

Margarito Manuel Rodriguez

I was your student for 4 years and graduated from Mathis High School in 1997. I remember most of all the time you took out of your days to reach out to me. I could say that I would be up there on the list of the worst and most disrespectful students you had. However that didn't keep you from trying to show me that there was another path I could take than straight toward a morgue or a prison sentence. I used to feel like my destiny was set and that was it. But, I can admit that those talks about me being able to do anything and be anyone I wanted did reach their marks. I am currently a select team soccer coach and a trainer to many other high schoolers around South East Texas. I use your words and examples to help my players realize that they can get somewhere and go on to do anything other than live a mediocre life wondering what might have been. They are finding their potential. It has helped shape some players into strong individuals with goals and dreams. I have had 15 players move go on to colleges and universities to pursue those dreams of playing at a higher level and not letting any obstacles stand in their way. I teach to my own children and have watched them grow everyday with more confidence and the knowledge that nothing can hold them back. For this I THANK YOU. I didn't finish college but that was my decision. I did however help my brothers and sisters with their studies and learned from their books and lab work. You could say I have been self-taught. I have made the decision now to go back to school and become a teacher and a coach. I am close to finishing slowly but surely. I am only hoping to become half the mentor you were. This is just part of the story though. I could say more but to many memories.

Era: Mathis ISD Job: 1993 - 1997

Relationship: Paul wanted to reply directly to this fine young man, who we used to know as Margarito.

Manny:

Let me share a few things that you deserve to know. I spoke with you often because I actually LIKED you, as I did so many of the young people from Mathis.

It is no surprise to me that you are helping other young people through your soccer coaching. Marla and I enjoy your Facebook posts about the team's ups and downs, and your candid comments about the struggles of this extra duty that you take in addition to your regular job. I predict you will become a super teacher when that day arrives. Below is a picture which symbolizes you – to my eyes. It is my hope you will apply this philosophy to the young people you now guide.

Teachers who really care are sort of like artists who carve things – we call them sculptors. Unlike painters, or carpenters, or music writers, caring teachers DO NOT CREATE GOODNESS! Caring teachers see the goodness that is WITHIN and then focus their efforts to remove the other material that is keeping the goodness from being visible to everyone else. You were ALWAYS a success Margarito, it just takes time for one's life path to carve away the distractions....

