

IU Latino Alumni News

Vol. 4/Fall 2003

Indiana University Latino Alumni Association

Alumni reunite, celebrate La Casa's 30th anniversary

The first-ever Latino Alumni Reunion and celebration of La Casa's 30th anniversary was Sept. 26–28 on the Indiana University Bloomington campus. Many former IU Latino students made their way to campus to catch up with old friends and stroll down memory lane as they visited their old haunts.

I was one of the students who made the drive from northwest Indiana to Bloomington. The last time I was on campus was 1985. Along the way, I stopped off in Indianapolis to pick up my best friend and fellow IU classmate Lupe (Matamoros) Carter, who flew in from California. As we drove to Bloomington, we reminisced about old times and looked forward to the upcoming weekend.

The reunion weekend started with registration at La Casa on Friday. Walking up the stairs to the front door brought a flood of many wonderful memories. Although La Casa had recently undergone some remodeling, the one thing that hadn't changed was that warm, welcoming feeling. When I was at IU, La Casa was the place to socialize and study; but most important, it was home away from home. The improvements serve to make La Casa that much more inviting, especially for the new generation of Latino students on campus.

Other activities planned for Friday night were the welcoming reception and two open houses: one for the Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies and the second for the Latino Studies program. The open houses and the welcoming reception were great opportunities to meet fellow alumni and become familiar with the Latino Studies program and the Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies.

Saturday morning turned out to be a sunny and warm day full of more
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Departing IU Bloomington Chancellor Sharon Brehm, left, chats with Distinguished Alumni Award winner J. Guadalupe Valtierra at the Latino Alumni Reunion, which took place Sept. 26–28 in Bloomington.

From the president

Association's future looking bright

Saludos a todos! I am very proud to have been chosen to serve as president of the IU Latino Alumni Association. This is going to be a promising year for the IULAA.

I'm excited about all the positive changes in store for us — beginning with the new staff and board.

Michelle Gutierrez comes to us from Indianapolis, where she served as a staff attorney with the Indiana Legal Services. She will serve as the staff liaison to IULAA, and we are very fortunate to have her on our staff.

Our first Latino Alumni Reunion,

held in September, was an extremely enjoyable occasion. Many thanks to those involved in making it a reality and for their outstanding efforts toward such a triumphant event. We left there with a great deal of enthusiasm to realize the association's potential. A dedicated board of directors was elected, and we look forward to working with Gutierrez and our membership in a harmonious manner to achieve the mission and goals of the IULAA.

Please keep us informed of your

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Help needed to complete IU Latino history exhibit

We have been hard at work putting together a photo and history exhibit to showcase the Latino presence at Indiana University Bloomington. We have made some great strides, but we need your help.

Unfortunately, we have had some challenges in gathering photos, newspaper clippings, and other items. Do you have pictures, newspaper clippings, flyers, or other flat items that you can share as part of this exhibit and archive? Many of us within the Latino community know of our pride and history at IU. It is our hope that through the exhibit, we will also be able to share this with the rest of the world. Help us spread the word.

To have your photographs or any other items considered for the exhibit, simply send us a copy of the item with your name, address, telephone, and

e-mail address to La Casa, Latino Cultural Center, 715 E. Seventh St., Bloomington, IN 47408. You may also send an electronic copy to lacasa@indiana.edu

Please include names or any other information you can supply regarding each photo or item you submit. We will not be able to return any item so be sure to send a copy instead of the original.

Listed below are general themes and specific images we need, but we are not limited to this list:

- Photos before 1970 of Latino students, faculty, staff, and alumni
- Informal family snapshots of visits, especially of family dropping off or picking up students
- Ceremonies, receptions, activities, and special events
- Any holiday meals or cultural traditions celebrated while at IU

• Recreation activities such as movies, music concerts, shows, playing games, sports, or any other outdoor event

• Organizational group photo or photo of officers

• Trips while in college

• La Casa photos

• Campus photos

• Special Latino guests, speakers, or performers

• Event programs or handouts

• Any writings such as stories, essays, journals, or papers on your experience at IU

We also welcome the opportunity to hear your story regarding your experience at IU. To share your story or suggestions, or to let us know of someone who would be interested in this project, please contact us at (812) 855-0174 or by e-mail at lacasa@indiana.edu.

