

OBITUARY

Juanita Rodriguez

September 28, 1911 — August 16, 1997

Written By Granddaughter
Kim Moore, Boston, Mass.

So often we lose our loved ones and never have a chance to talk about their accomplishments and contributions.

That's why I've taken the time to write this short tribute to my grandmother, Juanita Rodriguez of Eagle Lake.

On Saturday, August 16, 1997, she died of complications due to aging. She was 85 years old.

It will be difficult to truly capture in words the impact she had on our lives and the community. Here, I will try to deliver the essence of who my grandmother was and how she changed so many lives for the better.

We knew her as Gramo.

The Legacy

My grandmother is survived by her husband of 61 years, Benito Rodriguez of Eagle Lake. She was the loving mother to eight children and their respective partners: V. Wanda and Paul Graham of Palestine; Rod Rodriguez and Dorothy Morrison of



Lake Charles, La.; Maria and Isidro Reyes of Eagle Lake; Elizabeth and Leon Nutt of Pasadena; Elida Teresa and Jimmy Moore of Bellaire; Mercedes and Richard Ministerio of South Houston; Benito Jr. and Nora Rodriguez of Sealy; and Larry Falcon and Judy Moore of Nordheim.

She is also survived by five siblings: Manuel Cardenas of Smithville;

Jesus and Antonio Cardenas of Flaton; Eva Alvarado of Schulenburg; and Epifania Ayala of Houston.

Deceased brothers and sisters include Maria Sanchez, Adan Cardenas, Octaviano Cardenas Jr. and Benito Cardenas. She was also preceded in death by her grandson, Dennis Reyes.

Gramo was the proud grandmother of 25 devoted grandchildren, 23 great grandchildren and one great great grandchild.

She always judged her personal success by the accomplishments of her grandchildren. She used to brag endlessly about their successful marriages, college degrees, lucrative careers, beautiful homes, etc. And it always warmed her heart to see so many of us gathered together.

Background

Gramo was born September 28, 1911, to Epifania and Octaviano Cardenas. Her birth certificate identifies her birthplace as "near Waelder" in Gonzales County. She was one of 10 children.

Gramo's father was a farmer.

Growing up as a Mexican-American girl in the early 20th century, she never had the opportunity to get a formal education. Her education was in the cotton fields and on her father's farm.

That is where she developed her unbending work ethic — a characteristic she passed on to her children and one that is felt in our generation of the family as well.

In 1936, at the age of 25, she met and married my grandfather, Benito Rodriguez.

While living in Flaton, Gramo began to work in the homes of affluent residents in the area. She did not have the luxury of staying home with her children. A few years later, they moved to Eagle Lake.

Through hard work and perseverance, Gramo helped raise a successful family and contributed to the local community.

The Family Foundation

In recent years, Gramo admitted to me that she, in fact, had asked for Gramo's hand in marriage.

A strong sense of family values was at the center of my grandmother's philosophy of life. Everything she did was for her family.

Unlike so many, Gramo's priorities were very clear. With the smallest budget, she managed to rear, feed, clothe and provide for eight children.

She also succeeded in instilling in her children the importance of maintaining family relationships — a tenet of the Rodriguez clan.

The Entrepreneur

Just before the beginning of the war, my grandparents moved to Eagle Lake.

Gramo's entrepreneurial spirit and her need to help provide for the family lead her to open a small restaurant (apparently where the old Miller's Grocery stands today on E. Main).

The restaurant was only the first of many efforts my grandmother made to care for her family.

While my grandfather worked on various construction projects in and around SE Texas, Gramo spent time in a variety of positions — ironing, sewing, cleaning homes, dressing poultry, cleaning fish, picking cotton, etc.

For several summers, the family traveled anywhere they could to get work — from the fields of East Bernard to the groves of Florida.

But, Gramo's desire to work closer to home for the children resulted in a job at Melvin and Francis Campbell's chicken farm and hatchery. There she developed the skills to build a small seasonal business she liked to call Eagle Lake Poultry Dressing.

Her customers understood that they would get a top quality dressing job (by hand) for their duck, goose or chicken. Gramo was always concerned about quality. And before it was popular to talk about good customer service, Gramo was practicing it.

The Humanitarian

Perhaps it is a stretch to say that my grandmother helped to establish Eagle Lake as the "Goose Hunting Capital of the World", but she was a great contributor to the community in terms of reputation and increased tourism and hunting business.

