



Carmen H. Garcia

November 3, 1945 - January 17, 2025

Carmen H. Garcia

11/3/1945 - 1/17/2025

Loving Mother, Grandma, Daughter, Sister, Cousin, and Friend, Carmen H. Garcia, passed away peacefully on Friday, January 17th, in the loving arms of family at age 79. Her decline with dementia took her last years and final breath but the life before that was blessed with grandchildren, lots of cooking, sewing, and dance floors awaiting her spicy rhythm of life!

She was born November 3rd, 1945, to Salvador Hernandez and Connie (Torres) Hernandez in Los Angeles, California. She attended Guadalupe Catholic school in Santa Barbara, La Cumbre Jr. High, and graduated Santa Barbara High in 1964, thereafter attending Santa Barbara City College earning a degree in Police Science. She patrolled our curbs as a meter maid and planned to be an officer but opted for motherhood. She cashed checks at Mid-State Bank for a few years before working her magic in our local school cafeterias for nearly 20 years feeding school kids with a little plate and a big smile. After retirement she reignited her purpose for helping youth by serving our local justice system at both the Santa Barbara Juvenile Hall and Los Prietos Boys Camp well into her 70's when she would ride her motor scooter up the 154 at midnight for her graveyard shift as a Juvenile Institutions Officer. She poured her passion into our local youth from her professions as a hard-

working cafeteria cook and a “Grandma-Figure” to incarcerated youth.

Her glory years spanned from the early 1990’s to the late 2010’s when Grandma Carmen stood loud and proud cheering on her grandchildren for football, soccer, basketball, and wrestling. With pom-poms in hand, shouts of joy in her voice, and unconditional cheers in her heart she truly shined. YFL football fields and Bishop Diego games are where she cheered the most.

On her softer side, sewing quilts, patching up pants, and creating costumes for kids in the family was a seamless endeavor for Auntie or Grandma Carmen. Turtles, skunks, and other cute critters still crawl around in the Halloween memories of her grandkids, nieces, and nephews. During Fiestas she dressed up grandkids and even made teenagers push the squeaky cart in the Children’s parade as her baby “Fiesteras” detailed her dresses and little Zoros zoomed around with her handmade capes. Then in 1998, as a member of The Native Daughters Of The Golden West, she earned the title of Saint Barbara! This honor highlighted a wonderful Chicana raised in a family of 12 siblings from humble beginnings who sold “cascarones” as a little girl to parade-goers in the 1950’s. Amidst the 1960’s she stepped tall, curvy, and with bright red lipstick while being selected as a candidate for the Miss Milpas beauty title. Carmen’s creations all came with comfort and compassion whether it was a baby’s first blanket or a little girl’s fiesta dress she stitched it with a Grandma’s love.

She is survived by her mother Connie Hernandez, her four children, sons Brian Pearson (Leanna), and Eric Garcia (Nancy), and daughters Regina Garcia, and Trina Garcia, and her lifetime partner of 53 years, Joe Nelson, along with her six sisters and four brothers, ten grandchildren and six great-grandchildren. She is preceded in death by her father Salvador Hernandez and brothers Sal Hernandez Jr. and Richard Hernandez. A special thanks to the staff at Channel Islands Post Acute and the Visiting Nurses Association

(VNA) Hospice for their kind and compassionate care. A funeral mass is planned for Saturday, January 25th, 10:00 at Holy Cross Church, 1740 Cliff drive.

Previous Events

Memorial Mass

JAN **25**. 10:00 AM (PT)

Holy Cross Catholic Church
1740 Cliff Drive
Santa Barbara, CA 93109
(805) 962-0411

Tribute Wall

MH

“ My sister Carmen was brave, bold and had a beautiful soul. I remember watching a toys for tots motorcycle ride up state street one year and there was Carmen at the very end dressed as an angel on her scooter. Complete with angel wings. To "watch over all the riders" were her words. Like I said brave, and bold with a beautiful soul. Ride with the angels Carmen you will not soon be forgotten. Martin.

Martin Hernandez - January 24, 2025 at 12:46 PM

EC

“ My beautiful aunt Carmen will be greatly missed. She was my lunch lady at Washington elementary school.

Elizabeth Cook - January 23, 2025 at 03:33 PM

RP

Went to SBHS with Carmen and tho didn't know her well, we graduated in '64 from our big class..Blessings, Carmen, as you go through the Heavenly future.. Roxanne Parks

Roxanne Parks - January 24, 2025 at 12:06 AM

ET

Lise Mac Farlane told wonderful stories of how Carmen and she had great times in the Native Daughters of the Golden West. Lise loved Carmen and said to me, " I miss her a great deal!" They were both fortunate enough to be selected as Saint Barbara and each of them raised money for the veterans as well as other charities. The memorial service for Carmen was so special. Everyone who spoke did a fantastic job. We laughed and cried hearing the beautiful stories of Carmen. Lise was determined not to miss the service, no matter what! Forever sisters from the Reina Del Mar Parlor. Have fun in heaven Carmen and Lise just like you both did on earth! Love Ellen and John Thermos

Ellen Thermos - February 01, 2025 at 11:15 PM