Latino graduates encouraged to join student-recruitment program

Greetings! I currently serve as the director of multicultural outreach at Indiana University. My position is newly created and is a joint effort between the Office of Admissions and the Office of Academic Support and Diversity.

My main responsibility is recruiting minority students to IU. This is done through various efforts, such as visiting high schools, attending college fairs, planning and implementing on-campus visit days, communicating with families, and making sure that students know the wonderful social, academic, and cultural opportunities available at IU.

As IU alumni, you are extremely important to the recruitment process. Sharing your experiences at this institution with prospective students can be a wonderful tool for encouraging a student to attend IU.

Therefore, I would like to invite you to become involved in recruiting more Latino students to the campus by becoming an alumni student recruiter. Alumni student recruiters willingly assist the Office of Admissions with various outreach activities for prospective students. For only a minor time commitment, you can make a huge investment to ensure that future generations of Latino students have an opportunity to experience a quality education at IU. Alumni

have assisted admissions with:

- college fairs;
- previews (special admissions presentations in select geographical locations);
- send-offs (programs that alumni host for students in their geographical area who have chosen to attend IU, which usually happen in the summer or fall before school begins);
- and resources for students when they have questions and want to connect with the university.

I cannot stress enough the importance of alumni in increasing the access of Latino students to IU. If you are interested in this great opportunity, please visit www.indiana.edu/~iualumsr to learn more about the alumni student recruitment program. Although this Web site will allow you to sign up, please contact me at lpatt@indiana.edu or (812) 855-1678 if you would like to participate in the program. Doing so will allow me to work on more targeted opportunities that would require your participation.

Also, I welcome any questions you may have.

Thank you, and I look forward to having dedicated alumni like you to assist in our recruitment efforts.

— Lori Patton

Latino Alumni News

IU Latino Alumni News is published by the IU Alumni Association for the IU Latino Alumni Association to encourage alumni interest in and support for IU. For membership information, please call (800) 824-3044 or e-mail iualumni@indiana.edu.

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LAA welcomes new liaison

The Latino Alumni Association is happy to announce the arrival of our new liaison, Michelle Gutierrez, who succeeds Georgia Burgueño. In this position, Gutierrez will assist the LAA board in achieving its goals, assist in planning the alumni reunion and other events, and will be the primary LAA contact for both alumni and students. Aside from her duties with the LAA, Gutierrez is also a student adviser. She said she is especially looking forward to synthesizing the interests of alumni with the needs of Latino students.

Gutierrez is a 2000 graduate of the Indiana University School of Law. Prior to joining the LAA staff, she worked as an attorney with Indiana Legal Services. In that job, she worked with the low-income immigrant population of Indiana.

From the president

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accomplishments so we can share them with your classmates. (You can send updates through our Web site.) This will be an essential professional networking resource tool and a valuable source to renew old acquaintances. Keep your contact information updated with us to assure you receive the IULAA newsletters and invitations to association activities and board meetings.

Also, please visit our Web site often. It will continue to highlight the latest developments of the association and among alumni. You can update your address and work information, find out about upcoming alumni events, and learn about alumni privileges.

I look forward to helping to position the IULAA for its next level of service, and to the opportunity to work closely with you. Do not hesitate to contact me, any member of the board, or Gutierrez if we can be of assistance to you or if you desire to assist us. We have many accomplishments to look forward to, and I believe that teamwork is the key!

— Esther Vargas, MBA'00

Alumni notes

1970s

Danny Simonsohn, BA'76, has been appointed to the Parent's Association advisory board at Indiana University Bloomington.

1980s

Michael Huerta, BA'72, JD'83, received the Latino Faculty and Staff Council Service Award in September.

Alice Jordán-Miles, BA'89, is the executive director of the Martin Luther King Montessori School in Fort Wayne, Ind. She can be reached at mlkmontessori@aol.com.

Save the date!

Join us for the second
Latino Alumni Reunion
Sept. 17–19, 2004!

Visit our Web site, www.indiana.edu/~latinoaa, for a registration form and more information

Alumni reunion

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activities. Registration continued, followed by a continental breakfast and a walk around the campus.

