



Domitila "Tillie" Rose Mendoza

January 2, 1926 - August 13, 2021

Domitila "Tillie" Rose Mendoza, lifelong resident of Santa Barbara, CA passed away on August 13, 2021 at the age of 95.

Our much loved matriarch, Tillie, was born on January 2, 1926 in Santa Barbara, CA to Erlinda Luera Lopez and Pedro Lopez. She grew up and attended the local schools, Lincoln Elementary, Santa Barbara Junior High School and Santa Barbara High School. In 1939, Tillie met Elisio "Lee" Hidalgo Mendoza. After three years of courting, Lee and Tillie were married on November 27, 1942, in Las Vegas, Nevada. Two months after their marriage, Lee was drafted by the U.S. Army. Three months later, during WWII, he was ordered to serve in North Africa. In 1945, he was sent to Italy. They exchanged love letters throughout the war. Lee returned home from WWII in August 1945 and one year later, Lee and Tillie began their family. Together, they raised three sons and a daughter.

In 1959, they started Lee's Plumbing & Heating, a plumbing and heating business at 806 East Haley Street in Santa Barbara. In 1973, it became Lee & Sons Plumbing & Heating, Inc. It still operates today in its original location and has been responsible for training many family members in the trade. Tillie took charge of the administrative duties of the business while raising her family. She sat at her office desk and welcomed all who came in with a big smile and a friendly, cheery "hello." Then, in the next moment, she headed back to her house (located and attached to the "shop") where she tended to whatever household duties life required.

In the mid 1950s, Lee and Tillie purchased a plot of land on Sycamore Canyon Road. During the 1980s, they spent many years building their new home and were very grateful to all family and friends who helped. Lee and Tillie happily partied with friends and family on "The Lot" for many years. The home was finally completed in 1987 and embodied the years of hard work and love for family. It was a source of pride. Tillie worked alongside her husband in business until his health matters shifted her duties. For the next 10 years, Tillie devoted herself to caring for her husband. She made sure Lee was included in all their activities and adventures. For Tillie, there were no limits for Lee and her. With the help of their dear family and friends, they continued to take their favorite bus trips to Las Vegas. Tillie's devoted and loving care continued until Lee's death on May 30, 2009. Together, they had celebrated 66 1/2 years of marriage. As a widow, she continued to live life to its fullest. She cooked an abundance of food for family and friends to enjoy. She graciously entertained all at her home, enjoyed restaurant dining, attended Taco Tuesdays at the Moose Lodge with the Fragosa Family, traveled, and rarely missed a party. Tillie did this all with a big smile and open heart. During these last couple of years, Tillie had a helper and personal driver, Elias Espinoza. He chauffeured her throughout town during the day. The Fragosa Family lovingly chauffeured her for her night activities. Cecilia "Sally" Solomon, her loyal cousin, was there for her, day or night, for everything she needed and to share in the fun. Tillie never slowed down. She kept all who loved her very busy.

"We are family" was the theme of her life. She treated her friends as family and opened her heart and home to everyone. "Family" was her top priority. Her love and loyalty was felt and seen with all whom she came into contact. She was not afraid to speak her mind and always got her way because, well, she was "Mom" or "Grandma TiTi." Family and friends wanted to make her happy because she deserved it. There are very few souls that have the same energy and bright light that she possessed. She was a very special woman with the sweetest smile.

She will be greatly missed by her 4 children, Richard Mendoza (Susan), Linda Mendoza Cantu (Ralph), Andrew Mendoza (Jody), and Michael Mendoza (Sonya), her 10 grandchildren, Lee Cantu (Jeanette), Marlies Mendoza Horton (Conan), Matthew Mendoza (Maureen), Shelly Cantu, Linnea Mendoza, Aaron Mendoza (Caysi), John Mendoza (Ashlie), Joseph Mendoza (Rebecca), Nathan Mendoza (Jamie), and Liana Mendoza, her 23 great-grandchildren, her 3 great-great-grandchildren, her cousin and “partner in crime” Cecilia “Sally” Solomon, and many beloved cousins, nieces and nephews. There are numerous family and friends who feel this deep loss and are recognized for how important they were in her life.

Tillie was preceded in death by her husband, Lee Mendoza, her parents, Erlinda “Nana” Lopez and Pedro Lopez, and brothers Joseph Wesley and Efraim Lopez.

The viewing will be held on Thursday, August 26, 2021 from 3:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church located at 1300 East Valley Road, Santa Barbara, CA 93108. The Rosary Service will follow at 6:00 p.m. at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church. A Funeral Mass will be held on Friday, August 27, 2021 at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church at 10:00 a.m. Interment will follow at Calvary Cemetery located at 199 North Hope Avenue, Santa Barbara, CA 9311

Previous Events

Visitation

AUG **26**. 3:00 PM (PT)

Our Lady of Mount Carmel Catholic Church
1300 East Valley Rd.
Santa Barbara, CA 93108
(805) 969-6868
<http://www.olmc-montecito.com>

Rosary

AUG **26**. 6:00 PM (PT)

Our Lady of Mount Carmel Catholic Church
1300 East Valley Rd.
Santa Barbara, CA 93108
(805) 969-6868
<http://www.olmc-montecito.com>

Funeral Mass

AUG **27**. 10:00 AM (PT)

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