

Jim García

A Biography

Personal

Jim Garcia is a third generation Mexican American born on September 16, 1955 in Corona, California. His parents and paternal grandparents worked in the fields of southern California and the valleys along the Pacific coast. His maternal grandfather worked at Kaiser Steel Corporation and maternal grandmother was very knowledgeable in traditional healing and medicine. In 1955, his father, Jose Alfredo Garcia received a job with the Kaiser Steel Corporation in Fontana, California and became a union member. The local union provided the Garcia family with health, dental and other benefits generally not available to farm workers in the United States. His mother, Rose Marie Uribe, in addition to being a homemaker, worked in the local packing-houses and as a cafeteria cook in the local schools.

Although born in the United States, Jim retains many of the Mexican customs and traditions of his parents and grandparents. Attending public schools in southern California provided an opportunity to experience and appreciate the rich cultural diversity that exists in this nation and throughout the world. Having lived in the second largest concentration of Spanish-speaking people in the world, has served to reinforce a bilingual / bicultural identity and world view. He credits his Mexican heritage and fellow Chicano homeboys for helping him achieve a 3.0 high school GPA and graduating from the University of Oregon in four years.

Professional

During his Senior year in college, Jim volunteered as a tutor for the High School Equivalency Program (HEP), a program which assists migrant farm workers to attain a GED diploma. While tutoring at HEP, Jim discovered his bilingual skills to be extremely useful in preparing students for the GED. The HEP experience gave him an opportunity to give back to the community which has provided a strong foundation for his accomplishments in life. After graduating from UO in 1977, Jim worked as a bilingual substitute teacher in his birthplace of Corona, California. Three years later, he received a job at HEP and taught Social Studies / Reading classes for about 8 years. While working at UO, he served as a faculty advisor to MEChA and taught Chicano Studies in the Ethnic Studies Program. In 1988, he accepted a position as Assistant Director for the Chicano Student Programs at New Mexico State University. Living in Las Cruces, New Mexico afforded Jim an opportunity to live in an area of the United States with a large concentration of Hispanic/Mexican people.

In 1990, served as an Advising Coordinator for the Office of Multicultural Affairs (OMA) at the University of Oregon, overseeing several scholarship retention programs, including the Underrepresented Minority Scholarship for Freshmen and College Juniors and the Target of Opportunity Scholarship. Jim worked closely with the migrant education community to increase the participation of migrant farm workers in higher education. Jim also presented college information at community gatherings to Spanish speaking parents. Eventually, Jim served as Assistant Director and Acting Director and was promoted to Assistant Professor in 1995 in recognition for his high level of professionalism, caring and dedication in overseeing administrative responsibilities of OMA programs. In 1998, Jim became the Coordinator of the Casa Educacional Office at Oregon State University and focused more of his energies on serving the needs of the largest and growing community of color, in Oregon. As Coordinator, Jim did extensive outreach to the Latino community and participated in numerous migrant education and Latino youth conferences. In 2000, Jim served as Diversity Coordinator at Lane Community College and engaged in diversity initiatives for a more inclusive and responsive organization for diverse student and staff populations. Jim also taught Chicano Studies courses at Chemeketa Community College, Portland State University-Salem Center and Oregon State University.

Community Service

In 1991, Jim co-founded *Raza Sin Fronteras* with Rose Mary Villanueva, a singing duo performing *Corridos* on Chicano history at community events and public schools. As a result, over \$4,000 dollars was raised and donated to a book scholarship fund for UO MEChA students. In 1996, he co-founded the *Ganas* Program with middle school educator, Roscoe Caron, which connects college students with middle school students. *Ganas* provides tutoring, college information, field trips and an educational component designed to develop bicultural leadership skills. For 8 years, Jim has also volunteered as a Choir Director for the Spanish Mass at St. Mary's Catholic Church in Eugene, and has performed music at Mexican weddings, baptisms and quinceañeras since 1995. In 2001, Jim co-founded a leadership academy, with Connie Mesquita, for Lane County Latino high school students called *Puertas Abiertas* at Lane Community College. The leadership academy provides a bicultural learning environment for college preparation and scholarship information. In 2011, the *Puertas Abiertas* Leadership Academy received a nomination for national recognition by ¡Excelencia in Education! Founded in 1995, ¡Excelencia! is a national organization dedicated to identifying and honoring programs and departments in the United States at the forefront of increasing academic opportunities and improving achievement for Latino students.

Awards / Recognition

In 1973, Jim received a Mexican American Community Scholarship and attended the University of Oregon. In 1980, HEP students presented Jim with a Si Se Puede Award in recognition of his teaching, service and commitment to HEP students. During the 1980's and 90's, he received various awards from the UO MEChA Chapter, including the Chicano of the Year Award in 1992, in recognition of his role as faculty advisor. In 1995, in recognition of his work with students of color and community service, Jim attained the rank of Assistant Professor at the University of Oregon. In 1997, Jim received the Golden Apple Community Volunteer Award from the Eugene Education Association. In 1998, Jim received an Honor Blanket from the Native American Student Union at the University of Oregon.

During the year 2000, a number of organizations recognized Jim for his 20 years of service to the local and state Chicano community. The National Association for Chicana & Chicano Studies honored Jim with a Community Service Award, for his dedication to the advancement of the Chicano community in Oregon. The OSU MEChA Chapter awarded Jim the Aztec Cosmos Award for his service to the Chicano students at Oregon State University. The Office of Multicultural Affairs at the University of Oregon presented Jim with a Special Appreciation Award for his dedicated and committed service to OMA, students of color at UO, and the Eugene community. Jim also received the Hometown Hero Award from the City of Eugene Human Rights Commission. Also in 2000, Jim was selected as a Chautauqua Humanities Scholar for the Oregon Council for the Humanities. As a Chautauqua presenter, Jim performed *Corridos*, reading poetry and showing artwork that brought the Mexican American cultural experience to life to local rural communities throughout Oregon. During the year 2004, Jim received the *Human Rights Leadership Award* from the Springfield Alliance for Equality and Respect (SAFER); the *Equity Award* from the Eugene 4J School District Equity Committee and the 2005 Dr Martin Luther King, Jr. Leadership Award from the City of Eugene Human Rights

Program. In 2008, Jim received the Tenison Haley Outstanding Contribution Award from the Oregon Diversity Institute for his service to students. In 2012, Jim received a Community Appreciation Award from the Centro Latino Americano, a non-profit community organization, for his service to Latino families in Lane County.

Present

As the Chicano/Latino Student Program Coordinator for Lane Community College, Jim teaches Chicano/Latino leadership courses; coordinates the *Puertas Abiertas* Leadership Academy- a bicultural leadership program for Chicano/Latino high school students; assist students and family with financial aid and college access; consults the organization to ensure equity practices based on Latino cultural experiences; and serves as a faculty advisor to the MEChA de Lane chapter. Education continues to be a life long process for Jim. In addition to learning from his family members, friends, students and colleagues, Jim currently is a doctoral student in Critical and Socio-Cultural Studies in the College of Education at the University of Oregon. His primary interest is to present a more complete and accurate representation of Mexican American life and culture in school curriculum and the media. He also has a passion with working with youth to reaffirm a bicultural heritage and leadership experience.