



**SAN ANTONIO
EXPRESS-NEWS**

**S.A. TRICENTENNIAL
1718-2018**



**TRICENTENNIAL
CALENDAR**

TODAY

El Encuentro: Our Lady of Guadalupe Church, 1321 El Paso St., 210-226-4064, olgsanantonio.com. José Rubén De León will perform *El Encuentro*, a dramatic telling of the Apparitions of Guadalupe. 6:30-7:30 p.m.

THURSDAY

Poinsettia Ball: Grand Hyatt Hotel, 600 E. Market St., friendsofhospicea.org. Gala black-tie ball with dinner and dancing. Benefits Friends of Hospice for uninsured hospice patients. \$250. 7 p.m.

UPCOMING

Celebrate San Antonio: HemisFair, 434 S. Alamo St., sanantonio300.org. Celebrate the new year with live music on three stages, carnival games and rides, and festival food. Free. 6 p.m.-12:35 a.m. Dec. 31.

ONGOING

Ford Holiday Boat Caroling: River Walk, 100 River Walk, thesanantonioverwalk.com. Enjoy the sound of holiday caroling floating on the river, or reserve your own spot on one of the decorated river boats. Boats start and end at Embassy Suites at the river level. Each caroling boat makes one lap around downtown. Reservations can be made online. Select dates through Dec. 21.

COMMUNICATIONS

HENRY GUERRA HAD PASSION FOR THE CITY

The announcer known as 'Voice of San Antonio' also a historian

FROM EXPRESS-NEWS ARCHIVES

Henry Guerra, the legendary "Voice of San Antonio," broke ethnic barriers in radio and television as a Mexican-American broadcaster for more than half a century.

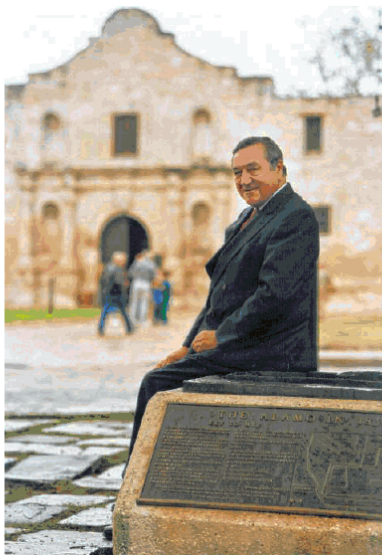
A native San Antonian and self-described history buff, the man with the instantly recognizable rich, bass voice had a great love for the city that infused his life and his life's work.

"His passion for the history of San Antonio, coupled with his knowledge of it, made him a treasure," the late Pat Rodgers, a longtime friend who worked with Guerra at WOAI, said in 2001 after Guerra's death. "There was no broadcast entity — if not any other entity in town — that day to day could plug into someone's knowledge so intimately and get the right answer."

Bexar County Judge Nelson Wolff said, "Henry Guerra was not only 'the voice of San Antonio,' he was the heart and soul of it."

Guerra, who became the first Mexican-American announcer to work using his own name when he joined WOAI in 1939, retired from the station in 1992.

Guerra, who ended his newscasts with the trade-



Express-News file photo

Henry Guerra is shown in front of the Alamo in this undated photo.

mark signoff — "Good night, y muy buenas noches" — had a long list of broadcast credits, including his "E Days of the Alamo," a radio program he wrote and broadcast for the anniversary of the siege and fall of the Alamo.

A series of radio and TV programs, "Henry Guerra's San Antonio," provided the material for a book he co-authored in 1999 with his wife, Mary Ann Noonan Guerra.

Guerra was born on Oct. 27, 1918, in a clapboard

house on Uvalde Street on the city's South Side. His family, which included an Italian grandfather who came to San Antonio by way of Mexico, owned the Angelus Funeral Home. Guerra sold the business in 1933.

Guerra spoke only Spanish when he entered Lukin Military Academy, a now-defunct school in Alamo Heights, but by the end of his first year he won the school's top prize for English study. He graduated from Central Catholic High



Jerry Lara / Staff file photo

Henry Guerra offers a smile while having breakfast with his wife, Mary Ann Noonan Guerra, in this 1998 photo.

School in 1936 and then enrolled at St. Mary's University.

In his senior year, while majoring in English and minoring in history, Guerra edited the campus newspaper and occasionally acted in local theater productions while trying to figure out what to do with his life.

The answer came from his mother, a member of the local Pan-American Round Table. She told her son that the announcer for her organization's upcoming luncheon had quit, unable to pronounce the names of the regional Mexican costumes. Could Henry do it?

Guerra filled in. The audience included the station manager of WOAI, who passed a message to the young man that he wanted to hire him.

Guerra agreed, but on two conditions: a schedule that would allow him to finish his degree at St. Mary's and the right to use his Hispanic surname.

On Nov. 30, 1939, the 21-year-old became the first Mexican-American announcer to use his own name at a major English-language radio station in Texas.

Ten years later, he made history again when WOAI-TV — now KMOL — made its first televised newscast, with Guerra as the city's first Mexican-American TV announcer.

Guerra became San Antonio's veteran newsmen, developing a reputation as a walking textbook of Texas history.

"Henry was of the old school," Rodgers said in 2001. "He respected the facts. He respected the job that he did and he respected the audience. He just always used extraordinary caution in making sure that what he did was right."

Guerra served as tour guide when first lady Barbara Bush visited the missions. In May 1991, Guerra showed Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip around the Alamo during their five-minute stop.

Another memorable moment came in 1987 when Guerra opened the ceremony before the Mass during Pope John Paul II's historic visit to the Alamo City.

A longer version of this report by David Uhler ran July 2, 2001.