uh.edu</i></p>
<p>Mary Helen Meza <i>Department Business Administrator mmeza@uh.edu</i></p>	<p>Elizabeth Jimenez <i>Financial Coordinator I ejimenez@central.uh.edu</i></p>
<p>Rebeca Treviño <i>Academic Achievers-UH Program Manager rtrevino@uh.edu</i></p>	<p>Holly Laurenzana <i>Events Assistant hllauren@central.uh.edu</i></p>
<p>Sarah Cortez <i>Editor</i></p>	<p>Alejandra Castellano <i>Academic Achievers-UH Program Coordinator II acastel3@central.uh.edu</i></p>

MISSION STATEMENT

The Center for Mexican American Studies (CMAS) at the University of Houston was established in 1972 as an interdisciplinary academic program encompassing the liberal arts, education, and social sciences focusing on the Mexican American and broader Latino experience in the U.S. Its mission is to advance knowledge, promote critical thinking, and foster the value of service to the community. This involves designing a broad spectrum of public and scholarly programs. Located within the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences, CMAS has evolved into an academic unit with several major components: teaching, research and publications, recruitment and retention, leadership training, academic advising, and community service.

Arnoldo De León: Writing Ethnicity in the Sunbelt

It seems not so long ago that Dr. Tatcho Mindiola called from the University of Houston and invited me to be the first participant in the Visiting Scholars Program he had just launched as head of the Center for Mexican American Studies (CMAS), which this year marks its Fortieth Anniversary. I had by then published two major books: *The Tejano Community* (1982) and *They Called them Greasers* (1983).

My mission, he informed me, was to write a history of the Mexican American presence in Houston. While he left the details of the work entirely to me, he did wish for it to set the foundation for other publications to follow.

The Visiting Scholars Program, with its mission of filling the research void on Houston, extends numerous amenities, among them providing the scholar in residence with office space, salary, work benefits, and qualified professional assistance. I thus received the support of a dependable and talented cast. Foremost was Dr. Thomas H. Kreneck, then Associate Director of the Houston Metropolitan Research Center, who had been active for some time compiling primary materials about the Houston Mexican American community. The sources he had accumulated provided me with the essential documents I needed. Equally valuable to the project was the participation of my research assistant, Roberto R. Treviño, who had grown up in Houston. Then a graduate student in the University of Houston's School of Education, Treviño went on to receive his Ph.D. in history from Stanford University in 1993 and became an award-winning author in Chicano history.

For the next eight months in 1986, Treviño and I worked with the extensive archives Kreneck had amassed as well as the collection of microfilm and other holdings available at the University of Houston's M.D. Anderson Memorial Library. By August, I had finished my research and returned to San Angelo. I postponed writing until the Spring of 1987 when Dr. Mindiola provided further funding for release time from my duties at Angelo State University that allowed me to conclude the project. Two years later, CMAS underwrote the publication of what became the first history of Mexican Americans in Houston. After toying with other titles, I opted to call the book *Ethnicity in the Sunbelt*. To use the more inclusive label "Hispanic" would have implied treatment of the whole spectrum of peoples from Latin America, rather than the book's focus on the city's ethnic Mexicans.



Arnoldo De León, Ph.D.

As intended, the book established the foundation for subsequent historical studies on Houston's Mexican American community. At least three major monographs, two of which were sponsored by CMAS, would rely on it for background information: Thomas H. Kreneck's masterful Mexican American Odyssey: *Felix Tijerina, Entrepreneur and Civic Leader, 1905-1965* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2001), which earned the "Certificate of Commendation" by the American Association for State and Local History; Guadalupe San Miguel's well-received *Brown, Not White: School Integration and the Chicano Movement*

in Houston (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2001); and Roberto R. Treviño's *The Church in the Barrio: Mexican American Ethno-Catholicism in Houston* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), which garnered the Texas Historical Commission's T. R. Fehrenbach Book Award.