During lunch, the first Latino Distinguished Alumni Award was given. The recipient was J. Guadalupe Valtierra, region one chancellor at Ivy Tech State College. Valtierra gave an inspiring speech that touched many of those in attendance and served to illustrate that his was a well-deserved award. More mingling, catching up, and exchanging contact information occurred after lunch, and plans were made to meet at the Festival Latino later that afternoon.

The Festival Latino was an outdoor concert and festival held in Dunn Meadow. Luckily, the rain from the night before dried up and allowed us the opportunity to enjoy ourselves. The event allowed us to dance to great salsa and merengue music, visit with one another, take pictures and check out the informational booths and activities for the kids. During this time, there was an informational seminar on giving back to the Latino community at IU by becoming an alumni student recruiter (see page 2).

And to add to the already stimulating repertoire of activities, one more event was scheduled. We were welcomed to the formal banquet by Alberto Torchinsky (who, during my time on campus, was Dean Torchinsky), the associate vice chancellor with the Office of Strategic Hiring and Support. The alumni and current students' reflections and observations were the best part of the banquet. Many alumni spoke about their time at IU and what they are doing now. The current students spoke about their time at IU, their future plans and how La Casa and Lillian Casillas, director of La Casa, have played an important role in their lives. Many happy tears flowed because the reunion was an important occasion. It was the meeting of the past and present, coming together for a purpose — to reflect on the history and contribution of Latino students and faculty at IU and their continuation in order to pave the way for the future generations of Latino students at IU.

Sunday morning began rather early, and for those who stayed out late dancing the night before at the Second Story nightclub (guilty as charged), 9 a.m. was way too early to begin the day.

But one final and important item to

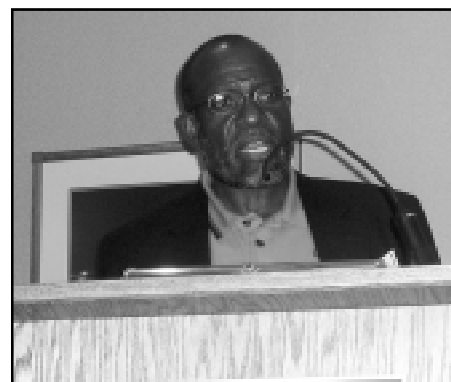
attend to before the reunion weekend ended was the Latino alumni business meeting, at which it was asserted that the Latino Alumni Association's primary function will be to "stimulate and foster an environment of positive interaction between Indiana University, Indiana University Alumni Association and the community of Latino alumni." At this meeting, the IU Latino Alumni Association board was introduced. After introductions and discussion related to the history, constitution, and bylaws of the IULAAB and IU Alumni Association, open discussion took place. Some of the topics included recruiting IU Latino alumni to join the IU Alumni Association, benefits of membership, future activities, importance of the board members keeping in frequent contact, and planning the next meeting.

I believe I can safely say (and many of the alumni who attended the reunion would probably agree) the weekend and all of its activities were a success. For many, it was a great trip down memory lane. Thank you to the Latino Alumni Reunion Planning Committee for all of your hard work.

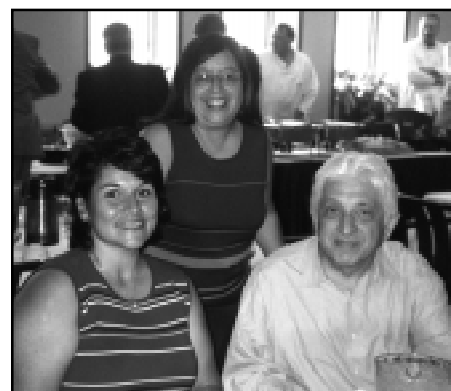
— Luz María Pérez, '88,
machetera65@yahoo.com



Three generations of IU graduates: Melisa Benavente, BA'02; Ruth (Gonzalez) Benavente, BS'78, MS'83; and Iris Gonzalez, MA'64, PhD'73.



Charlie Nelms, IU vice president for student development and diversity, gives an address at the alumni reunion.



Lupe Carter, Alba Franco, and Alberto Torchinsky catch up at the banquet.

First alumni reunion a success!

Latino alumni gathered Sept. 26–28 in Bloomington for a reunion and celebration of La Casa's 30th anniversary. Here are some scenes from that weekend's activities. Check our Web site, www.indiana.edu/~latinoaa, for more photos.



