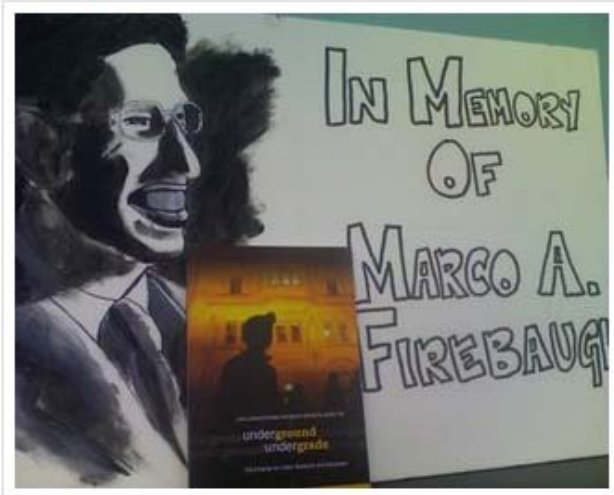


In Memoriam: Marco Antonio Firebaugh

Posted by Matias Ramos



This old rally sign sits in our office.

I never met Marco Antonio Firebaugh. The Tijuana-born, South Gate-raised, Berkeley and UCLA-educated architect behind AB540 passed away on this date in 2006, before I had a chance to actually see him in person and thank him for the arduous work of moving an unpopular piece of legislation in the state that a few years ago had voted for Proposition 187.

I remember the 2004 fast for the DREAM Act outside USC, and I was not there the day he showed up to support the students.

Later that year, someone hosted a luncheon for AB540 students. I couldn't attend, but my buddy Manuel, who I roomed with for some time at UCLA, was beaming with pride to have met him. Now, Manuel is usually apprehensive about politics in general, but even he was effusive about how inspiring Firebaugh's words to his audience was.

Even though he was out of the legislature by the time IDEAS held its first ever banquet, we still chose him for our first ever "Legislator of the Year" award in 2006. He was set to attend the event, and meet a group of proud and grateful kids from the support and advocacy group for undocumented students. But liver failure and the twists of life prevented him from doing so. Nobody saw it coming. But this is [how he felt about what the fight for AB540 meant to future activists.](#)

“AB- 540 was a product of twelve years of work; it took 12 years to get this state of California to say if you are a young person that goes to our public schools, who lives here, who is going to make this their home, who has contributed, who has succeeded, who has excelled we are going to let you study and pay what everybody else that is a California resident pays. It is not a cut rate, you get to pay what everyone else pays. And it took us 12 years to get there. It is a struggle, it is still a place that demands our activism and our tenacity and hard work, and I guess I'll leave you with that thought.”
-Marco Antonio Firebaugh, to the UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center, in 2005 (five months before he passed away)

A choppy phrase, perhaps, but certainly a powerful thought that should recharge us for the DREAM fight. Rest In Peace, and Thank You.

at [12:01 AM](#)

About us

Underground Undergrads: The Journey is a blog. But it's not just a blog. It's a collection of chronicles, a series of rants, an analysis of our culture and our time in history, and a source of information for Dream Act advocates. Our blog was born as a continuation of a student project that led to a book titled *Underground Undergrads: UCLA Undocumented Students Speak Out*, which was published by the UCLA Center for Labor Research and Education. We are just getting started on this blogging business, so feel free to send us comments and tips to undergroundundergrads@gmail.com. Thanks!

The Team

- [Tam Tran](#)
- [DreamACTivist](#)
- [Maria M.](#)
- [Oscar Espino-Padron](#)
- [Fabiola Inzunza](#)
- [Zeenat Bhamani](#)
- [Matias Ramos](#)
- [MathBruin](#)
- [Julita Rincon](#)

Subscribe to Underground Undergrads



The Book: Underground Undergrads



UCLA Undocumented Immigrant Students Speak Out

Resources

- [CHIRLA](#)
- [National Immigration Law Center](#)