Over the years, *Ethnicity in the Sunbelt* has won deserved acclaim. Reviewers commended the monograph's place in the evolution of Mexican American history, as it made marked additions to the field. Earlier scholarship had been heavily focused on (though not restricted to) issues such as racism, barrioization, labor exploitation, land loss, violence—in short, topics that explained Tejano subordination and historical powerlessness through the lens of Chicano activism of the 1960s and 1970s. *Ethnicity*, by contrast, relied on the generational model then in vogue; examined city life by surveying broader stretches of time (existing works on El Paso and San Antonio, for instance, focused on shorter time spans); looked at immigration and the progression of cultural adaptation and adjustment; and explained identity formation and the evolution of Houston's Mexican American community as a multi-dimensional process that involved class, ideological, generational, and ethnic differentiation.

Since the publication of *Ethnicity*, historians of Mexican Americans in Texas naturally have gone on to explore topics only briefly examined in my text, looking more precisely at subjects such as gender, religion, military service, bossism, and biography, among other topics. But amidst these new directions, *Ethnicity in the Sunbelt* is still referenced in new works and maintains an important place in the historiography on Chicanos, thanks to the phone call Tatcho Mindiola placed to Angelo State University slightly more than a quarter century ago. 



The First MAS Director: Lupe Quintanilla, Ed.D.

Dr. Lupe Quintanilla was the first director of the program, then titled Mexican American Studies (MAS). Her path to UH is as interesting as what she accomplished once she arrived.

Quintanilla's first degree was a B.S. in Biology from Pan American University in Edinburg, Texas. From her home in Brownsville, she targeted UH for a master's degree, which she finished in 1971, majoring in Spanish and Latin American Literature.

Attending her graduate level courses and working as a teaching fellow, she noticed that there was often a grade discrepancy between better educated Anglo students and Mexican American students. After a period of time considering the many factors, Quintanilla came to her own conclusion that the Mexican American students knew a type of Spanish due to their oral usage, rather than their written usage. She developed the idea of a course entitled "Spanish for Spanish Speakers" to help those with oral skills excel. Later Quintanilla also established the popular course, "Hispanic Folklore of the Southwest" which she still teaches.

Another of Quintanilla's observations was that the Mexican American student population wasn't generating hardly any students to attend graduate school. This situation had to change. Quintanilla became very involved with trying to motivate other Latino students to stay in school. She also became involved in helping Latino students learn how to be successful in a college environment.

As Quintanilla did this valuable work, she became more and more talented as a spokeswoman for the UH Latino student population. She says, "I listened to the students. They are the ones who had a firm idea about establishing a department (or center) for Mexican American Studies. Both the students and I went to the state legislature in Austin to lobby for money at various times, and we were successful." In 1972, the UH offered her the job of interim director of CMAS. However, she says that she didn't want a temporary position. Instead, she held out until a permanent position was offered to her.

Only days before the first semester began, Quintanilla received an approved budget for the year for the new entity called Mexican American Studies Program. Immediately, she began contacting persons such as Lionel Castillo, Luis Cano and David Lopez to find faculty. Only three classes were offered that semester with a required minimum of ten students. She says,



Lupe Quintanilla, Ed.D.

"After that, it was a matter of adding more classes and hiring instructors."

There were several major hurdles that Quintanilla still remembers. One area was the hiring of more Latino faculty. She says that she had her professional colleagues tell her when Latino Ph.D. candidates would be graduating. In fact, she fondly remembers various steps in the process of hiring professors like Nicolas Kanellos, Ph.D. and Michael A. Olivas, Ph.D., J.D.

Another wonderful moment was when the Undergraduate Council approved the slate of CMAS courses for credit. During her tenure as director, Quintanilla worked hard to convince the

Council of the course's intellectual viability and lobbied department heads so that they would grant permission to their instructors to teach the approved courses for the MAS concentration.

At that time, she says that the focus of UH was on the recruitment of Latino students. Her department helped with this issue, although Quintanilla was also focused on the important issue of retention. Through her untiring efforts and matching funds from UH, she established the first endowment for Latino scholarships with \$10,000.

Another of Quintanilla's talents was being able to inspire volunteers to help her and her department. These gifts of time and talent cannot be underestimated in their importance, particularly in the early years when funds were so tight. Quintanilla says, "If we were having problems gathering the required minimum of ten students for one of the MAS courses, then we would call all the MAS students and they would call their friends, and we would have ten students enrolled. Even our logo was designed by a volunteer."

Quintanilla ultimately went beyond the directorship of CMAS to further honors, being awarded two consecutive fellowships from the American Council on Education. She also founded the Department of Bilingual Education at UH. In the second year of the American Council on Education appointment, she was moved to the Provost's office at UH-Central, thus becoming the first Hispanic administrator in the history of that office.