Luis Ortega, Danny Simonsohn, Iris Rosa, Luis Davila, Juan Anaya, and Felix Perez mingle at the alumni reunion.



J. Guadalupe Valtierra beams with happiness as he is honored with the Distinguished Latino Alumni Award.

Contact us!



Michelle Gutierrez, LAA liaison: (812) 855-9632
E-mail: latinoaa@indiana.edu

Web site: www.indiana.edu/~latinoaa

IUAA membership: (800) 824-3044 or iualumni@indiana.edu



Interested in mentoring a Latino student?

For more information on how you can help, visit our Web site: www.indiana.edu/~latinoaa

Valtierra honored at first Latino Alumni Reunion weekend

During the first Latino Alumni Reunion weekend, Guadalupe Valtierra was honored with the Distinguished Latino Alumni Award. This award is given to living alumni of Indiana University who have been outstanding in their chosen field of endeavor and/or have made significant contributions benefiting their community, state, nation, or university. Excerpts of Valtierra's remarks are reprinted below.

Let me preface my comments today with some data and report findings that provide a backdrop. A study by the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities in August 2000 reported that "As a whole, school-age Latinos battle a host of educational obstacles. According to the National Center for Educational Statistics, in 1992 10 percent of the nation's eighth graders were Hispanic. More than one-third of those children reported two or more 'at risk' characteristics: single-parent family, low levels of parental education, limited English proficiency, low family income, sibling dropout, and spending more than three hours a day at home alone."

Ruben Martinez, in a paper commissioned by HACU entitled, "Hispanic Leadership in American Higher Education," concluded that "for the first time in the history of this country, there exists a critical mass of highly educated Hispanics who are positioned in society to significantly improve the life chances of the rest of the population, both Hispanic and non-Hispanic."

Being Hispanic, a Latino, Mexican-American, is a blessing for me, but [I realized] early on that I would continually face issues of access to opportunities and equity in practice. [I learned] that I would succeed not because of my Mexican heritage, but rather due to the training, education, and skills I would learn that would make me a qualified individual.

I first came to Indiana University Bloomington in 1979 to begin law school. I arrived as "Martin's brother," since he began his IU years that summer with the Groups program. I want to thank him because he actually helped orient me to the campus and the wealth of activities available. Most importantly, he introduced me to La Casa and the Office of Latino Affairs.

I could spend the next hour talking

about all the wonderful events and activities that took place through La Casa, but overall it's important that we take the time to acknowledge that having a gathering place that gave many of us the chance to "feel like at home" was and continues to be important.

We should feel that we left IU a better place. Sure, statistically the number of Latinos continues at an unrepresentative rate, *pero seguimos sobreviviendo*. We need to be proud of the fact that many have come, many have graduated, and many have contributed back to their community, wherever that ends up being.

Bloomington was home for a short while. There are good memories and very happy present realities. Our families grow, our children get older, and it too quickly becomes time for us to let them out on their own to discover their own potentials. And we all pray that the places where we have been have been made better by our being there, and that our children continue that rich tradition of leaving their marks and one day celebrating their successes.

But it's not easy. Nationally, Latinos are either becoming, or have already achieved, status as the majority minority in this country. Aside from showing our fertility and longevity, this statistic invites us to excel at all matters, educationally, career-wise, and within our local communities. But statistically, we don't. We don't graduate from high school. We don't go on to college, and if we do, we're not there long enough to get either the associate's or bachelor's degree. If we've somehow bucked that statistic, we don't continue on to master's or doctoral programs, so we're not able to serve as academic models for our youth at postsecondary institutions. We need to continue to support the educational process so that others after us will have better opportunities for success.

We need to become more involved both at home and in our local schools, churches, and service agencies. We need to serve on boards, volunteer for field trips, become active mentors for our youth and communities. Remember, it's important to be a good role model not just for the little Latinos running around, but also for the rest of the community to see that Latinos can and do make a

positive difference in this country.

