

## **Armando Chapa**

### **Written by: C. Chapa (daughter)**

My (Our) dad was born on January 1, 1941 in Houston, TX to Jose and Alberta Chapa. The third of five children, he grew up attending schools in the Houston ISD. As a teenager he participated in school sports and graduated from Milby High School in 1959. Wanting the best for his son, Jose Chapa (grandpa), a ship channel laborer with a fourth grade education, was very adamant about him (Dad) attending school and forbade him from getting a job like many of his peers.

“If you get a little money in your pocket you will never continue your education,” he warned him. This, I believe, provided the foundation and motivation for my father (Dad) to attend the University of Texas at Austin where he graduated in 1963 with a Bachelor’s degree in Physical Education and a minor in History.

A job offer for an assistant living director from Gary Job Corps in San Marcos brought Armando (Dad) to the Hays area. Some how he convinced Evangelina his wife, not only to marry him but to make the move as well. This decision was a stepping stone to today, but the big leap in his career path was in 1974, after 10 years in the San Marcos area when Olna Montgomery, the Director of Special Education, recruited my dad to help with the Special Education Program here in the Hays School District.

His dedication and hard work must have made an impression on the school’s administrators. After three years with the district, on a hot Monday evening, in the summer of 1977, there was a knock on our door. Superintendent Mo Johnson’s secretary, Opal Kay, had come to tell Dad that the school board wanted to talk to him. It seemed that finding a principal for Hays Middle School was on the agenda and his name was mentioned. We still aren’t sure if he was politely asked or possibly hard pressed into accepting the position. He accepted of course and then for the next several years he would spend his days at the middle school and his evening and weekends earning his Administrative Certification.

In 1985, the growth of this district was just starting. One middle school was no longer enough and dad made the move to the newly opened Kyle Middle School. There he earned the nickname “Papa Chapa”. It is your decision as to (I will let you decide) whether or not the nickname came from his commitment to his students or the fact that 3 more daughters were added to the family. In 1993, he moved once again to Barton Junior High, however this time he joined the staff as a counselor. He remained at Barton until his retirement in 2004. Even though my dad has retired after spending over 30 years in the Hays School District, he continues to give his time to kids as a counselor in the Lockhart ISD.

Although my father certainly has a knack for aiding others in the education field, I personally believe that his first love is sports. Dad’s love has always been in sports and he would probably love to coach. He has had plenty of practice coaching all of us girls and he’ll have even more coaching responsibilities working over (with) his three grandsons. I also believe that if you have played sports in the Hays School District, Dad has been to at least one of your games. He has been a Hays fan ever since he arrived in 1974. If he isn’t watching a game, you might find him up in the press box keeping stats or at times announcing.

It is simple to say that Armando Chapa was a great principal and counselor, however I think many of us can vouch that his level of devotion goes beyond words. To his coworkers and students he has been an everlasting pillar of support, a mentor and a leader. To the community he has been an avid volunteer, a friend, and for some a role model. And most importantly to me as a daughter and family member, I know we all think of him as a loving husband, father, brother and grandfather. I believe that this amazing building standing behind me is a reflection of just how much he has touched the community during the past 30 plus years. On behalf of my family I would like to thank everyone involved for showing your support on this day of recognition and celebration for Armando Chapa, my Dad....