



## Della de Lafuente

November 28, 1963 - March 20, 2015

Della de Lafuente, a trailblazing newspaper reporter who later found success in management roles at magazines and advertising agencies, died unexpectedly Thursday in North Bergen, New Jersey. She was 51.

The feisty Native Texan dedicated much of her career to uncovering flaws in America's health care and insurance industries, while also celebrating the achievements of women, mentoring young journalists and keenly observing trends in politics, culture, art and fashion.

Della de Lafuente was born on November 28, 1963, in South Texas, and grew up in Harlingen, where her father Adolfo de Lafuente is a prominent developer and businessman.

From an early age, Ms. de Lafuente, was confident, funny and outspoken, much like her father. She was also strongly influenced by her mother, Olga de Lafuente, an English teacher, who taught her daughter to value flawless grammar and clear, concise writing.

As a student at Harlingen High School, Ms. de Lafuente honed the skills that would make her a successful journalist by taking leadership roles with the student newspaper and yearbook.

While earning her Bachelor of Journalism at the University of Texas at Austin, she published dozens of articles for the Daily Texan newspaper, UT Cactus

yearbook and UTMost magazine, serving in a variety of management positions for the student-run publications.

After graduation, Ms. de Lafuente's reporting work at Chicago-based Crain Communications Modern Healthcare Los Angeles office and the San Antonio Light newspaper led her to her first big break as Staff Reporter for the Chicago Sun-Times. It is there she pioneered a specialty beat covering the business of healthcare, winning numerous awards in Chicago for her front page exposes on lengthy hospital wait times, patient dumping and medical insurance fraud. Ms. de Lafuente launched similar investigations while at her next job as staff reporter for the Arizona Republic Newspaper.

In 2000, she jumped at the chance to move to New York City for Latina Media Ventures as a member of the editorial team at Latina Magazine, which was a landmark publication representing positive images of Latinas in the media world.

Later serving as Deputy Editor at Working Mother Magazine, she set up cover stories about inspiring women, only some of whom were celebrities. Ms. de Lafuente said it was her mission and passion to publicize the stories of extraordinary, largely unknown women.

After her time at Working Mother, Ms. de Lafuente served as a contributor to the features and lifestyle department of the Associated Press and wrote for the titles BusinessWeek and Pink, a women's business and career magazine.

As a senior editor at Adweek Media, she crafted the "Hispanic Marketing Report," which appeared in print editions of Adweek, Brandweek and Mediaweek.

Ms. de Lafuente's career changed directions in 2009, when she left Adweek to

work as Director of Strategic Communications and Editorial at Adrenalina, a multicultural advertising agency. Her role expanded when the company merged into KBS+P. Her recent triumphs there included helping steer the company to a slew of top ad industry awards and collaborating on a 2014 Super Bowl Ad for BMW that landed on the Top 5 lists of many national television critics.

Ms. de Lafuente was a champion for gender equality, animal rights and she was a proud member of the National Association of Hispanic Journalists.

As much as she loved New York City, and endeavored not to leave it, she considered herself, first and foremost, a child of South Texas. She was devoted to family and always on the lookout for big sky, the best brisket and folksy people, just like the characters she knew from her youth.

A stroke ended her earthly connection to those things she held so dear. Ms. de Lafuente is survived by parents Adolfo and Olga de Lafuente, of Harlingen, and sisters Veronica de Lafuente and Edith de Lafuente. She is predeceased in death by paternal grandparents Adolfo and Michaela de Lafuente and maternal grandparents Ramon and Guadalupe Gutierrez.

Funeral arrangements are under the direction of Rudy Garza Funeral Home in Harlingen, Texas. Visitation will be held Thursday, March 26, 2014 from 10:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. A holy rosary will be held at 7:00 p.m. Funeral mass will be celebrated at 10:00 a.m. at St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church in La Feria, Texas on Friday, March 27, 2015. Interment will follow at Heavenly Grace in La Feria, Texas.

Pallbearers will be her cousins, Roger Gutierrez, Joseph Mendoza, Mateo Alvarez, Genaro Alvarez, Rene De La Fuente, Antonio Sanchez, Cesar

Varela, Olivia Aguilar, Melissa Mendoza, and Ola Mayor.

# Cemetery Details

## Heavenly Grace Memorial Park

26873 White Ranch Rd.  
La Feria, TX 78559  
(956) 797-5614

# Previous Events

## Visitation

**MAR 26.** 10:00 AM - 9:00 PM (CT)

Rudy Garza Funeral Home - Harlingen  
1702 E Harrison Ave  
Harlingen, TX 78550  
(956) 425-8200  
rgfhtx@aol.com  
<https://www.rudygarzafunerals.com>

## Funeral

**MAR 27.** 10:00 AM (CT)

St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church  
La Feria, TX

# Tribute Wall

CY

“ *Christi Ball Loso (Della's friend from UT Cactus yearbook) purchased the Basket Full of Wishes for the family of Della de Lafuente.*



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**Christi Ball Loso (Della's friend from UT Cactus yearbook) -**  
March 26, 2015 at 04:50 PM



“ *Strength & Solace Spray was purchased for the family of Della de Lafuente.*



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March 25, 2015 at 10:52 PM

JC

“ *Joel Castellano purchased the Enchanted Cottage for the family of Della de Lafuente.*



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**Joel Castellano -** March 25, 2015 at 04:17 PM

ED

“ *My dear Olga, Adolfo, Veronica, and Edith, my heart is heavy with grief at the loss of your precious daughter and sister, Della. I wish i could be there to accompany you. You are in my thoughts and prayers always. Love you all!*  
*Emma Ortega Donofry, Tampa, FL*

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**Emma Ortega Donofry -** March 25, 2015 at 10:57 AM

RD

“ *RJ Dutton purchased the Fruit Abounds for the family of Della de Lafuente.*



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**RJ Dutton** - March 25, 2015 at 09:54 AM

CS

“ *My deepest condolences for the loss of Della, sister of our colleague Edith, and to the entire De La Fuente Family. I pray to God to give you courage and peace to endure this painful time. May the Lord guide you and your family and heal your pain in a matter that keep her memories in your heart forever.*

*Calixto Seca*

*Texas DSHS Office of Border Health - Laredo*

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**Calixto Seca** - March 25, 2015 at 09:52 AM

DD

“ *Our sincere condolences to the de Lafuente family, and our dear colleague Edith, for the loss of their cherished daughter and sister. You are in our prayers this time of mourning and remembrance of Della. From your friends at the Texas DSHS Office of Border Health.*

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**Dr. Robald J. Dutton** - March 25, 2015 at 09:34 AM

TO

“ *Della was a beautiful woman, daughter, sister, cousin and friend. I remember while growing up and visiting her Grandfather (Tio Ramon) he spoke highly of Della and her sisters. He was so proud of her and all her accomplishments. Just hearing his stories about the "three" De La Fuente girls, made me proud to be related. I am heartbroken! My thoughts and prayers are with everyone that knew her, especially her parents and sisters!*

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**Tanya Ortega-Olivarez** - March 25, 2015 at 06:47 AM

HI

“ *Della was a ray of light, a glowing force of joy in an office often beleaguered with seriousness and overwork. She had a way of making everyone's worst traits melt away. How could you not return Della's smiles with smiles? How could you say anything but yes to such a sweet woman? She will be sorely missed. Much love and my sincerest condolences to her family and friends in Texas.*

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**hilary** - March 24, 2015 at 03:05 PM