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Members of the Tejano band "Los Aguilares" (from right to left) Emilio and Genaro Aguilares, Gilberto Perez, Gilberto Lopez, Paulino Bernal and Freddie Martinez pose for photographers after they were inducted into the Tejano Walk of Fame at a ceremony held at The Social Club.

TEJANO WALK OF FAME

Famous Tejano musicians walk through genres past and present

BY ZACK QUAINANCE

THE MONITOR

EDINBURG — Two white stretch limousines rolled up to the Social Club, carrying the past and future of Tejano music in the Rio Grande Valley.

Inside the luxury cars rode five musicians to be honored on Edinburg's Tejano Walk of Fame. The men brought with them a decades-long legacy of serenading their fans. But they also carried hope for the future.

Organizers sold tickets to a private dinner after the induction ceremony. For \$1,000 per table, fans got dinner and a front-row seat for live performances by Tejano musicians including Little Joe, Roberto Pulido, Bobby Pulido and Rene Sandoval.

The proceeds will benefit the

University of Texas-Pan American music department and will fund scholarships for aspiring musicians — in investment in the future of music in the Valley.

Many of the honorees had collected accolades across the country. Paulino Bernal remembers being honored by President Lyndon B. Johnson after playing for the troops in Vietnam. Along with his partner Conjunto Bernal, he was the only Spanish musician to do so.

Freddie Martinez remembers fans from the Valley following him to shows in Chicago and California.

And Genaro Aguilares of Los Aguilares told of accolades from Tejano music organizations in San Antonio and Dallas.

In light of what they achieved, all the musicians agreed it felt

right to be honored in the Valley, the place that had shaped their music.

"Here in the Rio Grande Valley is where my music was first created," Martinez said as Bernal stood beside him.

In the 1970s, Bernal hosted dances three times a week. Mondays meant McAllen, Tuesdays Brownsville and Wednesdays Harlingen. Martinez performed for the hordes that danced away in those city's civic centers. He points to that period as his first opportunity to popularize his music.

Gilberto Pulido, himself a member of Edinburg's Tejano Walk of Fame, helped organize the event and praised the inductees.

PLEASE SEE **TEJANO**, A12

RIO GRANDE VALLEY

RSV

FROM PAGE A1

complications from RSV, Camacho said. The hospital started seeing children with RSV in early August — usually, the first cases appear in October, she said.

“It really varies accord

TEJANO

FROM PAGE A1

“They’ve paved the way for a lot of the region’s musicians,” Pulido said. By coming to the event and helping to raise money for music

students, they continue to open doors, he said.

Edinburg city officials decided to have the dinner and ceremony at the Social Club because of construction at the preferred venue. The Tejano Walk of Fame, which every inductee gets a star on, sits outside the Edinburg Auditorium and

the new Edinburg City Hall, which is currently under construction.

Organizers had considered delaying the event until next year, said Edinburg City Manager Juan Jose “J.J.” Rodriguez. Public pressure forced them to move it up. In fact, public demand brought about the

event in the first place.

The city has inducted five previous groups of musicians into the walk of fame, but they had neglected to induct any new members for the past two years. Residents came to Edinburg Mayor Joe Ochoa and requested the sixth induction ceremony, and the

mayor obliged.

“We’re very excited to bring this back to the city of Edinburg,” Ochoa said as he listened to a live Tejano performance. “Tejano music has been with us for very many years.”

If the donations keep rolling in, Tejano music will stay for many more years.