

# Shoe shop owner backs Aggie corps

By Laura Williams

Battalion Reporter

Six days a week Victor Caudillo guards his coveralls with a blue pinstriped apron as he sews together worn boots and replaces high heels.

Watching this small Mexican man work, one would never know his blood runs maroon. But in the back of Victor's Shoe Repair in Bryan, a tailor sews uniforms for the Corps of Cadets, and on the shelf, among hundreds of other tagged shoes, sits a pair of senior boots, waiting to be resoled.

"We dedicate as much time as possible to the Corps of Cadets here," 48-year-old Caudillo said.

"When I came to College Station, they were my only business, and I was penniless. They really took a chance and stood with me," he said.

His Spanish accent is strong, although he immigrated in 1956 and has been in the College Station area for 15 years.

Caudillo sells some 250 boots each semester to anxious cadets, and this semester he began selling tailor-made uniforms.

"Sometimes we get boys in here that cry when they put their boots on. They've been waiting such a long time, you know," he said.

Caudillo said he began serving a large number of cadets in 1967, after opening his own business at Northgate next door to his former employer.

"Many of the boys would gather in my store back then," he said. "The county was dry, and many of the boys were minors too. So, I'd go over to the next county and buy the boys their beer," he said.

As Caudillo peeked over his brown-rimmed glasses, the amused look never left his face.

"I'll tell you how I let them pay me back," he said. "They were to give me all of their busi-

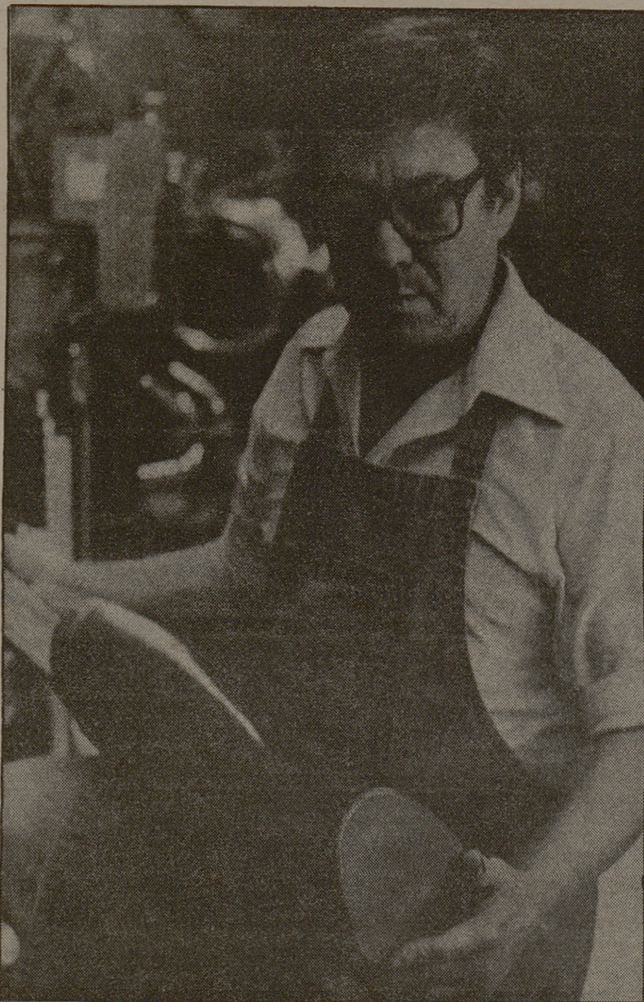
ness. I had three lines of boys all the way to the post office one semester. And my competition had none. This is my old boss I'm talking about."

Caudillo has done more than buy beer for cadets. He helped revive the University's cavalry in 1974. The cavalry had been

banned in the 1940's, Caudillo said, and some cadets asked him to help establish it again.

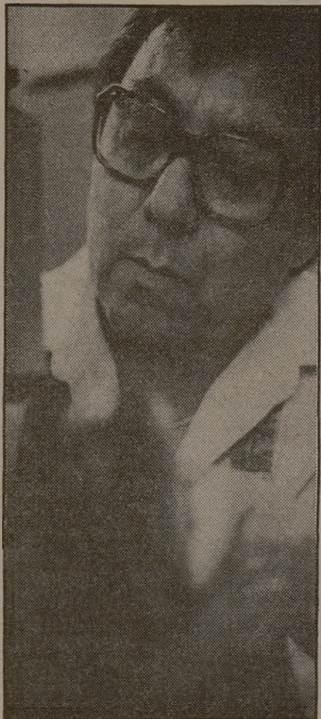
"The main thing was not to get any recognition, but to make everyone happy," he said.

"We are more than glad to maintain A&M tradition."



Above, Victor Caudillo passes by a wall of boots in his shoe repair shop. Left, Caudillo checks the wedge in a pair of Texas Aggie senior boots. The wedge maintains shape and stretches the top of the boot for proper fit.

Photos by Linda Warinner



Victor Caudillo

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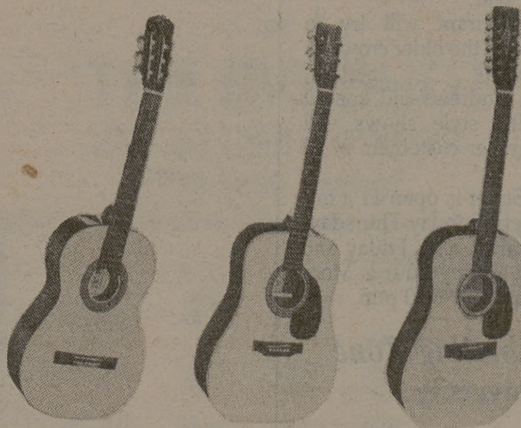
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