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PALO ALTO COLLEGE

NEWS RELEASE

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Palo Alto College celebrates Grammy Award-winning faculty member

Juan Ortiz, a member of Campanas de América who teaches music at Palo Alto College and leads the Mariachi Palomino, has won an American Grammy and a Latin Grammy for an album with Little Joe & La Familia.

Ortiz was the violinist on the album “Recuerdos.” Ortiz recently received the two actual phonograph statues and two nominee medallions, which were shared with the San Antonio community during a reception on March 19 at the college. He will be honored at the Alamo Colleges Board of Trustees meeting at 6 p.m. on March 27 at the Killen Center, 201 W. Sheridan.

“We congratulate Juan Ortiz on this stellar accomplishment,” said Dr. Ana M. “Cha” Guzmán, Palo Alto College President. “Our students are taught by a Grammy Award winner. Not many community colleges can say that, and we are thrilled that Mr. Ortiz has chosen to share his talents with students at Palo Alto College.”

Ortiz and his wife, Belle, were instrumental in starting the Mariachi music program at PAC in 1996, and Juan Ortiz has been the instructor since then. It was the first college mariachi program in the area, and high school mariachi programs send their students to Palo Alto to continue their love for mariachi music.

Ortiz speculated that the album won because “these are all Mexican songs done cowboy style.” The group is led by Little Joe, who has been in the business for 50 years, with accompaniment by a guitar, steel guitar, bass and violin.

Palo Alto College, one of the Alamo Colleges, is a fully accredited community college located on the Southside of San Antonio with 9,000 students. It awards associate degrees and short-term certificates and offers non-credit continuing education classes. The campus is located at 1400 W. Villaret Blvd. at I-410 and Texas Hwy. 16 or online at alamo.edu/pac.

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