

Belle Ortiz



Belle Ortiz is considered the First Lady of Mariachi Education, not only in San Antonio but throughout the world. She earned her Bachelor of Music Education in 1968 at Our Lady of the Lake University in San Antonio. Her career as teacher and music teacher took her to many school districts in San Antonio including Edgewood, Northside, and San Antonio Independent School District (SAISD). In 1970, as both an educator and administrator for the SAISD, Ms. Ortiz created a school mariachi curriculum for middle and high school students. These students studied mariachi instrumentation, history, culture, and language. At this time, Ms. Ortiz was also a music instructor at San Antonio College and the University of Texas at San Antonio.

Ms. Ortiz was the driving force behind the first International Mariachi Festival held in 1979 in San Antonio. Based on the success of this festival the concept of an International Mariachi Festival has been duplicated throughout the United States. In 1979, Ms. Ortiz co-founded the international renowned Campanas de America (Campanas). Mr. Juan Ortiz, Belle's husband, is the director of Campanas and Belle is the manager. Campanas continues to be a driving force behind mariachi education programs in public schools. So much so, that many of the Campanas members are instructor and teachers in various public schools themselves, following in Ms. Ortiz's steps. Ms. Ortiz was the writer and consultant for the Festival Folkloric at Six Flags Fiesta Texas. Belle has also contributed to several publications including "Juntos" published by Prentiss Hall and "Music and You" published by Mc Millan McGraw Hill. "Music and You" is a textbook utilized in the Texas public school system.

In 1989 Juan and Belle were joint recipients of the Mind Science Foundations' Imagineer Award. The Imagineer Award is an annual search for creative visionaries who have made a difference in the local community of San Antonio. In 2002 Belle was inducted into San Antonio Women's Hall of Fame. Belle has countless career highlights and accomplishments. Those listed above are but few notables to give you a glimpse into this remarkable individual. Belle epitomizes the Arts and is constantly striving to "enhance the quality of life by ensuring the future of arts (Mariachi Music) for the people

of Texas, (the country and the world.)”