

**T**he talent and ability came out of nowhere, totally blindsiding him. He was barely a C student at the time at Fountain Valley High School in Fountain Valley, Calif., just slowly strolling his way through school, not knowing where life was going to take him.

Then it all came together for Pablo Ortiz when he walked into an accounting class early one morning. He just thought he'd give the course a try, though he was quite certain it would be like any other class. But no, this one was different. *This* was a life-changing moment.

"I was looking at the numbers and the accounting statement on the board and I just got it," he says as he glares out of the huge panoramic window in his spacious office in a high-rise building in Anaheim, Calif. with a majestic view of the San Bernardino Mountains and the bright blue California sky.

As President and CEO of Ortiz Accountancy Group, Ortiz is considered one of the most inspiring success stories in the business community. His company, which began in his garage in Orange, California, is thriving and is one of the top accountancy firms in



***Pablo Ortiz's family came to the U.S. with nothing but the clothes they were wearing. Today, he runs a thriving accountancy firm and has emerged as one of the most inspiring success stories in the community.***

the area.

“I had no idea that things were going to turn out this way for me,” he says. “It’s quite amazing.”

The conversation about the inception of his unknown mathematical skill and business acumen takes Ortiz back in time, back to that day when he discovered his talent and purpose for life. He had come from Cuba to the U.S. 17 years earlier in 1966. He was six months old. His family didn’t even have a dollar in their pockets.

“We could only come with the cloths we were wearing – nothing else,” he says. “My mother even stashed her wedding ring in my diaper. She was afraid it was going to be taken from her.”

Only women and children were allowed to leave Cuba to come to the U.S. Husbands were allowed to follow afterwards. Soon thereafter, however, the path to the U.S. for Cubans was slammed shut. The Ortiz’s just made it out in time.

The airplane carrying Ortiz and his mother landed in Los Angeles. They wound up living in Culver City for 16 years before moving south to Orange County. Up to that time, Ortiz was unaware of any special talents he possessed ... until he walked into that accounting class.

“Accounting is not one plus one is two -- it’s more logic,” he says. “I was immediately able to look at the numbers and see that ‘ok, this number is off here.’ Or ‘this is off here because of this number here.’ It just came easy to me. For me, it was like putting together a puzzle. Where other students were looking at it and just didn’t understand, I did. I understood the logic behind it. I can’t explain where it came from.”

It’s like that riveting scene in Good Will Hunting when Matt Damon is trying to explain to Minnie Driver his amazing ability to see and

comprehend math like none other. “Take Beethoven,” Damon says. “He looked at a piano and it just made sense to him. He could just play.”

“It just flowed so easily for me,” he says.

From that point on, he aced every test. His parents were stunned. “They were like, ‘Where did this come from,’” he says.

And an accounting star was born.

His business has evolved over time, but the one staple is Ortiz’s personable, friendly and easy-going manner. You don’t just walk into Ortiz’s office and drop your financial information in his lap. Not even close. Ortiz builds rock-solid relationships with clients. He embeds himself in their businesses, getting to know the day-to-day operations inside and out.

“From day one, I decided I wanted to be in the trenches with my clients,” he says. “I still am. I don’t just sit behind a desk. I get out there. I learn my clients’ business. If I don’t know how the business operates on a day-to-day basis, I can’t find different tax strategies to help them. That face-to-face interaction goes a long way in my business.”

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**Contact:**

**Pablo Ortiz**

**President**

**Ortiz Accountancy group**

**2401 E. Katella Ave. suite 600**

**Anaheim, CA 92806**

**714-541-4646**

**Pablo@OrtizAG.com**

**www.OrtizAg.com**