Everyone knew my grandmother. She charmed them all with her good sense of humor and mothering ways. Each season, hunters from all over the state and country would come back to visit Gramo.

And, invariably, the Houston Oilers would show up for a celebrity visit.

My grandmother always had an open door for those in need. Her spirit alone has been enough to get various individuals on their feet. She was full of love.

While no one would argue that she was perfect, I think we all understand the level of love that she offered was unparalleled.

The Artist

My grandmother loved the color purple. Had one seen her flower beds, this fact would be obvious.

Purple was also a shade found in her very artful quilt work. I wish I could speak more eloquently about her sewing and artistry, but no words would do them justice.

The quilts capture so many things about my grandmother. They are an expression of her creativity. Like Gramo, her quilts keep us warm.

One must be patient and persistent to succeed in creating such a work. She was both.

Gramo was truly an artist. Her colors and designs should hang in a museum. She sewed love into those quilts and got pleasure from that work.

It wasn't even work to her... it was joy.

The Chef

My grandmother was a fantastic cook. It came from within her.

Like her quilts, it was all done with love. She nourished generations with her delicious food.

She served Texas' best fideo with chicken, nopalitos, pot of pinto beans, beef soup, etc. Her very special hot sauces, made from home-grown peppers and herbs, were the best this side of the Mississippi.

My personal favorite was her flour tortillas and greens.

The Gardener

To say Gramo had a green thumb is an understatement.

She worked the land, fed and

nourished it just like her children. The results were gorgeous fruits, vegetables and herbs that looked as good as they tasted.

She was a whiz in the yard.

My grandmother adored flowers and plants. Her porch and flower beds always colored the west end of Main Street so beautifully.

Our Friend

More than any other role, I most appreciate my grandmother as a friend. I could speak to her with no worries. I had fun sharing time with her over a good polka, a hot taco and a cold beer.

She never judged anyone. She was understanding.

She was a great teacher despite the fact that I never mastered the art of tortilla-making.

She had a great knack for making everyone feel better. Even though English was not her first language, Gramo could communicate better than most folks I know.

Gramo was a great neighbor.

I will strive to attain her level of unconditional love. I feel most fortunate to have had 30 years to get to know and love my grandmother.

I, along with the hundreds of friends and relatives, will miss her.

The funeral for Juanita Rodriguez was held Tuesday, August 19, 1997, in Eagle Lake.

Donations may be sent in the name of Juanita Rodriguez to Rice Medical Center Lady's Auxiliary, P.O. Box 277, Eagle Lake, Texas 77434.



ANNOUNCING NEW ARRIVALS

Robert Maldonado Jr.

Mr. and Mrs. Robert Maldonado of Eagle Lake announce the birth of their first child, a son, born August 12, 1997, at 10:51 a.m. at Rice Medical Center in Eagle Lake.

Robert Jr. weighed eight pounds and measured 20-3/4 inches at birth. Maternal grandparents are Rich-

ard Lujan and Janie Ochoa of Eagle Lake.

His paternal grandmother is Susan Morales of Eagle Lake.

His great grandparents are Mr. and Mrs. Mike Gonzales and Mrs. Trino (Pauline) Maldonado of Eagle Lake and the late, Mr. Trino Maldonado.

Jessica Leigh Tesch

Bruce and Vicki Tesch of Sheridan announce the birth of their daughter August 6, 1997, at 7:59 a.m. at Rice Medical Center.

Jessica Leigh weighed eight pounds, one ounce and measured 21 inches at birth.

She was welcomed home by her sister, Tara Dawn Tesch, age four.

Maternal grandparents are Vernon and Dorothy Brown of Rock Island.

Paternal grandparents are Oscar and Judy Tesch of Sheridan.

Her great grandfather is Harvey Jones of Waverly, Tennessee.

The new mother is the former Vicki Brown.

NIGHTINGALE'S CORNER

By Mary Jan Hargraves, RN/MSN/FNP

Depression

Unfortunately, depression is becoming more common, according to researchers at Cornell University Medical College.

It has been determined that since the 1960's the rate of depressive disorders has increased in all age groups and has become more prevalent among teens and young adults.

It has been estimated that 1 in 20 American adults suffers from a depressive disorder. In the next month, about 2% of all Americans will experience some symptoms of major depression.

