

From: Aguilar, Arocles
Sent: 7/6/2010 12:36:47 PM
To: Horner, Trina (/O=PG&E/OU=CORPORATE/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=TNHC)
Cc:
Bcc:
Subject: My Mom

Hi
Trina-

Just wanted to let you know my Mom passed away last month. I'm very much at peace with her passing. It was a great privilege to help both my parents through their end-of-life transitions.

Take
Care,

Arocles

EULOGY FOR ISABEL AGUILAR

By Arocles Aguilar

We were very blessed to have had our Mom in our lives for such a very long time. She loved life and up to the very end, she was savoring each moment, enjoying the sunlight on her face, and the cool breeze

floating gently into her room. When I think of my Mom, I see her as an adventurous spiritual warrior, with a strong sense of morality and ethics. And not in the judgmental sense, but rather she possessed a strong moral compass that guided her life. She was kind and compassionate, she lived her life in a way that honored honesty, truth and love. I remember even as a child, I saw her as one of those rarest of people, a true Christian, a Good Samaritan, who followed the Golden Rule. She was always helping people, whether it be through the Church, or through her own private reaching out to people in need. Perhaps the most important gift she gave me was the gift of spirituality. My mother's relationship to her God, was both personal and profoundly deep. It was a quality I always admired in her. We had regular discussions about spirituality, about the different world religions and about living one's life consistent with one's spiritual beliefs. She was always supportive of my own personal spirituality, whether it be Native American spiritual practices or Eastern philosophy and Buddhist Practice - as she understood the Hindu aphorism that "there is one truth, men call it by many names."

My Mom came from a large Mexican family of 11 children. Many of her brothers and sisters are here with us today. My Mom grew up in poverty during the depression in the barrio in Phoenix. She used to tell us stories about her Mom, how difficult life was for her, and how she would always try to do whatever she could to help her. Sadly, my grandmother died of cancer of the uterus at age 39, leaving behind eight children who still needed to be raised. My incredible Tia Ramona, who was the eldest child, took in all of her brothers and sisters and raised 5 of her own to keep the family together. This is the type of extraordinary family my mother comes from. Family was very important to both my Mom and my Dad. And we were lucky enough to get to know our hundreds of aunts, uncles, and cousins from both sides. The huge Urias family reunions at Papago Park in Phoenix were legendary.

Although my Mom started out as a Roman Catholic, at some point, her mother left the Roman Catholic Church, at least temporarily, and started taking her children to an Episcopal Mission in the Phoenix barrio. The attending priest was a young Puerto Rican priest by the name of Father Victor Rivera. Another of life's synchronicities is that Father Rivera ultimately became Bishop Rivera of the Episcopal Diocese of San Joaquin. How amazing that my Mom had a life-long association with Bishop Rivera. I received my confirmation and first communion from Bishop Rivera.

But family of course, starts with my Mother's lifetime love for my father Gilbert. They were married for 63 years. My Mom tells the story of how she met my father. My Mom's best friend Sally, was my father's cousin. My Mom met my father when she was around 10 years old at Sally's house. She claims he never noticed her nor paid her any attention at that age. I find that hard to believe! But by age 14, she had decided that this was the man for her. He had all the qualities that she was looking for in a man – he was going to college, doing something with his life, he didn't drink, womanize or lead a life of disrepute. She decided, whether he knew it or not, that she was going to marry him. My Mom was a beautiful young woman, with many

suitors. She paid them no interest, as she had already decided that Gilbert was to be her future husband. When my Mom was 18 years old, my father was drafted and left to go into the army, which was prior to the US entering WWII. He was supposed to be in the army for just one year. They corresponded with each other by letter, and then after the attack on Pearl Harbor, his one-year in the army was extended to four long years. Because of his education and typing abilities, my father worked closely with the top brass, typing out military orders. I have a sense that my father was very plugged into what was really happening on the war front, as he served as the messenger to the troops with the specific orders. He advanced through the ranks to Sergeant. My father was not alone in contributing to the War effort. My Mom served on a crew in Tucson, building fighter planes, and was one of the original "Rosie the Riveters." I think that experience contributed to her sense of independence and fearlessness, never doubting that she could tackle anything she put her mind to. They married when my Mom was 21 – while he was still in the service. My sister Tessa was a war baby and was born in Fort Benning, Georgia.