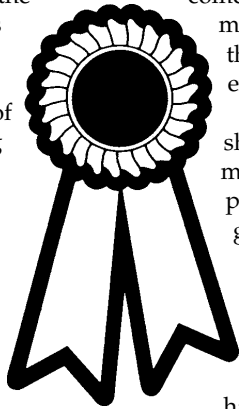
You should, as our parents tried, provide a solid moral upbringing by taking on responsibilities as needed. You should nurture an appreciation and respect for education, from kindergarten, through high school, college, and beyond, either as a parent, teacher, mentor, colleague, or friend. You must foster a sense of fair play and an understanding of equality and the importance of access and opportunities for all, despite an individual's background or upbringing. Many here, whether you realize it or not, played a role in helping me get to where I am today, and I want to thank each and every one of you. For the roles all of you will continue to play in furthering my success, and the successful enhancement and improvement of Latinos everywhere, I especially want to thank you.

Growing up in "da region" presented many opportunities for making significant life decisions, even though many of us did not fully realize the implications of our actions. I would joke [during college] that most of my high school classmates had already passed on, given the roughness of the era and living in downtown Gary. For me, however, I had a supportive and firm set of parents, 10 brothers and sisters, a bunch of cousins, and even the neighbors down the street watching out for me. In fact, my story and the story of many here today is witness to the adage that "it takes a village to raise a child," and I'm proud to say, *hermanos y hermanas*, you've done a good job with many of us.

To be recognized for doing what one enjoys is special. To be recognized by one's alma mater is significant. To be able to share that honor with family and friends is, as is said in the commercial, priceless. I'm proud, humbled and honored to [receive this award]. It creates continued challenges to realize that one's contributions are recognized by others as significant, when you actually thought you were just doing things because they felt right.

A few years back, Charles Barkley said, "I don't want to be a role model." Well, like it or not, with so few Latinos completing the educational system at either the high school or college level, you don't have the luxury of opting out of being a role model. You have succeeded and must show those that are coming behind us that they too can achieve as

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Latino alumni to establish scholarship fund

At the most recent board meeting of the Latino Alumni Association, the board unanimously voted to establish a scholarship fund.

"I am very excited about this scholarship," said Lillian Casillas, director of La Casa. "I know students who work three jobs to make ends meet and resort to using credit cards to buy their textbooks."

Student adviser Michelle Gutierrez said the scholarship will bolster Latino students' morale and finances.

"I have noticed a real desire of Latino students to know and be involved with Latino alumni," she said. "This scholarship will remind the students in a very tangible way that alumni understand the challenges they face and believe in the students' ability to succeed."

The criteria for the scholarship are yet to be determined. That will be developed by a committee of the LAA. The committee will also have the task of developing the application process, involving faculty, and choosing future student recipients.

The LAA board's goal is to award the first LAA scholarship in fall 2004. For further information about the scholarship, please contact Gutierrez at (812) 855-9632.

Contributions to the LAA Scholarship Fund should be made payable to the IU Foundation and can be mailed to the Latino Alumni Association, Memorial Hall West 108, 1021 E. Third St., Bloomington, IN 47405-7005.

Valtierra honored

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much, if not more, than what we have thus far.

This distinction today, while personalized for me, much more truly reflects the many successes of all Latinos who have come before, those who made today possible for me. I thank and acknowledge the role our present company and absent friends have played in making this celebration possible today, and I salute each of you in turn. May we always remember that every action creates a reaction, and your actions today will reverberate well into the future, continuing to make this world a much better place for our children.

For the complete text of Valtierra's comments, please visit www.indiana.edu/%7Elatinoaa/recipComments.html.

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Latino Alumni: What's new with you?

The IU Alumni Association is charged with maintaining records for all IU alumni. Please print as much of the following information as you wish. Its purpose, in addition to providing us with your class note, is to keep IU's alumni records accurate and up to date. To verify and update your information online, visit our online alumni directory at www.alumni.indiana.edu/directory.



Name _____ Date _____

Preferred name _____

Last name while at IU _____

IU Degree(s)/Yr(s) _____

Soc. Sec. # or Student ID # _____

Home address _____

Home phone _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Business title _____

Company/Institution _____

Company address _____

Work phone _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

* E-mail _____

* Home page URL _____

** Please indicate clearly upper and lower case.*

Mailing address preference: Home Business

Spouse name _____

Last name while at IU _____

IU Degree(s)/Yr(s) _____

Your news: _____

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Attach additional pages if necessary. Mail to the address above, or fax to (812) 855-8266.