

shenanigans to push the state to get serious.

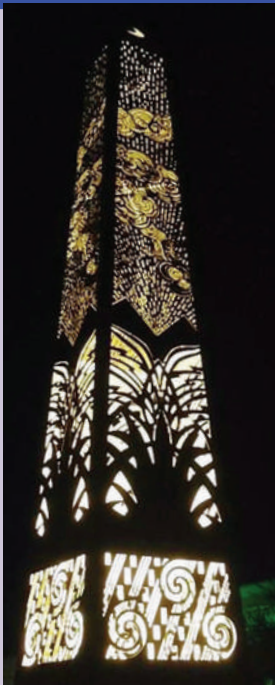
Dr. Cortez described one of the times he testified in a school finance trial: “I remember the state’s lawyer hammering away at me, asking how close to equity is close enough? ‘How close to equalization would you all be willing to accept’ – to, essentially, settle for. I told the lawyer: It’s either equal or it’s not. It’s either an equitable funding system or it’s not.”

He added: “It was insulting to be asked how many children you are willing to sacrifice so that you can ‘compromise’ to reach a reasonable settlement. At IDRA, we were never interested in being reasonable. As a matter of fact, we were often called unreasonable and unrealistic because we had the audacity to believe that it was possible to have an equitable school funding system for all kids. I believe that. I still believe that. I still think it’s possible.”

In the last five decades, IDRA and many with us have learned the critical importance of persistence. It has taken persistence in the courts and in the state capitol. It has taken the persistence of organizations like IDRA, MALDEF, the Equity Center and Every Texan. It has taken the persistence of school board members, superintendents and advocates.

And, most importantly, it has taken the persistence of families – mothers, fathers, grandparents – and students who insist that the state do its job to fund schools fairly and provide an excellent, college-ready education to every student. There’s nothing unreasonable about that.

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Angel’s public art sculpture, *The Beacon*, shines on night and day in the Beacon Hill neighborhood.



Angel Rodriguez-Diaz

December 6, 1955 - March 31, 2023



Artist Angel Rodriguez-Diaz, “un hijo del pueblo Latino”, passed on March 31 at age 67. An eminent artist who distinguished himself and achieved renown in the national and international art scene, Angel was especially notable in the

San Antonio community, who came to know his art not only in museums, galleries and special exhibitions, but in his distinctly impressive public art, in particular his outdoor sculptures, such as the “Beacon”, a metal obelisk on Blanco in Beacon Hill.

I first met Angel in 1995 through his partner and spouse, Rolando Briseño, an established artist in his own right. I got to know Angel better when I was on the arts committee for the renovation/restoration of San Fernando Cathedral, and asked him to submit his perception for a painting of “Las Tres Marias” at the tomb of the resurrected Jesus. Using three local strong Latina women as models and portraying them in his own unique and vivid realistic style, Angel’s large painting demonstrated his mastery of portraiture, for which he was well known. His work was selected over all the other submissions, and it became a permanent icon among all the sacred art in the Cathedral.



Above, Angel at 17 years old was a budding artist. Below, a self-portrait years later.

In 1998, Angel asked if I wanted to be a model for his new body of work, “Santos y Pecadores”. The result was not only a reflection of my sensibilities to the theme, but the painting also expressed various allegorical aspects on an ethnic, religious and philosophical level, aspects that permeated much of his artwork .

I remember Angel voicing his very strong convictions regarding socio-political ethnic and racial inequities, which were always underlying themes in his artwork. He also upheld a firm advocacy and voice for the LGBTQ community, in particular, subjects related to homosexuality and those still challenged by HIV.

Culturally, Angel was proud of his Puerto Rican heritage and the Latino community. I remember him being awestruck by a beautiful woman, and emotionally exclaiming: “ que bella es nuestra raza”! When his health showed signs of decline, Rolando asked some of his friends to assist in caring for Angel. We shared special moments when we went for a walk and enjoyed a meal at Mi Tierra.

*I will miss Angel...
“hijito del pueblo Latino”.*

—Richard Arredondo



“Las Tres Marias” was on exhibit at the San Fernando Cathedral and featured local women who posed for the portrait.

EDITOR’S NOTE: *The Esperanza board, staff & Buena Gente note the passing of an iconic artist whose humanity shone through in all of his artwork and actions. Our condolences to his husband, Rolando Briseño, his family and many friends. ¡Que en paz y poder descanse! ¡Angel Rodriguez -Diaz, siempre presente!*