

THE ANDREAN

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YOU NAME IT...

...and Dem Rogers '59 has probably supported it

Inside, Dem reflects on growing up at Willow Farm and becoming one of SAC's most ardent supporters

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2021

FABIO GUZMÁN '66

ISLAND ICON

By Chris Traber



From an early age in his native Dominican Republic, **Fabio Guzmán '66** embraced sage advice from his father, Antonio, a small-town lawyer.

“For him, education and hard work was everything,” says Fabio.

The parental guidance was also timely, considering his island nation was under the restrictive dictatorial rule of Rafael Trujillo from 1930 to 1961.

“It was our father’s idea to send my two brothers and me to school outside the regime,” he says.

Fabio credits his oldest brother for opening the gateway to a foreign education when his father auditioned numerous private schools before enrolling **Tony '54** at St. Andrew’s College, followed by **Omar '62**.

Fabio had just turned 13 when he entered Grade 10 in 1962, buoyed by his brothers’ experiences at SAC and full of enthusiasm at the prospect of life and studies in Aurora.

“It’s never what you expect,” he says with a hint of melancholy, recalling his first months in school. “I was skinny, weighing 83 pounds. My brothers played football, and that wasn’t for me.”

His limited English was compounded by lessons he had received earlier from a Jamaican tutor.

“My English wasn’t very good, and the accent was all wrong,” he says with a chuckle.

With no other boarding students of Latin descent, missing his graduated brothers, the language barrier, and the

introduction of French courses, Fabio’s isolation heightened. Still, his father’s counsel rang in his ears.

“It was not a great introduction,” he says. “It was difficult, but at that age, my mind was like a sponge. I worked hard.”

Fabio convinced a reluctant French teacher to provide him with a French-English dictionary and he studied well after lights out at 10 p.m. with a flashlight under the covers. By the first midterm, he earned 80 per cent in French. By Christmas, his grade average was 69.5 per cent, and at the end of his first year, he achieved first-class honours.

Fabio acclimated fully after the first year. “My second year, I was second in my class, and in Grade 12, I was

the top student,” he adds. In Grade 13, he served as Prefect, Head Boy, Head Student Librarian, Science Committee chair, Students’ Council secretary, a member of the First Basketball team, and Philosophy Club member while maintaining his scholar status.

SAC honed his language skills and die-casted his positive mindset, he says.

He credits his chemistry teacher, the late Geoff Smith, for steering him to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), where he earned a degree in science and humanities.

As a young man, Fabio took time off and opted to manage his family’s small ranch for several years. With his father’s long-solo law practice about to end, his focus shifted. He studied law, graduating top of his class, summa cum laude, in 1981. He joined his father’s practice and soon converted it into a full-service law firm, Guzmán Ariza, currently the largest in the Dominican Republic, with 50 lawyers at eight offices.

Today, the man with a congenial smile framed by a trim beard is considered a shining star in the rarified orbit of Dominican and international jurisprudence.

For the last four decades, Fabio has been one of the foremost practitioners in the Dominican Republic in tourism-

related real estate transactions and litigation. His work is lauded by prestigious legal guides ranking the best lawyers and firms in Latin America and the world.

Fabio is a former professor of contract law and dean of the law faculty at the Universidad Católica Nordestana. He is also a prolific author, having published 12 books on Dominican law and numerous articles in legal journals domestically and globally.

He and his wife, Vivian, reside in the Dominican Republic, and he continues to write and mentor young lawyers at Guzmán Ariza. His sons, Fabio and Alfredo, are partners at the firm.

He maintains fond memories of SAC despite the difficult first two months.

“Those first days made me more of an adult,” he says. “I’m glad it happened. St. Andrew’s moulded me to be the man I became.” x

“

My second year, I was second in my class, and in Grade 12, I was the top student.

– Fabio Guzmán '66

OLD BOYS NEWS

AND NOW FOR THE



FABIO J. GUZMAN — “Guz”

ACTIVITIES: Head boy, Head librarian, Chairman of Science Committee, Secretary of Students’ Council, Bruce Clan Vice-Captain, Cdt./CSM, Soccer, 1st Basketball, Prefect, Philosophy Club, Scholar, Member of the Billiard Academy for Gentlemen. (Third Substratum.)

AMBITION: To be peacefully coexistent and contiguously harmonious with the Supreme Being.

PROBABLE DESTINATION: Total excommunication and eternal excretion.

FAVOURITE PASTIME: Chickens and phenolphthalein.

FAVOURITE AUTHOR: Anonymous.

NEXT YEAR: Chemical Engineering somewhere in the upper layers of the North American percipitate.

Fabio’s *Review* entry in his graduating year. **Previous page:** Fabio with his wife, Vivian, and sons, Fabio (left) and Alfredo.