

Welcome Back, Galves: Strong generational ties reels in attorney, an advocate for Pueblo digital equity

In the late 1970s, there was a very popular television show entitled, “Welcome Back, Kotter.” It was about a young man who, after high school, left his hometown and then returned many years later as a teacher wanting to “give back” to his community. The iconic lyrics of the theme song for that TV show are quite applicable to Puebloan Fred Galves—who, like the TV character—left many years ago, and now has returned to engage his former community.



Fred Galves

Fred Galves’ Pueblo roots run deep. He was born in St. Mary Corwin Hospital, attended Holy Family Catholic Church in his youth, and he is a 1979 graduate of South High School (and a 2011 South High School Hall of Fame Inductee). Before moving to the Southside, his family lived on “Bellevue,” in “The Blocks,” and he spent every weekend at his grandparents’ home on East 2nd Street, at

the bottom of "Goat Hill."

"Welcome back...Your dreams were your ticket out..."

In 1983, Galves graduated from Colorado College, where he later taught Political Science courses and was on the CC Board of Trustees. In the summer of 1985, Galves worked for Amnesty International in Santiago, Chile, on behalf of arrested political prisoners. After graduating from Harvard Law School in 1986, Galves returned to Colorado to work as a judicial law clerk for Federal Judge John L. Kane, Jr., US District Court, in Denver. He then worked for five years as a litigator at Holland & Hart, a large prestigious Denver law firm.

Although Galves had a very successful career as a Denver corporate attorney, he always loved teaching and academia, much like his uncle, the late Dr. Edmund Vallejo—a beloved teacher, educator, and former School District 60 Superintendent in Pueblo from 1985 through 1991. Inspired by his uncle, Galves became a full-time law professor in Sacramento, California, in 1993, and eventually became an "Evidence" legal textbook author. Galves has taught at various law schools across the country, including Fordham Law School in New York, UC Davis Law School in California, and Denver University's Sturm College of Law, and he has taught in several international law programs in China, Guatemala, England, Chile, Germany, and Austria (where he taught with Former US Supreme Court Justice, Anthony M. Kennedy).

Over the years, no matter where Galves' many travels and experiences took him, he always remained connected to Pueblo, visiting family and friends, former teachers and coaches, and, of course, his mother, Kathy Galves, who worked at "Fashion Bar," and Dillard's, for many years and was a single mother who raised Fred, and his older sister, Viki, and older brother, Ken. In 2020, just before moving back to Pueblo, Galves was hired by the City of Pueblo to mediate the Christopher Columbus Statue dispute.

Although the mediation did not provide a final solution to the disagreement, better mutual understanding was achieved, as the interested parties, along with City Council members, and Mayor Nick Gradisar, worked diligently to search for common ground and a possible solution to the controversy.

It was at that time, that certain members of City Council and the Mayor, along with some interested Puebloans, thought that if Galves were to move back, he would be a great asset to the Pueblo community, and to CSU Pueblo's

"Vision 2028" to connect more with the community. So, in late 2021, CSU Pueblo President Tim Mottet offered a newly-created position to Galves.

"Well, the names have all changed since you hung around, but those dreams have remained, and now they've turned around...

For just over a year now, Galves has had a multi-faceted

job as the CSU Pueblo "Special Assistant to the President for Community Engagement." Generally, he is responsible for identifying challenges in the Pueblo Community, including the Latino community, that the university can help mitigate through: (1) innovative programming; and, (2) partnering with Pueblo City and County officials, agencies, local school systems, and community groups in order to help drive and stimulate social, political, economic, and academic development in the region.

One appropriate and current example of his efforts is how Galves has been working diligently to try to bring more robust broadband internet services and digital equity, digital inclusion, and digital literacy to Pueblo. By involving CSU Pueblo as a conduit to receive federal grant money, Galves, along with his longtime friend, Salvador Acuna, a 1979 East High School Graduate, and owner of "Co-Create," conceptualized and brought to fruition the

"Adelante Connect" Broadband Grant program, where the City of Pueblo will benefit from a \$3 Million grant to be administered by Galves, with the help and expertise of Acuna.

"This is just the beginning," Acuna said, "as there is so much available grant funding out there, and now political will, on all federal, state, and local levels, to make meaningful and robust access to the internet, and full online integration and digital adoption, a real possibility in our communities."

The CSU Pueblo "Adelante Connect" Grant program can boast of very extensive expertise and vast experience on the leadership team. Along with Galves, the Project Investigator ("PI"), and Acuna's (Strategic Planning and Community Relations Director) "Co-Create" partner, Denise Shorey (Telecommunications Director), who is also the owner of "e-Luminosity" in Denver, who has wide-ranging experience working on internet grant programs. Assisting Galves at CSU Pueblo, is the Senior Director of Research Development John Williamson (Project Coordinator), with whom Galves has also collaborated on working on draft legislation creating the Southern Colorado Institute of Transportation Technology ("SCITT") at CSU Pueblo, which Colorado Governor Lance Polis signed into law last year. Also, Galves and Acuna have another long-time Pueblo friend, Tim Piganelli, Digital Literacy Content Coordinator, who is a fellow 1979 graduate (from Central High School). Piganelli is the owner of his own Litigation Technology firm, in Phoenix, who will be assisting Galves in creating digital literacy learning modules. Galves and Piganelli team-taught a computer-assisted litigation course in various law schools in the past for about a decade, where they used such online learning modules to teach law students how to use and incorporate state-of-the-art litigation technology into law practice. Finally, and of critical importance, is Juanita Pena (Budget/Finance), the Chief Financial Officer and Controller at CSU Pueblo, who, along with her team, will be assisting with all financial and reporting requirements

associated with CSU Pueblo grant programs, given her substantial experience in grant funding management.

