



Ecco Sorenson Ochoa

July 11, 1920 - June 22, 2022

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Ecco S. Ochoa ventured on into the next life on June 22, 2022, in Santa Barbara, California. She passed at the home of her son, Retired Superior Court Judge Frank J. Ochoa Jr. She was given extraordinary end-of-life care by her daughters-in-law, Paula Lopez Ochoa and Rosario Vidales-Ochoa.

Ecco Sorenson was born in Driggs, Idaho. Her father, Jesse Frank Sorenson, served in the 91st "Wild West Division" in World War I and fought in the Battle of Meuse-Argonne. Her mother, Ada Majora Bigelow was from Wallsburg, Utah. Her grandmother's family were Mormon Handcart pioneers. Her Bigelow ancestors included an Officer in the First Continental Army who served directly under General George Washington and an Army of the Potomac Artillery Officer who served at the Battle of Gettysburg.

Ada and Jesse eloped and were married in Idaho Falls, Idaho on January 2, 1920. Ecco was the first of their four children. Wanda, Frank, and Dale followed. The boys were both veterans of World War II. All four children were born in different states because her father had wanderlust at the time. After they arrived in Long Beach, California, when she was about five years old, her mother put her foot down and told her father she would not move anymore. She spent most of the rest of her life living in Long Beach.

Ecco earned an A.A. degree from Long Beach City College in 1940 and started working the same year at Douglas Aircraft Company in Long Beach. During World War II, Douglas built war aircraft for the U.S. military, and she worked as a "rate" girl in the employment department and as a clerk for the plant manager. She also worked for a time in Philadelphia in an aircraft factory as a spot welder building Conestoga aircraft because she wanted to serve her country in any way needed. She returned to Douglas in winter 1944. She then met the love of her life, Frank Joseph Ochoa, who was also working at Douglas, and they married on November 2, 1945 in Lakewood, California.

Ecco and Frank settled in Long Beach and their first child, a son, was born in 1948. Over the next four years, three more sons were born, including twins in the middle. As she said, in those years she had three children in diapers at the same time and had to wash and hang them to dry. Ecco's main job in those years was raising her 4 sons John, Frank Jr.,

Dana, and Victor, who were born within 4 years of each other. Later, she worked in clerical capacities in business and law offices. Despite her extraordinary memory for past events when it came to questions about raising her four sons, her response was “I don’t remember. It was all a blur.” She is survived by three of her children (Dana pre-deceased her), seven grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

She was a lifelong avid reader. She read and explained materials to her children on a nightly basis, creating strong foundations for their educational attainments. She passed that “love of reading” quality on to her sons and other descendants.

She considered the First Congregational Church of Santa Barbara her second home. She was active in the church’s Dorcas Circle, spending countless hours knitting blankets and sewing quilts for homeless, disabled and other underprivileged children. She was a member of the League of Women Voters for decades and was very proud when she received her 50 years membership recognition many years ago. Aware that she was born in the year that women achieved the right to vote, she made sure to never miss voting in any election in her entire life.

Ecco was a perpetual giver. She gave to UNESCO children’s funds, literacy programs, and other charitable endeavors. As their Christmas gifts, she gave her grandchildren gift cards showing that they had given a gift to organizations such as “Heifer International”. This organization provides agricultural supplies and other food sources to end poverty and hunger around the world. She gave such gifts in their names to teach them the ethic of giving. Excited utterances among the kids around the Yule Tree would be: “I gave a goat to people in need!” The response: “Well I gave three chickens!”

She was a staunch advocate for civil rights, peace, and equality of treatment for persons of all races, ethnicities, nationalities, and genders. She and her husband proudly displayed in the window of their home in Long Beach a sticker that read “My neighbor may be of any race, religion, or nationality.” Throughout the Vietnam War she wore a necklace pendant which read, “War is Not Healthy for Children and Other Living Things.” When asked what message she would want to impart to her descendants, she said, “I would just tell them to care about other people. Caring about the world, and the people in it, makes a life worth living.”

A Celebration of Life for Ecco S. Ochoa will occur on Friday, July 8, 2022, at 10 am at the First Congregational Church, 2101 State Street, Santa Barbara, CA 93105. In lieu of flowers, her friends are asked to give a gift to 1) Ecco’s church; or to 2) Heifer International at: www.heifer.org, or 3) the League of Women Voters, 328 E. Carrillo St., #A, Santa Barbara, CA 93101 or, 4) or other similar organizations.

Previous Events

Celebration of Life

JUL 8. 10:00 AM (PT)

First Congregational Church
2101 State St.
Santa Barbara, CA

Tribute Wall

JH

“Wow there are so many things since I have known the entire family since the late 70s. What I will say is that it has been one of the great honors of my life to call her a truly great friend. And that I will miss her and think of her always Ecco you will never be forgotten. My condolences to the family John, Frank, Victor and all your families. Jessie

Jessie Horn - July 02, 2022 at 06:55 PM



“1 file added to the tribute wall



Paula Ochoa - July 02, 2022 at 06:33 PM