In Memoriam

Ramón Eduardo Ruiz

1921-2010

Professor Ramón Ruiz, a member of The Journal of San Diego History’s Board of Editors for over 30 years and a well-known historian, died at his home in Rancho Santa Fe on July 6, 2010, at the age of 88. Ruiz, an emeritus professor of history at UC San Diego, was the author of 15 books, including Triumphs and Tragedy: A History of the Mexican People (1993) and The Great Rebellion: Mexico 1905-1924 (1980).

Professor Ruiz served in the Army Air Force as a B-29 pilot in World War II. His experiences were featured on the KPBS television program “San Diego’s DNA: Military Roots,” in June 2009. His wartime service convinced Ramón that all Americans, regardless of background, deserved to be treated fairly and justly.

Following the war, Ruiz earned his BA degree from San Diego State College in 1947, his MA degree from Claremont Graduate University in 1948, and his PhD in history from the University of California, Berkeley, in 1954. He taught history at the University of Oregon, Southern Methodist University and Smith College before becoming a founding member of the history faculty at UCSD. He was awarded the prestigious National Humanities Medal by President Clinton in 1998.

Ruiz, the son of Mexican immigrants, was born in Pacific Beach and brought up in La Jolla where his father owned a nursery. Ramón worked for a time at Kate Sessions nursery while his interest in Mexican history was fostered by his father, who left Mexico during the 1910 revolution. The Ruiz family were very proud of their Mexican heritage and maintained a love for Mexican culture and cuisine. Ramón’s final book “Mexico: Why a Few are Rich and the People are Poor,” will be published later this year.

Natalia, Ramón’s wife of 62 years, died in 2006. Their daughter, Olivia Ruiz, is a professor at the Colegio de La Frontera Norte in Baja California. Ramón is also survived by daughter Maura Parkinson and two grandsons.