“And who would have thought those dreams would lead you,
back here where we need you?”

In what is a very fitting coincidence, Galves has an additional CSU Pueblo community engagement office located in the newly refurbished Watertower Place, on Santa Fe Avenue, which is the old Alpha Beta Meatpacking Plant. Additionally, the Watertower Place is a key community anchor for the Adelante Connect Broadband Program Grant and will help provide more access to the internet in the community neighborhoods near the Watertower Place.

The reason that it is quite fitting that Galves is so connected now with the Watertower Place building, is because Galves' brother, Ken, worked in the building for several years in the 1970s, when it was the “Alpha Beta” Meatpacking Plant. But his family's connection to the building does not end there. Galves' uncle, Ernest Smith, also worked in the meatpacking plant in the 1950s; and even Galves' grandmother, Ernestine Bustos, worked in the meatpacking plant in the 1940s, reminiscent of “Rosie the Riveter,” where many women took on very demanding manufacturing/tough labor jobs when numerous men were fighting during World War II. And as if that were not enough, Galves' grandfather, Anthony Smith, a Denver &

Rio Grande Railroad machinist, sought refuge on top of the roof of the Watertower Place building (then known as the "McNichol's Meatpacking Plant") during the infamous 1921 Pueblo flood. Large black & white photos of the 1921 flood are featured outside of Galves' Watertower Place CSU Pueblo office.

Historical events often have a way of coming full circle. It literally has been over a Century since Galves' grandfather escaped the 1921 flood waters on the Watertower Place rooftop, and now Galves works in that same landmark building that so many of his Pueblo family members have worked in over the years. Only now, Galves works on behalf of CSU Pueblo and the Pueblo community, as he engages the Watertower Place building as a high-speed broadband internet community anchor in the "Adelante Connect" Broadband Grant Program. It is a microcosm of how over the last century, as time has marched on relentlessly, there have been incredible changes in technology, education, and progress, both in the world, and in our city.

Another example of Galves' community work includes two businesses in the Watertower Place—International Engineering (high-tech manufacturing) and Silverback Consulting (cyber-security and IT), who are also partnering with two other Pueblo employers—CS Wind (wind energy) and The SCITT (with ENSCO Corp. and MxV -- high speed rail testing, electronic driverless vehicles, and other surface transportation) in seeking to

provide apprenticeships for high school students. The apprenticeships will be administered by "Careerwise Colorado." Galves has collaborated with Dana Lambert, CEO of Global Ed Solutions, so that high school online students can take concurrent enrollment courses at CSU Pueblo, in conjunction with working and receiving on-the-job training at the four business partner establishments. Through such innovative collaborations of Pueblo private businesses, high schools, CSU Pueblo, and the Careerwise apprenticeship program, real ground-breaking change and opportunities can happen.

"Was there somethin' that made you come back again?

And what could ever lead you (What could ever lead you)

Back here where we need you? (Back here where we need you?)—

When asked what made him decide to come back to Pueblo, Galves said, "I have deep family connections here in Pueblo, and I am so excited to be working in this position with CSU Pueblo at this later stage in my career. My goal has been to create a legacy as a community servant, and as an educator, in my own hometown, with college, and K-12 students, who now are just starting out, much like I did so many years ago, as a young person with an audacious dream about having a rewarding and meaningful educational pathway and future."

He continued, "The idea is to ensure that students,

struggling with so many obstacles that seem to persist, have numerous opportunities to succeed and thrive in this vibrant community."

Galves concluded, "It is now most appropriate, and very fulfilling to me at this point in my life, to be able to engage my hometown community!"

As part of that work, Galves is also an active board member on the Pueblo Latino Chamber of Commerce and has just been appointed by former Denver Mayor, and former Secretary of Transportation in the Clinton Administration, Federico Pena, to the board of the Colorado Latino Leadership, Advocacy, and Research Organization ("CLLARO")—a state-wide organization dedicated to empowerment through leadership development, advocacy, and policy research to strengthen Colorado. Galves is also an ex-officio member of the Board of the Chavez-Huerta Preparatory Academy Charter School.

And so to all of this, Pueblo extends a heartfelt, "Welcome Back," Fred Galves! Pueblo is fortunate to have a Puebloan, like you, and like so many others in Pueblo's history, who left Pueblo at some point in their lives, but still eventually found their way back home to help their community be a continued success.

So, if the "Welcome Back, Kotter" theme song has applicable lyrics for Galves as he has returned to Pueblo,

then perhaps the final scene in "The Wizard of Oz" is just as applicable and appropriate to the long journey home for Fred Galves. Indeed, when Dorothy was asked what she had learned from her most incredible life adventure in the Land of OZ, she famously replied:

"... it's that if I ever go looking for my heart's desire again, I won't look any further than my own backyard...THERE'S

NO PLACE LIKE HOME."

... Adelante!