

**The Power of the United Community**  
Mural Project for HUMA 2319: Chicano/Latino Art  
Mural Unveiling: May 4<sup>th</sup>, 2016

The community is the only place we feel safe expressing our beliefs on the good and the bad that surrounds us. The community is not always our safe place but our people help us feel safe and empowered. Due to the people that have lived in our community, nine members of the Humanities 2319: Chicano/Latino Art class at Lee College decided to create a mural that depicts the truth behind the Baytown community. They want to reveal the forgotten history behind some of our old important buildings. We want to educate the members of the community why these buildings are important and what we are hoping to see in the future for the community. We want to shine a light not just on the history of Baytown but also about the forgotten and untold history. The people who have come together to plan this mural for months are people who care for each other. They are people who don't want to be known for just starting "trouble" but for creating art that displays the ideas that should be discussed within the Baytown community.

*Below are some of the buildings that are depicted in the mural:*

**Lorenzo De Zavala Elementary School** was the first educational facility for Mexican American children. The school was established in 1923 and recently received a historical marker this year. Some community members have mixed feelings about this school since it supported so many students but also since it used corporal punishment at times to discipline youth.

**George Washington Carver Elementary School** was built in the 1940's and opened in 1948. It was an all African American school due to the fact that in that time period schools were segregated.

**Sterling Municipal Library** was built in 1963. It was expanded in 1975 and 1995. It is the home of much cultural and literary programming for the community, such as this mural.

The **Brunson Theater** was opened on August 23, 1949 and bought by the City of Baytown in 1997. The film *Hellfighter* was filmed in Baytown in 1968.

The **Wiesenthal Drug Store** was owned by the Wiesenthal brothers but was bought off by Garret Herring. According to surviving newspaper stories, the infamous Bert Smith lynching happened somewhere near

the store. According to John Marquez, “Garrett R. Herring witnessed the Smith lynching from a window at the “old Wiesenthal Drug Store” (Marquez 85).

**The Promise Center** was a vacant building for 12 years until **Fred Aguilar** and **Agustin Loreda** decided to help out the community. It took 3 years of renovation but it has been a great help to the community in producing poetry events, art shows, and educational programs.

*Some of the people depicted in the mural:*

**Leo Tanguma** was born In Beeville, Texas. He is known as a Chicano muralist that has lived in Baytown for 22 years and went to Lee College.

**John Marquez** is Assistant Professor in the Department of African American Studies at Northwestern University, where he also a founding member of the Latina and Latino Studies program. He is a Chicano and native of Baytown. His book *Black Brown Solidarity* was a key resource in our development of the mural project.

**Victoria Marron** is a grant director and Puente Project Mentoring Program coordinator at Lee College, and has been instrumental in bringing great cultural relevance to the academic environment at Lee College. She was instrumental in the creation of this mural.

**Laura Torres** is an Education Program Coordinator at Barber’s Hill High School, a long-time organizer of the local chapter of the National Hispanic Institute, and a Librotraficante. She has been central to the development of Latino student achievement in Baytown.

**Orlando Lara** is the lead instructor for the Mexican American Studies program at Lee College and the lead instructor for this mural project.

**Emily Trevino** and **Cynthia Rose Pizana** are co-chairs of the MAS Raza Collective and have been central to revitalizing student involvement and leadership in Baytown.

**Leslie Castro** is a Puente student in the Chicano/Latino Art class who represents the students in the class who helped to create this mural. The following students also participated: **Caine Salazar, Emily Blumentritt, Felicite Herrera, Alma Castilleja, Cristina Serrata, Abigail Lopez, Karla Amezcua, Maria Montemayor.**