



Elida V. Quintanilla

March 1, 1937 - May 9, 2017

Elida V. Quintanilla, known to friends as Ellie, to siblings as Ella and to her children and family as Ma, died May 9. The Seguin native, born on March 1, 1937, is preceded in death by her mother Julia Campos Vasquez, and siblings Olga Campos Vasquez, Lola Menchaca and Rudy Vasquez. Elida was masterful at wheeling and dealing, using her innate negotiating skills to guide her children to successful careers and lives: Michael, an award-winning San Antonio journalist who traveled to New York, Milan and Paris reporting on fashion and culture; Becky, a counselor and educator with a Master's Degree; Linda, a skillful chef and food services supervisor and Julie, a loving mother. Elida's guidance included a backbone of no-excuses ever. She struggled and sacrificed for her children. She epitomized survival. She gave strength to those she loved. She was hospitalized for 28 days and died from complications of acute respiratory distress. Her children were with her all the time, just as she always has been there for them working as many as three jobs in a week: babysitting, retail sales at Sears, customer service for QVC and Paragon Cable. She earned 25 cents per zipper she sewed onto blue jeans at the former Levi Strauss plant on S. Zarzamora Street. She colored jelly beans at the Judson Candy Co. And she even acted, once playing a nun in an NBC Movie of the Week, "300 Miles for Stephanie" that starred 1970s icon, Tony Orlando. The movie was based on a story written by her son, Michael. Later she played a bit part in a movie alongside Amanda Blake, famous for her role as Miss Kitty on "Gunsmoke." Elida and Blake became

good friends. At 10, Elida became a motherless daughter when her mother, Julia Campos Vasquez, died at 36 after childbirth. Elida had to quit school in the fourth grade to rear her infant brother and on many occasions was forced to sleep, overnight, on the front porch with him. She later earned her GED and attended San Antonio College only after clearing the way with an instructor for her to bring her daughter, Becky, then five, with her. She bought a child's Mexican painted chair at Market Square for Becky to sit on next to her own desk at SAC. Elida was always inventive, full of ways to make anything work. There were never any barriers, only incentives and creative ideas — the promise of a mother's love, the roar of her protection, a woman's will and instinct to be directional, to never surrender her power, always moving forward even though others would try to force her to remain behind. When her son, a Trinity University graduate, was hired to work the night police beat at the San Antonio Express-News he told the editor that he could drive, had a car, insurance and a driver's license. But he didn't have any of those and wanted the job to make his mother proud. He rode the bus home after that interview to tell her the news. They hugged and jumped like crazy. And then they ate eclairs, Elida's favorite pastry. Elida soon she hatched an idea: she would fetch her son at the downtown police station and drive him to the crime scenes. Together they covered the night police beat without his editors ever knowing. She drove him to shootings at bars, fires, and calls pertaining to domestic violence -- men who had imprisoned women with their vicious vitriol and hateful hands, experiences that Elida shared as a young woman. Decades later, she was a volunteer with the SAPD's Women's Victim Unit and would ride along with officers to crime scenes to comfort and talk to women of abuse and get them to press charges against their abusers. On the police beat with her son she was gorgeous, all Cher-like with her long dark hair, working the crime scene, the duo gathering information. While on the drive back to the station mother and son talked about the story and how it should be written. But they also talked about the stuff of life. She pushed her kids hard. At the dining room table she doled out writing assignments to Michael: "Write

a story about being a patrol boy. Write a story about your favorite Halloween costume. Write a story about Christmas.” And she'd always say to him then and years later when he was a reporter for the L.A. Times, the Dallas Times Herald, the Dallas Morning News, the El Paso Herald Post and the San Antonio Express-News: “Take me there with words so I can see it, smell it, taste it. Show me, don't just tell me.” Elida was her son's first editor. She pushed her daughters to go beyond their own expectation be it with college or a vocation. Becky earned degrees from Our Lady of the Lake University and the University of the Incarnate Word. A skilled seamstress Elida also taught her girls and son — as kids — about fashion and encouraged them to develop a fierce look. Elida was always in her children's corner, orchestrating their successes, challenging them to never settle for less and to determine a deserve level beyond what she had hoped for her life because she just didn't get the breaks that she created for them. She taught her kids to stand up for themselves and for others. And to stand up for her, to always have her back and be bold enough to speak for her when the time came because one day she might not be able to. When Michael was in New York for Fashion Week during 9/11 she spoke to him every day and encouraged him to stay strong, to never forget his humility and to have compassion for the people in New York and to remain curious. She relished her trips to Las Vegas where she was known as Ma Bling to cocktail waitresses and casino supervisors. The love of her life was her 11-year-old teacup Chihuahua, Baby Girl, who was with her every day. The past four weeks were filled with sweetness and sadness for Elida. She entered the hospital on April 12. Fiesta kicked in and she was doing fine and told her kids to keep their Fiesta commitments — and she wanted to hear about everything. Her children brought her Fiesta fun and she loved the attention. E.J. De Luna, the Fiesta Commission president and his wife, Rosie Mac Moon visited Elida and personally pinned her with their medals. She wore a medal from King Antonio and Rey Feo. Linda and Julie watched the Fiesta parades on television with her. They ate watermelon,

