

Irma Mireles

May 31, 1947 - December 9, 2023



Chicana activist Irma Mireles was born in Martindale, Texas and lived most of her life in San Antonio, Texas. She graduated from Brackenridge High School in downtown San Antonio and was well aware of what the building of Hemisfair Park did to the vibrant Chicano neighborhood that was torn down. As a result, she vowed to never step into “that damn park”

and she never did visit the Tower of the Americas. Early on, her father made her aware that “we lived in a city named for Juan Seguin, but we had to get off the sidewalk for a white person and we lived along the Guadalupe River, but we couldn’t go swimming.” These formative memories formed the basis of her activism throughout her life. Her concern for social justice and the political powerlessness of Chicanos prompted her to run for a seat on the San Antonio River Authority (SARA) and she was elected for a six-year term (1977-1982) becoming the first minority person and first woman elected to the SARA Board in fifty years. Irma was involved in many organizations most notably, La Raza Unida Party where she played key roles in the 70s making an impact on statewide elections. As committee chair and founder of the 50th Raza Unida Party Reunion

she stated “I’m proud to call myself a Chicana and continue to work for social justice, the rights of immigrants and promoting [the notion] that our vote DOES make a difference.” LULAC, Academia America, the Cesar Chavez Memorial Alliance and AARP were among other groups that she was actively engaged in. In the mid-1990s, while residing in Juneau, Alaska, she served on the State’s Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, and testified against the “English Only” bill being considered by the Legislature. Her testimony against the Bill ensured that it never made it out of committee and thus never became law. Her life was celebrated locally on Saturday, January 27th at St. Paul Catholic Church in San Antonio, Texas. Donations to the San Antonio P.E.A.C.E. Initiative at [paypal.me/PEACEInitiative](https://www.paypal.me/PEACEInitiative) were requested in Irma’s honor. Her words today ring truer than ever, “We need to be the change. We need to get out and vote and make the change happen.” The Esperanza Peace & Justice Center board, staff and Buena gente extend our condolences to Irma’s familia, the activist community and her wide circle of friends. May her memory be preserved in San Antonio history. Rest in peace and power! ¡Irma Mireles, presente!



¡Ignacio “Nacho” Estrada, presente!



Ignacio “Nacho” Estrada died on January 28, 2023 at the age of 77.

Nacho was not a movie star, but he might as well have been — because thousands of children, parents and educators in South Texas, Mexico, Puerto Rico and beyond were entertained by him

receiving powerful messages to combat drug use and bullying in the schools. He also urged kids to stay in school and care for their environment. His secret weapon was his skill as a ventriloquist and comedian who used puppets to convey his messages. For more than four decades, Nacho and his mannequin were eagerly awaited at schools, community centers and festivals. The Tortilla Monster and the infamous Maclovio were his most popular puppets. Tortilla Monster was reminiscent of the Cookie Monster with a deep, scary voice, while the dapper Maclovio, was Nacho’s sidekick —always reluctant to come out of his home, a suitcase, saying, “I’m not readyyyy!” As a teenager, Nacho already had a place in his heart for comedy and kindness and was known for being a prankster. He trained to be one of the most famous clowns in pop culture, Ronald McDonald, and was said to be the first Latino *Ronald McDonald* in the state of Texas. He was born on July 27, 1946, and raised in Edinburg, Texas, in the Rio Grande Valley before



moving to San Antonio. He was best known for his appearances at school functions in the Alamo City from the 1980s until as recently as the mid-2010s. Nacho was recognized for his work with children and received multiple awards from such groups as the Texas State Teachers Association; Alamo District XX and the Alamo Reading Council, among others. In 1993, *Smithsonian Magazine* named Estrada *Best Ventriloquist* in the category of *Distant Voice*. In 1995, he was named *Ventriloquist of the Year* at the *International Ventriloquist Convention*. Though his performances have come to an end, the laughter and positive spirit of Nacho Estrada will continue to resonate with many for years to come. In remembering him, we are reminded of the power of art to connect, inspire, and bring joy. A memorial service for Nacho will take place on Saturday, April 6, and be livestreamed on YouTube (bit.ly/ignacio-nacho) at 6 p.m. The Estrada family thanks Nacho and Maclovio’s fans for their support and asks that memories and condolences be sent to: imnotready2024@gmail.com or to The Nacho Estrada Family at P.O. Box 158, Leming, Texas 78050. Our heartfelt condolences to Nacho’s fans and family from the Esperanza board, staff and Buena gente. May the joyful memories he created for us sustain us in our loss.

¡Nacho Estrada, presente!