Quintanilla applauds the job done by director, Tatcho Mindiola, Ph.D., because she knows how hard it is to raise funds and how hard it is to provide consistent leadership. She says, "He has done an outstanding job. The program has become fully developed. The emphasis is on how to make things better not only for our community, but for everyone living in Houston. That is a true gift to everyone." ❏



Lillian Salinas: The First CMAS Graduate Fellow

Nineteen years ago in 1993, I was awarded the first graduate fellowship in the history of CMAS. To give you some idea of the incredible experience it was for me to pursue a master's degree, I'd like to share with you some basic information about my family, so that you will understand my background.

My parents were both born and raised in and around the San Antonio, Texas area and each had a parent born in Mexico. My father returned from the military and found work in a photo lab where he spent several years learning photography development, and in particular, the specialty of aerial mapping. Ultimately, my father was recruited by the government in Washington, D.C., to be a part of the aerial mapping program to map Vietnam in the early 1960s. He received the highest national security clearance and moved to Washington, D.C. with my mother and oldest brother. A few years later, my father made his way back to Texas to work at NASA. How happy they were to be back in the warmth of Texas. He had the privilege of developing all the motion footage and still photography that came back from the mission to the moon. In fact, all footage of space flight missions was developed by my father and his lab. We were a part of the groundbreaking history that was taking place.

We were away from all of our family in San Antonio, but the community near NASA was a great place to grow up. I found myself in a good school system and became involved in many social and athletic activities—I was heavily involved in competitive cheerleading. Unfortunately, like most adolescents who strive to be like everyone around them and to fit in with a group, I did that same thing and tried to assimilate.

Although I did not have a strong expectation to continue my education past high school, I decided to stay in Houston and attend UH to pursue a degree in Psychology. I began taking classes in Mexican American Studies, and my appreciation for my family's traditions and values began to shine. I truly found myself after leaving the community that I grew up in. College was a paramount experience that would define who I was to become. The courses I took at UH led me to initiate conversations with my parents and grandparents about how they grew up. I was able to identify with the powerful history of our people.

After graduating, I quickly learned that I would need to pursue a Master's degree to do the work I felt called to



Lillian Salinas, M.A. Social Work

do—working with children and adolescents in a school setting. I did find work at the Family Service Center, where I was exposed to social workers who were doing all kinds of good work with children and families, so I began looking into the nearby programs. I also started looking for assistance that would help me continue my education and my goals. I found and applied for the first offering of a graduate fellowship by CMAS. I can still remember the phone call; I had been selected and at that moment my life changed. I honestly don't know if I could have done it without the financial support from the program.

I quit my job and attended the Graduate School of Social Work full-time. Graduate school for me was a different experience. The classes were small and interactive. The students and the friends I made were all interested in the same thing. We wanted to make a difference in the lives of people. We studied social policies, social groups, human behavior, clinical practices, ethics, and, most importantly, treating all populations with dignity and respect. I focused most of my studies around the Hispanic populations. My first internship was at an elementary school. I saw firsthand the role of the social worker in a school setting. This was what I wanted to do, until I was placed in my second internship for a year at Catholic Charities in the Children and Families Services Department that was composed of foster care, infant adoption, and services to pregnant adolescents. I found this client base to be fascinating and the people who worked with them to be amazing. In fact, Post Adoption Services has become my passion.

I have been at Catholic Charities happily for 16 years. I am responsible for the Post Adoption Services. I adore the clients that I work with, and I get to be a witness to their amazing journeys in post adoption. I work with adults and children of adoption, adoptive parents, and birth mothers. Adoption is a life long journey for all members of triad, and I touch their lives at all stages of the journey.

I have the CMAS program to thank for my success. It was not only the crucial fellowship, but it was the exposure to the classes on my cultural heritage, the other students in the program, and the role models that opened the door to my appreciation of my Mexican American heritage. I look forward to passing the message to the next generations. 



César Álvarez: One of the Original Students

The Center for Mexican American Studies (CMAS) and the staff led by Dr. Tatcho Mindiola are the life-altering catalysts that have catapulted me to where I am today: a proud Ed.D. graduate in Education with a rewarding career helping others.

