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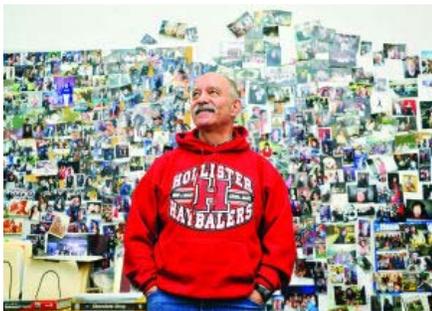
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Counselor leaves legacy with 27 years at SBHS

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Lora Schraft

Caffiero retires

San Benito High School counselor Jim Caffiero, known as "Mr. C," stands in front of a wall plastered with photos of his students over the past 27 years. Caffiero will be retiring at the end of the school year. He will be honored at the MACE scholarship banquet May 4. Look back for more photos.

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Posted: Thursday, May 2, 2013 11:55 am | Updated: 2:05 pm, Fri May 3, 2013.

2 comments

Posted on May 2, 2013
 by [Melissa Flores](#)



When Jim Caffiero empties his office at San Benito High School at the end of this year, he will be taking along memories of 27 years working with local students. Caffiero, being honored at the Mexican American Committee for Education scholarship banquet Saturday, will retire after nearly three decades of working with high school students.

He arrived on campus in the mid-1980s with the intention of staying for a one-year stint.

"I took a leave of absence from a college in Washington State because I wanted to try my hand at working with teenagers," he said. "One of my jobs was to bring kids to college."

He thought spending a year with high school students would help him learn better ways to recruit them to the Washington campus.

"I discovered very quickly it was something that was a lot of fun and really meaningful," he said. "The leave was for one year and it took me just a couple months to decide I wasn't going back to my job."

Estela Lopez was one of the first SBHS students with whom Caffiero worked. She said she was part of an initial class that changed the assignment of high school counselors by grades and, rather, had the counselors stay with the students for their four years of high school. She said having him as a counselor for four years helped her to get to know him, and him to know her.

"He's probably one of the people I would consider my mentors," she said. "What I most remember about him is, he's always been somewhat of a visionary. He has the ability to see students that are going to go on and make a difference in the world."

She said at the time she attended school, few Latino students were graduating and going off to college. She recalled taking field trips with the counselor many students refer to as "Mr. C" to visit college campuses in the region.

"He really opened our eyes beyond what Hollister had to offer," she said. "It was his way of planting a seed."

Lopez, who is one of eight children of farmworkers, had never thought about

college.

"I really credit him with helping me recognize that becoming an attorney was a dream that a daughter of farmworkers could achieve," she said.

After graduating from the University of California, Berkeley, Lopez went on to law school at Santa Clara University.

"All throughout the process and even after I graduated, he was one of my biggest champions," she said. "He was the first to really identify that

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Melissa Flores City Editor



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