



Student Name:  
Class Period:  
Date:

## Meet the Originals

*Texas Originals* is a radio series about people who made an impact on Texas. You can hear it online and on radio stations around the state. Read or listen to the episode on Cleto Rodríguez. Then, answer questions about it.

### Cleto Rodríguez 1923–1990

His portrait hangs in the Pentagon Hall of Heroes. A section of U.S. Route 90 in San Antonio is named for him, as is the school he attended as a boy. For his heroism in World War II, he received the nation's highest military honor.

San Marcos native Cleto Rodríguez was born in 1923. By the age of nine, he had lost both his parents and was raised in San Antonio by relatives.

Rodríguez joined the Army in 1944, and was soon serving as a rifleman with the 148th Infantry in the Philippines. In 1945, during the fierce month-long Battle for Manila, Rodríguez and a fellow soldier played key roles in regaining a heavily defended railroad station from the Japanese. Both men were awarded the Medal of Honor for their “gallant determination” and “heroic courage in the face of tremendous odds.”

Rodríguez was the fifth Mexican American ever to earn this honor—and one of fourteen Texans who earned it during World War II.

After the war, Rodríguez returned to San Antonio. He served briefly in the Air Force, and then rejoined the Army, retiring in 1970 as a master sergeant. He became an advocate for veterans and minorities after his military service.

Rodríguez died on Pearl Harbor Day in 1990 and is buried at Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery.

**Check for Understanding:** Answer the questions below based on evidence from the episode on Cleto Rodríguez. Refer to the text included above if needed.

1. How did Cleto Rodríguez earn the Congressional Medal of Honor?
2. Which causes did Rodríguez champion after his retirement from the military?

**Going Further:** Write or discuss your answer to the question below, supporting your answer with evidence from the episode or additional information you have learned in class.

3. **Creating Connections.** Rodríguez's boyhood school is named after him because of his service to country and community. If you could rename your school after a historical figure, who would it be and why?