



Smithsonian Latino Center

August 12, 2016

Belinda Menchaca
Acting Executive Director
Guadalupe Cultural Arts Center
San Antonio, TX 78207

Estimada Belinda,

Some 40 years ago a visionary and intrepid young man realized a dream—to create a festival showcasing films and videos about the Latino experience. In 1976, little was known or appreciated about the work of mostly Mexican American filmmakers. Little work was in distribution, little of it was accepted for broadcast, and there was no venue for the work to be seen, for filmmakers to gather, interact with the community, or support each other.

In 2016, it is important for us to pause in salute to Adán Medrano, founder of San Antonio CineFestival, and to thank him for his leadership in establishing this country's first Latino film and video festival in this most Latino of U.S. cities. The festival has come a long way from its humble beginnings under the auspices of Oblate College. Adán handed CineFestival off to the Guadalupe Cultural Arts Center in 1983, and into the arms of yours truly. I did my best to continue Adán's vision, and added a few new elements to the program. I ended my tenure as CineFestival director in 1988.

Other CineFestival directors took charge, accomplished professionals who have added and improved the program and its reach. I know that I join Adán in thanking all of them for their hard work and innovation in continuing this important legacy of service to our filmmakers and to our community, to whom we owe a great measure of gratitude for their participation and support over these 40 years.

I want to thank the Guadalupe Cultural Arts Center for providing a secure home for CineFestival. It is a legacy of program excellence and service to community of which the organization can be very proud.

I look forward to celebrating this remarkable 40-year benchmark with Adán, former CineFestival directors, filmmakers, Guadalupe representatives and community members.

Con aprecio,

Eduardo Díaz, Director
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