I was a political refugee from Nicaragua; I grew up in government housing and poor living conditions with a single mother. I had every reason to be a statistic just as my cousins and neighbors were. However, I believe it was my faith, and the support I received from CMAS that kept me from living the life traveled by many of my friends and neighbors.

In 1989, I was on a list of middle school students required to go to the school auditorium. We didn't know why we had been selected. Who would know that chance encounter at Jackson Middle School would be the life-altering event for me and the other students selected to participate? This was our introduction to the CMAS program for middle-school students.

For the following four years, CMAS mentored us, tutored us, presented workshops, and took us on fieldtrips. We developed life-long relationships with other students from the East End community in a program called the Hispanic Family College Project (the predecessor to the Academic Achievers Program). At that time, there were no other programs that specifically recruited urban Latinos and supported them through their high school experience until college graduation.

It was very evident during the onset of the program that Dr. Mindiola, was going to need enormous financial and academic support to get the students ready for high school graduation. With a small budget, Dr. Mindiola would have to be very creative in how he would pay for tutors, workshops, and college visits. One of my favorite memories during our senior year was during one of our tutorial sessions where our group was picked up from Austin High School and taken to UH. After the meeting, we went into the lounge to eat a snack, (we were used to eating pizzas and sandwiches), however that day we had bologna sandwiches. Some of the students said, "What happened, what happened to us getting pizzas?" As for me, I was happy to get a sandwich. Later I found out that the office was stressing out about not having the funds



César Álvarez, Ed.D.

to buy the pizzas—I think the staff was more worried than the kids were. That was the type of love and commitment CMAS has towards its students.

I had a great senior year in high school, but I was still not strong enough academically to get into UH on my own abilities, I was admitted on a probationary basis because I was one of "Tatcho's kids." Later, when I was having issues with my financial aid, again I was able to say that I was one of "Tatcho's kids!." I quickly realized that his name and the program had influence. For the next 10 years I was in and out of CMAS offices getting support and keeping up with the

extended family that motivated me and saw the potential deep inside of me that I did not know existed.

Fast forward to 2012, I now stand as a person with a doctorate. I have used the opportunity I received from CMAS to go into the field of education. I was able to go back to Austin High School and teach. For the last two years, I was the Assistant Principal at Jackson Middle School, where my story with CMAS began. It is an amazing feeling to have the opportunity to come full circle and be the potential agent of change for students.

It is with extreme pride and love that I say I am still "Tatcho's kid." I work very hard to prove to CMAS that I was worth the effort they invested in my life.

My goals in life are still ahead of me, and I know I still have a long way to go. I learned my drive, commitment, and passion for helping the Latino community from the Center for Mexican American Studies. CMAS does not only focus on teaching college students the history of the Mexican American experience, rather, it is the expectation that all students learn the history but can also use that knowledge to create a better future for all people. I learned that very well. I hope to continue to make CMAS proud. Of the original 88 students, all graduated from high school, and we have college graduates and even three students have doctorate degrees. My expression of gratitude is replicated by every single person who has been a member of the center. Even though there have been over 180 students who have been given the gift I have received, each of our stories has the same theme: we are grateful for the life-altering opportunity for a better future. ❏



Student Pioneers: First-Generation CMAS Grads

by Alfred Castillo, Jr.

Although, it has been over twenty years since my wife, Diana, and I were first introduced to CMAS, we continue to see an increasing number of CMAS students receive college degrees from UH. With the help from CMAS, they are defying the odds placed on them as a result of their backgrounds and financial limitations.

Diana and I were fortunate to be a part of CMAS because we both came from disadvantaged backgrounds. We both had immigrant parents from Mexico who came to this country in search of the American Dream. A native of San Luis Potosi, my father-in-law found work as a pipe layer, while my mother-in-law served as a homemaker for Diana and her five older siblings. My mother had left Matamoros early in her life and found herself working in the fields of the Midwest. She eventually learned to speak English and landed a job as a receptionist for a small oil company. My father, a graduate of Stephen F. Austin High School, became a shipping clerk for a tool company. Although born and raised in Houston, he did not have the opportunity for a higher education.

We were raised in Houston's East End, a predominately Mexican neighborhood, known as "The Barrio." It was our home, our neighborhood, but certainly not without its snares. Cantinas, drugs, gangs, and various other elements were all day-to-day influences. The encouragement of our parents, coupled with the interest in extracurricular activities helped to sustain our resolute mindset to improve our lifestyle through hard work and education as opposed to taking illegal shortcuts.

