



Florence A. Kolodziej

May 19, 1928 - July 21, 2018

Florence A. 'Flo' Kolodziej 1928-2018 Florence A. "Flo" Kolodziej of San Antonio passed away Saturday, July 21, 2018, at the age of 90. She was born May 19, 1928, in Cestohowa, Texas, to Frank J. and Julia Skrobarczyk Kolodziej. Her life revolved around education, music, church, and family. Education was always high on her list, starting school at the age of 5, as described in her book, *The Johann Kolodziej Family*. As a sophomore, she left Kosciuszko Public School to attend Good Council High School in Chicago, where she received her diploma in 1945. Upon graduation, she enrolled in Loyola University in Chicago. She then joined the Felician-Franciscan Order as Sister Mary Marita, CSSF, and spent the next nine years teaching at elementary schools in Illinois, Wisconsin, Nebraska, and Kansas. At age 22, she was already serving as vice principal and parish organist and directing both an adult choir and a children's choir in the parishes where she served. However, health issues forced her to leave the order and return home to Texas in 1955. Always resourceful, she immediately applied for a job, and found one the same day. Wanting something more challenging, she took and passed the test for government service, thus beginning a successful 32-year career with the government. As she wrote in her book, she started at the bottom of the career ladder at Kelly Air Force Base in San Antonio, as a clerk typist/secretary. She worked her way up through the ranks, retiring as a GS-12, which was a rare achievement for a woman in those days. She held the position of a computer systems management lead analyst. During her career,

she made good use of her literary skills, writing and editing many technical and operational manuals. She was proud of the many performance awards she earned throughout her career. Although working full time, she continued her education by enrolling in St. Mary's University. At that time, the university was for men only, but women could take evening classes. She earned her Bachelor of Arts degree in English in 1961, after St. Mary's became fully co-educational. Her graduating class was one of the first that had women graduates. In fact, for her class ring, her only choice was a men's style ring, which she wore proudly all her life. Throughout her working career, she remained active in her church. As important as education was to her, music was her other love. She had a God-given musical ability that she utilized, playing the organ for various churches and directing choirs. She wrote that she played in about 25 different Catholic churches in and around San Antonio. She was excited to have been the organist for the televised Sunday Masses. She was a parttime organist and choir director at St. Leo's for more than 20 years before becoming the fulltime organist and choir director at St. Cecilia's in 1981 until she retired. As a gifted singer and musician, Flo continued using her talent at St. Anthony's in Elmendorf for another six years. Along the way, she operated her own small business out of her home, having successfully completed the H&R Block tax course. She eventually gave up the tax business but said it was something that "kept her brain active, and also kept a few people honest!" She was a member of various professional organizations and continued her music, even studying guitar for a while. She loved to read, research for genealogy, sew, knit and crochet, travel, and take photographs. Flo was preceded in death by her parents; sister Frances Kotara, brother-in-law Clifford Kotara, nephew Norman Kotara, and brother Joe Kolodziej. She is survived by brothers Benjamin (Sue) Kolodziej of Sacramento, Calif., Chester (Myrtle) Kolodziej of La Vernia, and Alphonse (Elaine) Kolodziej of Floresville, and sister-in-law Christine Kolodziej of Kosciusko. She was fondly known as "Auntie Flo," not only to her numerous nieces and nephews, but to many in the community. She is also survived by many friends, as well as nieces and

nephews, and especially her niece, Darlene Breda and husband Bob. They were her almost-constant companions during her last year and a half, as Flo's outside activities were severely limited. Services were held July 25, with visitation and rosary preceding the 10 a.m. funeral Mass in St. Cecilia's Catholic Church in San Antonio. Interment followed in St. Ann's Cemetery in Kosciusko. Serving as pallbearers were nephews Karl Kolodziej of St. Hedwig, Keith Kolodziej of Floresville, Gary Kolodziej of San Mateo, Calif., Curtis Kolodziej of North Highlands, Calif., Clifford Kotara of Bulverde, and Robert Kolodziej of Stockdale; nephews-in-law James Weaver of Floresville and Bobby Breda of San Antonio; and great-nephews Christopher Kotara of Bulverde and Paul Breda of La Vernia. Card of Thanks The family wishes to thank the many who paid their respects and shared prayers for their beloved "Auntie Flo." Especially appreciated was the loving comfort and care she received during her last year and a half she stayed in St. Francis Nursing Home in San Antonio. It was a place she had come to call home. Also, thanks to Father Frank Kurzaj who came from St. Stanislaus Catholic Church in Bandera to lead the rosary, and fathers Dennis Aréchiga of St. Matthew Catholic Church and Jimmy Drennan of St. Margaret Mary Catholic Church who concelebrated the Mass. A special thanks to the beautiful St. Cecilia's choir, including guitarist Luis Duran and pianist Juan Carlos Paz. Also, thanks to Flo's dear friend and choir member Dora Salinas for her participation and assistance with the arrangements. --