Elida's favorite fruit. Elida fought and fought and fought for her health in the hospital, her body held hostage by an emergency intubation. She couldn't speak. So her children, just as she advised them all those years, spoke for her. But she was still orchestrating. With a finger pressed onto their palms she wrote letters to spell words to tell a sentence. Her last words she wrote were "I love you." Elida is survived by her children Michael Ray Quintanilla, Julia Rose Sanmiguel, Linda Q. Verduzco, Rebecca Ann Quintanilla, and her beloved pet Chihuahua "Baby Girl," as well as 6 grandchildren, 19 great grandchildren and 10 great-great grandchildren. Visitation will begin at 5 p.m. and will conclude with a 7 p.m. rosary at Palm Heights Mortuary on Monday, May 15. Funeral procession will depart from Palm Heights at 10:30 a.m. for an 11 a.m. graveside service at San Jose Burial Park, May 16.

Cemetery Details

San Jose Burial Park

8235 Mission RD
San Antonio, TX 78214
(210) 923-0272
<https://www.missionparks.com/>

Previous Events

Visitation

MAY 15. 5:00 PM - 9:00 PM (CT)

Palm Heights Mortuary
3711 S Zarzamora St
San Antonio, TX 78225
(210) 924-4568
<https://www.missionparks.com/>

Rosary

MAY 15. 7:00 PM (CT)

Palm Heights Mortuary
3711 S Zarzamora St
San Antonio, TX 78225
(210) 924-4568
<https://www.missionparks.com/>

Graveside Service

MAY **16**. 11:00 AM (CT)

San Jose Burial Park
8235 Mission RD
San Antonio, TX 78214
(210) 923-0272
<https://www.missionparks.com/>

Tribute Wall

RQ

“ Rebecca Quintanilla sent a virtual gift in memory of Elida V. Quintanilla



Rebecca Quintanilla - May 28, 2017 at 03:23 AM

RQ

“ Rebecca Quintanilla sent a virtual gift in memory of Elida V. Quintanilla



Rebecca Quintanilla - May 28, 2017 at 03:22 AM

RQ

“ *Ma*
I miss you beyond what words can explain. I feel awful. I know that you were preparing me for your departure but I would have never been ready. I always wanted to make you proud of me as I was growing up. I know it was not easy raising me alone. Thank you for always encouraging and pushing me forward for school, work and life. I'm sure you have reunited with Grandma Julie, Sydney, Boogie and Baby Girl. The five of you are now free from all illness and pain. I'm so pleased that you're with your mother and Baby Girl. I think you missed them the most. All of you will be happy together in heaven. I too will join you when it is my turn. Until then, know that I carry you in my heart and soul every day. I love you Ma beyond what words can explain. I will always be your "real" Baby Girl. Love Becky



Rebecca Quintanilla - May 28, 2017 at 03:21 AM

RQ

“ *Rebecca Quintanilla sent a virtual gift in memory of Elida V. Quintanilla*



Rebecca Quintanilla - May 28, 2017 at 03:06 AM

RQ

“ *Rebecca Quintanilla sent a virtual gift in memory of Elida V. Quintanilla*



Rebecca Quintanilla - May 28, 2017 at 03:05 AM

RQ

“ *Rebecca Quintanilla sent a virtual gift in memory of Elida V. Quintanilla*



Rebecca Quintanilla - May 28, 2017 at 03:04 AM

RQ

“ *Rebecca Quintanilla lit a candle in memory of Elida V. Quintanilla*



Rebecca Quintanilla - May 28, 2017 at 03:03 AM

RQ

“ *Rebecca Quintanilla sent a virtual gift in memory of Elida V. Quintanilla*



Rebecca Quintanilla - May 28, 2017 at 03:03 AM

OG

“ *RIP Ella. You are safe in Gods arms*

olga Gitierrez - May 15, 2017 at 02:09 PM

YP

“ Your team at Propel. purchased the Peaceful White Lilies Basket for the family of Elida V. Quintanilla.



Your team at Propel. - May 15, 2017 at 01:26 PM

TD

“ Tawana Timberlake/Rosemary Sundeen/Arabella Dalton purchased the Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum for the family of Elida V. Quintanilla.



Tawana Timberlake/Rosemary Sundeen/Arabella Dalton -
May 15, 2017 at 11:04 AM

TT

“ Tawana Timberlake sent a virtual gift in memory of Elida V. Quintanilla



Tawana Timberlake - May 15, 2017 at 10:13 AM

RR

“ Bless you all! It's hard for us when we lose our Mother, but she will live forever in the hearts of those who knew and loved her! My prayers are with you all.

Rachel Edwards Ridder - May 14, 2017 at 06:03 PM

NS

“ *Nathan, Karen and Chuck Speer purchased the Basket Full of Wishes for the family of Elida V. Quintanilla.*



Nathan, Karen and Chuck Speer - May 13, 2017 at 11:07 PM

TF

“ *The Robles Family purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Elida V. Quintanilla.*



The Robles Family - May 12, 2017 at 08:27 PM