It seems like only yesterday when our journey began with CMAS. Yet, it was 1988. Diana can still recall the day she was invited to the auditorium in Jackson Middle School. The Hispanic Family College Project (HFCP), the forerunner to the Academic Achievers Program, had been launched and was looking for students. Diana immediately embraced the effort and participated wholeheartedly.

I was not so lucky. I attended Thomas Edison Middle School, and the HFCP did not recruit from that school. It was not until my sophomore year at Stephen F. Austin High School that I became aware of the program through casual banter with a HFCP student. I was taken aback by the program's incentives: weekly trips to UH which included a dinner, tutoring, workshops, and an annual leadership retreat, followed by acclimation to the college experience, and, more importantly, a four-year scholarship for



Alfred Castillo, Jr., and his wife Diana, with their children, left to right, Jeselle, Jaden, Josiah.

those graduating from high school and going to college. Motivation kicked in, so I decided to enlist in this "once in a lifetime" opportunity only to find my quest for a higher education come to a halt as Dr. Mindiola kindly gave me the "no spots available" news. After weeks of relentless efforts, he admitted me to the HFCP.

While at UH, Diana and I became close friends, and eventually started dating. We declared civil engineering as our major, completing most of our classes together. While we were naturally dedicated, it was

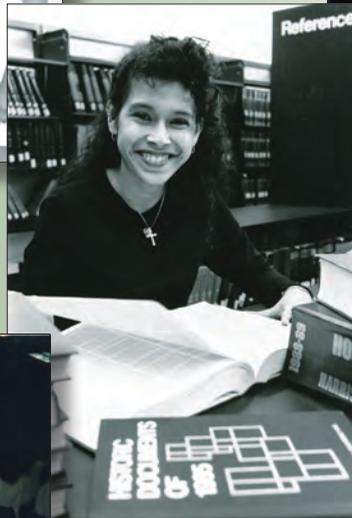
the hard work, immense sacrifice, and the support of CMAS that secured our academic success. This allowed us to achieve the honor of making Dean's List for the majority of our college careers. Consequently, Diana and I graduated Magna Cum Laude in 1998 with jobs that we accepted months in advance. Shortly after graduation, Diana and I married.

During our college years, we found CMAS to exemplify the highest degree of dedication and commitment to the students, emulating the relationship between parent and child. CMAS always displayed genuine concern for our well-being and academic success, especially via the tutoring program. As part of the services offered to Academic Achiever students, CMAS provided, and continues to provide, tutors for all subjects. I will never forget when Diana and I began to take some particularly challenging courses. Jokingly, we engaged CMAS to find us a tutor for a course that was actually entitled "Mechanics of Deformable Bodies." Our program manager at the time admitted to not having a tutor on-hand for that class, but said that she would provide one, if needed. Fortunately, the "specialty tutor" was not needed, but the thought of CMAS going through such great lengths to provide the tutor was felt deep in our hearts with total gratitude.

CMAS did not remove our plights, but gave us the resources, support, and confidence to overcome our disadvantages through education, enabling us to become productive members of society. Now as Licensed Professional Engineers, Diana and I continue the CMAS legacy by instilling the importance of higher education in the minds of our three beautiful children as well as in other aspiring CMAS students. We feel that our own individual academic achievements are a testament to the program's success. As a result, we are thrilled to maintain our commitment to support the program, both financially and by direct involvement, that has borne so many successful young people as its "fruit." 



