

# When They Were Us: Mrs. Bolaños-Cadenas



In our monthly faculty profile, we take a trip to the past and explore what teachers were like 'When They Were Us' (WTWU).

**WE'VE GOT SPIRIT:** Mrs. Bolaños-Cadenas, famous for her in-class enthusiasm, participated in cheer and stunts while in high school. Today her students describe her class as exciting and fun. (Photos submitted by Mrs. Bolaños-Cadenas)

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For some, high school serves as a time to explore varying interests and possible future careers, even if they don't pan out in college. Yet for English teacher Mrs. Jennifer Bolaños-Cadenas, sophomore year of high school at St. Thomas Aquinas cemented the path she wanted to pursue, one that would bring her to room 25306.

"My sophomore English teacher had a reputation for being really tough, but I loved her class," Mrs. Bolaños-Cadenas said. "I loved the stories that we were reading, and I found that I was always looking forward to sitting down with the text and reading it and discussing it. I had a moment one day leaving her class where I recognized, 'I know what I want to do.' I could visualize myself in front of a group of students with a literature text, lecturing and discussing."

Besides wanting to teach, Mrs. Bolaños-Cadenas emphasized the importance of having family. "It was a two-fold realization

for me because I knew that I wanted to have a family. I wanted to have a career that would allow me to do something that I enjoyed and that would also give me time to spend with my children. From that realization on, it was full steam ahead."

*She cares so deeply for her students. She always goes the extra mile and provides us with a safe space to talk about absolutely anything, whether it be academic or personal.*

*Sophia Hai, 12*

Outside of English, Mrs. Bolaños-Cadenas cheered all four years. A highlight for her included beginning to stunt junior year.

"Learning how to move past the fear and achieve something so physically challenging is really something that has always stuck with me as a marker that I can achieve what I set my mind to," Mrs. Bolaños-Cadenas said.

In college at the University of Central Florida, Mrs. Bolaños-Cadenas continued to engage within her community by opening up the first Latina sorority on campus, Lambda Theta Alpha. "It's cool because all of the other sisters know the names of the founders, so anytime I attend a reunion, I feel like a celebrity," she jokes. Although she began teaching at St. Thomas, Mrs. Bolaños-Cadenas found her perfect blend of career and family here.

"Working at Heritage is the dream for me. It's an opportunity for me to do the work I love and to have my kids right there with me," she said. "I have the chance now to appreciate the realization of the moment I had as a sophomore. I'm here. I'm living it."

*If you would like The Patriot Post to cover a specific faculty member next issue, email us at pl.patriotpost@ahschool.com.*