Whether you are suffering from a serious depressive or a simple case of the blues, exercise can help you bounce back. "Prescribed and supervised physical training may prevent or alleviate anxiety and depression in certain persons," states the American

Heart Association.

So how do you motivate yourself to exercise when you feel lifeless as a mop? So... ask a friend or a member of the family to work out with you to boost your motivation.

Running, dancing, swimming, bicycling and walking may be the best types of exercise for depression due to the aerobic benefits.

Weight lifting and T'ai chi (a Chinese martial art form that uses slow-motion movements) have also been found to relieve depression significantly.

Walking is usually the best way to start a program for physical and emotional wellness. But, whatever exercise program you decide to go into, please begin slowly; if you overdo it, you will probably stop very quickly.

If you have any questions, please contact me at Sealy Medical Clinic, 409-885-3370; or Eagle Lake Medical Clinic, 234-2066.

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BETHELEM DE JUDEA ASSEMBLY DE DIOS: 1000 East E Street, Eagle Lake.

SEALY ASSEMBLY OF GOD: 1140 Meyer St., Sealy; Warren Richardson, Pastor.

THE DAY OF PENTECOST APOSTOLIC REVIVAL: FM 102 S., Matthews, 4 p.m. (at Mt. Zion). Rev. R.L. Carter.

EAST BERNARD FIRST BAPTIST: Rev. Clifford Roser.

FIRST BAPTIST: N. Lake at E. Prairie, Eagle Lake. Rev. David Mann.

FRIENDSHIP BAPTIST: 405 S. Lake, Eagle Lake; Rev. Earl Shorter, Jr., Pastor, 234-5795.

IGLESIA BAUTISTA GETSEMANI: 901 B Street, Eagle Lake; Rev. Mario Vasquez.

GREATER MT. OLIVE BAPTIST: Rev. R. Kiser, Pastor. 705 Lake, Eagle Lake, 234-3545.

PROVIDENCE BAPTIST: 1207 E. State, Eagle Lake. Rev. Coby Shorter; 234-3735.

ROCK ISLAND BAPTIST: Bob Allison, Pastor.

SHERIDAN FIRST BAPTIST

WHITE CLOUD BAPTIST CHURCH: 202 Old Altair Rd., Eagle Lake; Rev. Obie Rhodes; 234-3800.

CHURCH OF CHRIST: Sheridan, Texas.

NEW LIFE FELLOWSHIP: Hwy. 90A, Sheridan; Del Sanford, Pastor; 234-3276.

CHRIST OUR REDEEMER — Charismatic: 478-7534, 478-6512, Jerry C. McKinney, Pastor.

HOLY CROSS CATHOLIC CHURCH: East Bernard.

PARISH OF THE NATIVITY: Our Lady of Guadalupe Sanctuary: Guadalupe Terrace Addition; Our Lady of Perpetual Help Sanctuary: 310 N. Stevenson; 7 a.m. (Spanish), 9 a.m., 11 a.m., Father Eddie Winkler.

ST. MARY'S CATHOLIC CHURCH: Box 97, Nada, 758-3218. Rev. Joseph Koebel, Pastor.

CHRIST EPISCOPAL: 306 E. Stockbridge.

EAGLE LAKE GOSPEL MISSION: Rev. Emil Burger.

GRACE LUTHERAN: 408 N. Stevenson, 234-3381; Rev. Robert E. Schlott.

LEHRER MEMORIAL UNITED METHODIST: Garwood, Texas. Rev. Barry Bauerschlag, Pastor.

LISSIE UNITED METHODIST: Sandra Kimbrow, Pastor; 234-2112; Lissie, Texas.

ROCK ISLAND METHODIST: Ken Sellers Jr., Lay-Pastor.

UNITED METHODIST: Barry Bauerschlag, Pastor. 200 W. Prairie; Sunday School 9:30 a.m.; Worship 10:45 a.m.

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN: 106 E. State St., Eagle Lake.

Richard Avery, Pastor.

VINE OF THE LORD: Paul Aguilar, Interim.

FRIENDSHIP A.G.: 501 Wallace, East Bernard. Fred Chambers, Pastor.

THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS: 600 West St., Sealy; Marshall Crosby, Branch Pres.

CHURCH OF CHRIST: 815 Milam, Columbus. Roy V. Palmer, Minister.

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