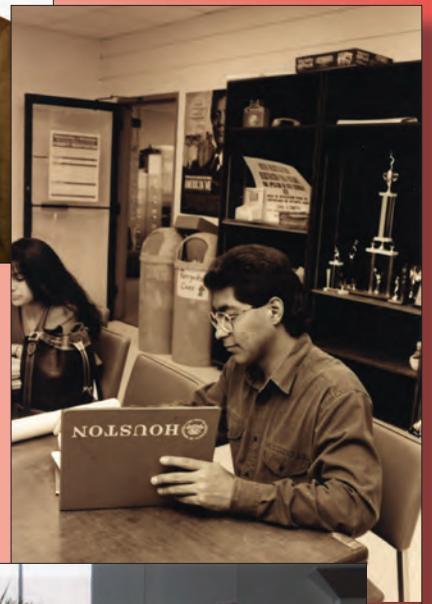
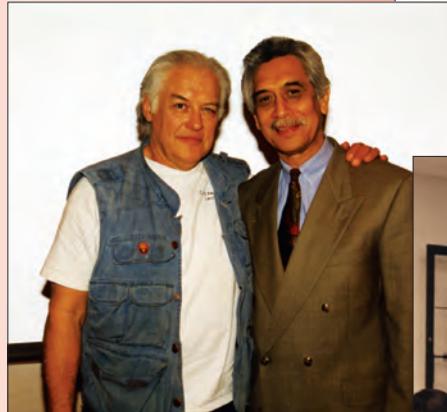
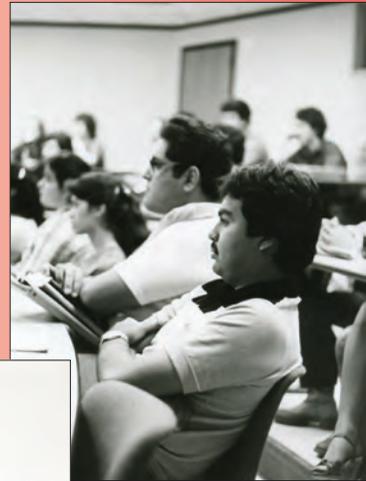
40 Years of



in Higher



Excellence



Education.



The Center for Mexican American Studies 40th Anniversary Fall Speaker Series

“Challenging Patriarchal Eagles and Risking the Personal: Chicana Feminisms Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow”

DENISE SEGURA, PH.D.

Professor of Sociology, University of California Santa Barbara

Tuesday, September 18, 2012 ~ 11 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Rockwell Pavilion, M.D. Anderson Library

“MAYO and Mexican American Studies at UH in 1972”

**JAIME DE LA ISLA, MARIO GARZA, MARIA JIMENEZ, ELIOT NAVARRO, CYNTHIA PEREZ,
UH And MAYO Alum**

Wednesday, October 3, 2012 ~ 1 p.m. - 3 p.m.

UH Hilton Hotel Plaza Room

“Return to Aztlán: Mexican Americans and the Immigration Debate”

NESTOR RODRIGUEZ, PH.D.

Professor of Sociology, University of Texas

“Gendered Migration from Mexico to the U.S. and Resultant Labor Patterns”

PIERRETTE HONDAGNEU-SOTELO, PH.D.

Professor of Sociology, University of Southern California

“No Undocumented Child Left Behind”

MICHAEL A. OLIVAS, J.D.

Professor of Law, University of Houston

Thursday, October 18, 2012 ~ 11 a.m. - 1 p.m.

UH Hilton Hotel Plaza Room

“Reflection of a Huelga (Strike) School Teacher”

AUGUSTINA REYES, PH.D.

Professor of Curriculum and Instruction, University of Houston

“The Historical and Contemporary Significance of the Chicano School Walkouts”

GUADALUPE SAN MIGUEL, PH.D.

Professor of History, University of Houston

Tuesday, October 23, 2012 ~ 1 p.m. - 3 p.m.

Gerald D. Hines Architecture Building, Room 143

“Exploring the Political Edge With the Brown Berets: An Ethnography of the Chicano Movement”

DAVID MONTEJANO, PH.D.

Professor of Ethnic Studies/Chicano Studies, University of California, Berkeley

Thursday, October 25, 2012 ~ 2:30 p.m. - 4 p.m.

Honors College-Commons



From The Director continued from page 1

Houston, and it was published by CMAS in 1987 and updated in 2001. To date, forty Visiting Scholars have been part of our program, and 40% of them have been employed at UH. Six books on Mexican Americans in the Houston area have been produced.

The intellectual base of CMAS is in the social sciences and humanities, and we seek to encourage students to join the ranks of professions which require Masters and Ph.D. degrees to teach and also to work in our community in the social service sector. Not surprisingly the number of students who pursue graduate degrees is very low. This is why CMAS established the Graduate Fellowship Program in 1996 with the explicit purpose of recruiting and providing financial assistance to students who seek graduate degrees. To date, we have supported forty-five graduate students and 80% have completed their degrees. Lillian Salinas was the first CMAS graduate fellow and in her article she reflects upon the culture awakening she experienced when she enrolled in college and took some of our courses, which in turn led her to a career as a social worker.

