The Voice of the Voiceless:

Angela Boricua Tirado's Journey of Faith, Family, and Advocacy

My name is Angela Boricua Tirado—a proud Puerto Rican A Cappella Vocalist and Community Advocate from East Side San Jose, California. I am the daughter of Angelita Tirado, a former Teacher Aide and Yard Duty Teacher at KR Smith Elementary, and Luis N. Tirado, an Air Force Veteran who served as the first Negro Puerto Rican Radio Operator. Born at Tripler Army Medical Center in Oahu, Hawaii, my family lived in Okinawa, Japan, and South Dakota before permanently settling in East Side San Jose in 1969.

My transformation from girlhood to womanhood began not in adulthood, but when I was just eight years old, sitting in the congregation at Most Holy Trinity Catholic Church while my mother sang in the choir.

Sister Maureen approached me one Sunday and encouraged me to join, telling me that God had blessed me with a special gift that needed to be shared with the world—a voice that allowed people to feel God's message deep in their souls. Inspired, I went to choir practice the next evening and asked the choir director, Kay Santana, if I could join. Seeing my young age, she smirked and told me to come back when I turned twelve.

When I returned to the congregation the following Sunday, Sister Maureen noticed I wasn't up in the choir loft. Hearing what happened, she didn't let me back down. Instead, she urged me to go back and challenge the director to pick any song for me to sing in front of everyone.

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The next evening, Miss Santana handed me "Ave Maria"—a daunting test that Sister Maureen rightfully questioned: "What kind of song is that for an 8-year-old to sing?" I knew I was being set up for failure, but in that moment of uncertainty, I stepped past girlhood fear into a woman's faith. I prayed to God, asking Him to use me as an instrument of peace and a change of heart.

When I finished singing, the room fell silent. Miss Santana looked at me and asked when I could start.

I looked her in the eye and replied, "Let me ask my Manager."

Puzzled, she asked who that was. I simply answered, "God."

From that day forward, she took me everywhere, opening for the choir. That defining moment grounded me in the lesson my mother always taught me: "Make a difference. God gives us all a gift, and what we do with that gift is our gift back to God."

Stepping into that power at eight years old paved the way for the woman I am today. As an adult, I became the voice of the voiceless through advocacy, resources, and networking. I fought fiercely for my youngest daughter, Angelita Tirado, a special needs student whose perseverance earned her a High School Diploma with Cum Laude Honors as part of the historic First Special Education Class of 2026 at James Lick High School.

Today, I am honored to be known as The Voice of San Jose, The Voice of The Bay Area, The Voice of The Veterans, The Voice of Forever Oakland, and as of October 31, 2026, The Voice of Alviso's Día de los Muertos.

My journey from a Puerto Rican girl to a Puerto Rican woman began the moment I stood up for my gift at eight years old—and every day since, I continue to use my voice to make a difference in the world.

I am Angela Boricua Tirado, TS#41 of 52 of The Soultown Magazine. I want to thank you all for having SOUL! ✌



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