After the war, they moved to California, ultimately settling in Tulare, California, where my brother and I were born. My Dad, the first person in our family to go to college, became an elementary school teacher and my Mom complemented his career by working in the office at Wilson Elementary School, doing everything from running the office, to administering first aid, or translating for Spanish-speaking parents. When I born in 1956, she became a businesswoman, and ran a day-care nursery in her home for 17 years, educating generations of schoolteachers' kids in all the fundamentals necessary to becoming loving, caring human beings. Ahead of her time, she also fed the children extremely healthy homemade food, including fresh fruit from her trees, vegetables, homemade yogurt and good Mexican food. After all her children were grown, she joined her husband in a second career in real estate, first with Al Avila Real Estate, and then worked side by side with her husband Gilbert who became a real estate broker in their own business, Aguilar Realty. This second career lasted over 20 years. As realtors, both Gilbert and Isabel made a point of serving the underserved Spanish-speaking community, making homeownership a reality for many struggling Hispanic families, as they very much believed in helping their community.

As you know, my Mom was a very active member of St. John's Episcopal Church where she served in the altar guild for over 40 years. The church formed an important part of Isabel's spiritual life and her presence in the church community enriched everyone with whom she came into contact Isabel regularly ministered to the needy, the sick and the troubled. The family was accustomed to her bringing home people who were hard on their luck to share a meal, or to help find people work in the community. She regularly translated for Spanish and Portuguese-speaking people, always willing to help, whether it was in line at the DMV or at the supermarket. My Mom was also a fabulous cook. The church put this talent to good use and she was famous for her mouth-watering chili beans, to-die-for homemade tortillas and enchiladas, which were regularly sold out at church fundraisers. She was energetic, extremely industrious, and never intimidated by learning something new, or trying to fix something herself. By 7 in the morning she had usually completed several tasks. Above all, she loved people. She was extremely social and treated everyone as if they mattered.

People flocked to her for her sage advice, as they felt comfortable telling her their intimate secrets and problems. Although she was extremely kind and compassionate, Isabel told it like it was and gave extremely practical advice and believed in helping people who were willing to help themselves.

My Mom grew spectacular roses, loved to read, and was ahead of her time in the areas of nutrition, vitamins, and alternative medicine and healing. She started practicing yoga at age 50 and began acupuncture at age 84! She was extremely open-minded and had solid bedrock values that she passed on to her children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren, both through example and by her many "dichos" - wise Spanish sayings that showed us all how to be good human beings. Isabel was loved by everyone who knew her, for her lively wisdom and for her unparalleled kindness.

Although our parents, Gilbert and Isabel moved from Tulare in September, 2005, to Berkeley, California to be nearer their children, they loved Tulare, and considered Tulare their home and missed their friends and family in Tulare deeply. My Mom enjoyed all the cards and letters that the ECW sent her during her time in Berkeley. It's these little things in life that can provide such deep meaning to people. And she gladly accepted all of your prayers.

My Mom lived with my brother and I in Berkeley the last three and ½ years of her life. During most of that time her great-granddaughter Isabel also lived with us. My sister Tessa and her husband James visited often. So at the end of her life, she had the comfort of family. After my father died, my Mom's health plummeted. Virtually from the moment of his death, she went from walking comfortably with a cane, to no longer being able to walk, to being in a wheelchair. We all thought she would be joining him soon. However, after a couple of devastating months, she bounced back, day by day, and pulled herself back into life. During the last 3 ½ years, we had caregivers in our home. They adored her. No matter how insignificant their assistance, she would always thank them. Polite, to the very end. Although she suffered from some dementia, she was lucid a lot of time. She gave us many amusing moments as some of the funniest and most candid things came out of her mouth, including asking me if I was losing my mind! Her spirituality manifested on a new level, as she seemed to have one foot in this world and the other foot in the next. She was truly a multi-dimensional spiritual being.

We also brought Hospice into the home - which was a blessing. The night before she died, the Hospice sent over Father Aidan, an Irish-Catholic priest from Belfast to give her the last rites. In his Irish accent he told her - "Don't be afraid, Isabel. All yer family is a 'waitin' for you in Heaven." He was very positive and uplifting. The next day, we all held vigil around the bedside. At around noon we noticed that her breathing had slowed down. Around 12:18 we heard the rustle of wind through the bamboo garden outside the bedroom window. A gust of wind blew through the bamboo and into the room and circled around her. The angels were in our midst. Within a few minutes, she peacefully took her last breaths. She passed away, peacefully, conscious, without pain or suffering, surrounded by her family.

She is now our Guardian Angel.

I'd like to end with my favorite Buddhist prayers.

MAY ALL BEINGS EVERYWHERE,

WITH WHOM WE ARE INSEPARABLY INTERCONNECTED, BE
FULFILLED, AWAKENED, AND FREE.

MAY THERE BE PEACE IN THIS WORLD AND THROUGHOUT THE
ENTIRE UNIVERSE, AND MAY WE ALL TOGETHER COMPLETE THE SPIRITUAL
JOURNEY.

MAY ALL BEINGS BE HAPPY

MAY ALL BEINGS BE FREE

MAY ALL BEINGS BE FREE FROM SUFFERING

MAY ALL BEINGS KNOW THEIR TRUE NATURE