At the undergraduate level among our various activities is the Academic Achievers Program (AAP). It began as the Hispanic Family College Project in 1986 at Stephen F. Austin High School and involves intense interaction with students through tutoring, mentoring, and skills workshops. The first group had eighty-six students, and we provided them with academic services from the ninth grade through college graduation. All graduated from high school but only a third earned college degrees. Cesar Alvarez and Alfred Castillo are examples of those who have

college degrees and in their articles they discuss their experiences as members of that early effort. Cesar earned a doctorate in Education and is an assistant principal at Jackson Middle School, his alma mater. Alfred Castillo holds a civil engineering degree and is employed with Dow Chemical Company. His wife Diana was also a member of the original group and she likewise earned a civil engineering degree. To date, AAP has graduated 190 students with degrees in a variety of fields which include engineering, business, communications, education, health and the social science. Our graduation rate is 72% compared with 60% for the U.S as a whole.

I close with an appeal for support. The money that we use to support the students in our Academic Achievers Program comes from the community. These monies allow us to award each student a \$12,500 four-year scholarship and a host of academic services—and 100% goes to the students in services provided. Their need is great. Our students come from less than modest circumstances as indicated by their mean family income of \$25,000.

On this, our 40th anniversary, however, we are broadening our appeal for support to include our graduate students and visiting scholars because the need for our representation at the graduate and faculty level is just as great as it is at the undergraduate level. CMAS has a proven record of success, but it is directly related to the generous support we receive from you. Together we have made a difference and together we can continue to do so from this fortieth anniversary onward into future.

Join us in making a difference in students' and scholars' lives.

Tatcho Mindiola, Ph.D., *Director*

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While still an undergraduate at Yale, he also gained valuable political training and insights by working in the offices of Texan politicians, such as Bob Bullock and Al Luna. In the middle of Martinez' senior year at Yale, a new state district opened up due to re-districting—District 148. Now familiar with constituent issues, Martinez chose to run for office rather than finish his senior year. In a hotly contested race, he won.

Stepping into elected office at age twenty-three, Martinez was eager to make a difference in a highly visible area related to education—the high dropout rate among Hispanic high school students. With this priority in mind, the stage was set for Martinez to become the champion for funding for CMAS.

One day while Martinez was working in his office, he received a telephone call from Tatcho Mindiola, Jr., asking to set up a meeting. During that first conference, Dr. Mindiola shared his vision for what CMAS could accomplish with a more generous budget that would be secure from year to year. Both men agreed that Mexican American college students needed support in their quest for a college degree, particularly since so few made it into college. Martinez says that he was particularly touched when he reflected upon the fact that many of Dr. Mindiola's students were about the same age as Martinez—still in his early twenties.

Eventually, Martinez suggested that an excellent strategy to secure the funding for CMAS through the legislature would be by using the mechanism of a line item appropriation. If such an item was approved through the legislative funding process in

Austin, the money would be “guaranteed” to CMAS. Fortunately, Martinez was able to negotiate such a line item successfully in the second year he proposed it.

But the story doesn't end there—either for CMAS or Martinez.

Martinez is a prominent Houston businessman and the president and CEO of Texas Taxi, Inc. In reflecting on the Mexican American community's readily apparent need for further education, he says: “I see that our community has come a long way from the 1980s. But we still have high dropout rates in high school. We need many more of our students going to college. When you look at universities, the percentage of Hispanics have grown, but when you look at our population and when our numbers will be in ten to fifteen years from now, it's clear we won't have the educated people we need.”

Martinez is still committed to education and to CMAS. He says: “Dr. Mindiola thinks outside the box. His programs are successful. Look at the awards and statistics they have garnered—the Star Award from the Texas Education Council, the phenomenal graduation rate among Academic Achiever Program participants. Why doesn't every Texas university try to duplicate the CMAS programs? They must be duplicated. They should be in every single university because they work. They achieve results.”

With a smile, Martinez says: “I'm thankful that Tatcho Mindiola came through my door all those years ago. Now, we need all the students he has already helped graduate to step forward. It's their turn to help those who are following in their footsteps.” 

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