



Connecting Chicano History and Homosexuality: 'Gaytino'

UCLA and UC Santa Barbara count with the Dan Guerrero Collection which has become one of the most important collections of Chicano History in Southern California.

By John Cádiz Klemack
Published Oct 7, 2018 at 10:45 PM

At 78 years old, Dan Guerrero is an ageless wonder. John Cadiz Klemack reports for NBC4 News at 11 p.m. on Oct. 7, 2018. (Published Monday, Oct. 8, 2018)

For years, Dan Guerrero hid his sexuality. Now he's not only open, but at 78 years old, he wants to share his "Gaytino" identity with the world.

"When I was going to school, you wouldn't even say the word 'gay' and now, I'm going to be on the stage singing and dancing about it," he says. "I think that's progress."

An East LA native, Guerrero stars in a one-man show called "Gaytino," in which he tells his coming-of-age story through the lens of Chicano history.

The show chronicles the key moments in Guerrero's life, such as the moment his father--famed Chicano musician Lalo Guerrero--learned of his son's homosexuality. Guerrero also discusses his relationship with street artist Carlos Almaraz, who died of AIDS in 1989. He hopes his story will be a learning experience for young people in the audience.

"They think of the AIDS crisis as ancient history," he said. "Well, it's not. It was just a few minutes ago and we lost an entire generation of talented young men and women."

While Guerrero's life story is the backbone of "Gaytino," he considers Chicano history to be a central character. Over the years, he has amassed countless artifacts connected to Mexican-American history. His collection has since been curated at UCLA and UC Santa Barbara into one of the most important stocks of Chicano history in Southern California.

Though Guerrero is a devout devotee of the past, he's also always looking toward the future. He's launched a crowdfunding campaign in hopes of bringing his show to more people. He even hopes to get "Gaytino" onto streaming services sometime soon.

Guerrero's life, once lived in secret, is now ready for a whole new audience.