



Don Ramiro Guerrero

Pittsfield, MA

Before we met, I knew only that Don Ramiro was an anthropologist, and that he was from Nicaragua. I asked him if those were true, and he smiled and said yes. But those two items are a very small part of Don Ramiro's story.

Educated in Nicaragua in classical humanities, philosophy, and theology, Ramiro also got a master's in anthropology at the University of Arizona in Tucson. After 16 years in Tucson, Don Ramiro moved back to the Berkshires with his wife of many years, who is from here. Tucson was a little too warm for her. He loves winter himself, miming pulling a stocking cap over his head and getting bundled up for the cold.

Don Ramiro has been a teacher for most of his life. When speaking with him, it's very evident that he gets great joy in helping others to make connections, whether educational, cultural, economic, or spiritual. His main academic interest was applied anthropology, that is, applying the lessons from culture and history to current issues and concerns.

In Nicaragua, for example, Don Ramiro helped the coastal Mosquito Indians, who are both poor and isolated, to develop a market and mechanism (ice chests and a plane to Managua every day) to get fish and shrimp to market. The community used the resulting resources for local needs. This is a kind of anthropology that is as concerned about the present as it is the past: bringing lessons and historical contexts to bear on present situations and concerns.

Now in his eighties, Don Ramiro volunteers with the Roman Catholic church, working to make sure that there are masses delivered in Spanish in Lee, North Adams, Pittsfield, and other towns in Berkshire County. He serves as a mentor in the diverse local Latino community, and as a catalyst in the region, helping to put people and projects together to benefit everyone. Don Ramiro Guerrero: a wonderful example of an elder who has found a tremendously helpful and enjoyable place in the community.

Photography: Douglass Truth

Words: Douglass Truth