Childhood in Arroyo

Rafael Cintrón Ortiz was born in the Caribbean coastal town of Arroyo, Puerto Rico on October 26, 1946. He was the fifth child of Rafael Cintrón and Emelia Ortiz, both distinguished professors who worked as school principals in Puerto Rico. His older sister, Nilda Cintrón, remembers that from the beginning he demonstrated extraordinary intelligence for his age and inspired his teachers with his inquisitive spirit.

A Bright and Promising Future

When he received honors, he promptly moved to the metropolitan capital of Puerto Rico where Rafael was enrolled in the sixth grade at Colegio San José, a Catholic School administered by the Redemptorist Fathers at the University of Puerto Rico. He excelled in his studies, graduated valedictorian in 1960, and received many medals and certificates of honor for his academic achievements.

Throughout Rafael's education, he continually distinguished himself as an outstanding and a brilliant student. True to his words: "Who is Rafael?" the 13 March newspaper profile on Wednesday, May 27, 1964. The article states that Rafael's spiritual life was centered in his many extracurricular activities through active membership in the Congregations of Mary which he represented in the parochial schools Council. He was a part of the student council, represented the school at Confex, and was also introduced as a class representative and class president.

Recognized for his academic excellence and leadership qualities, Rafael became a member of the National Honor Society and was also known as vice-president. He continually participated in many competitions in the parochial schools including the Oratory Club and was editor of the literary section of the school newspaper 'La Lanza'.

A Bright and Promising Future

Rafael in Chicago

The quality of Rafael's research gained him recognition and attention by leaders in the academic community. Among them were Dr. Richard Pikaza, first Director of the Latin American Studies Program at the University of Illinois at Chicago Circle (UIC) campus.正如其他之前的学生一样，马萨诸塞州剑桥市的哈佛大学历史系博士候选人，密歇根州立大学历史系教授，宾夕法尼亚大学历史系教授，普林斯顿大学历史系教授，哥伦比亚大学历史系教授，和耶鲁大学历史系教授，也对他的学术工作，他的艺术爱好，和他的生活热情表示尊敬。Rafael's exceptional intelligence. Equally impressive was the seriousness in which he approached his academic work, his love for the arts, and his passion for life.

Contextualizing Research and Academia

Because of his academic excellence and his civic leadership, Rafael was recruited for a faculty position at the University of Puerto Rico and the University of Dayton in Ohio. Rafael accepted the University of Dayton offer and left Puerto Rico to complete his bachelor degree in arts and education.

After graduating with a degree in education in 1968, Rafael returned to Puerto Rico and immediately began teaching English language at a high school while he started his doctoral studies at the University of Puerto Rico. In 1970, he was admitted and moved to New York in 1978 to begin his master's degree in Social Sciences at the New School for Social Research in New York. While there, Rafael was recognized for his academic work and was invited to join the faculty.

In 1972, he obtained a Master of Arts in Social Anthropology from the faculty of Political and Social Research at the New School for Social Research. Rafael's commitment to research was reflected in his graduate research, "A Colonial Experience: The School of Puerto Rico as an Agent of Domination" which he studied the effects of educational policies in Puerto Rico.

Adler New York: he accepted a teaching position at the University of Puerto Rico as a Professor of Anthropology in the Department of Social Sciences. While there, he conducted research on the history of mass media and studied the effects of education in Puerto Rico. Rafael accepted the University of Dayton offer and left Puerto Rico to complete his bachelor degree in arts and education.

During the year he spent at the University of Illinois, Chicago Circle Campus, Rafael focused on completing his doctoral thesis and quickly became an admired professor. At 29 years old, he expressed an interest in accepting Pikaza's offer to join the faculty at the University of Illinois at Chicago. Rafael was Chicago's opportunity to find a quiet place to complete his academic goals and achieve recognition.

Rafael Cintrón Ortiz

Childhood photos of 'Cuquito' in his hometown of Arroyo, 1956. Last photo of Rafael on Christmas vacation at his home in Puerto Rico, 1975.