



## Elma E. Barrera

September 13, 1934 - December 9, 2022

Elma E. Barrera believed in the dicho, “la educación es el único regalo que nadie se puede quitar (education is the only gift no one can take away from you).” As the first Hispanic teacher in Santa Rosa ISD, Elma devoted her 33-year teaching career to passing on that gift to every child in her hometown, ensuring they knew, no matter their background, that their future was theirs to create. Her positive energy and constant smile left a mark on all who knew her, so much so they named the elementary school in her honor, the Elma E. Barrera Elementary in Santa Rosa ISD.

Born September 13, 1934, her father Merced ran a barber shop and later a general store in downtown Santa Rosa. Her mother, Gregoria, was a trailblazer in her own right, having attended college in the 1920’s, rare for a Hispanic woman of that time. Her mother’s education was made possible by the encouragement and support of women in the local Methodist Church. The lesson was not lost on Gregoria’s eldest daughter, Elma, that education was a gift meant to be shared.

Elma, known to family and friends as “Mita,” not only shared her passion for learning, but she lovingly shared her commitment to her faith as well. A parishioner of St. Mary’s Catholic Church in Santa Rosa, Elma taught CCD for years helping children prepare for first communion. She served as President of “Las Damas,” sung in the Spanish Choir, served on the Church Council,

made tacos and crafts for fundraisers at the Jamaicas, helped make rosaries, and taught English in night classes to support women in their jobs and their desire to be more active in their children's education.

She was dependable, bringing menudo and buñuelos over on Christmas mornings. She was a rock, serving as the primary caregiver for her aging parents, and eventually retiring from teaching when their health conditions grew more severe, ensuring they lived out their lives with dignity and love. She was the glue, always making time for her nieces and nephews and instilling in them the importance of family. Time with "Tiá Mita" meant helping set up her classroom, taking a ride in her Chevy Nova, playing with her dog Lito and her parrot Loro, dancing to Freddie Fender, and singing along as she played guitar. One of her favorite songs was "This Little Light of Mine," as Elma made sure that everyone she touched had a chance to shine.

Elma Barrera played many roles, as devoted daughter, sister, aunt, teacher, friend, and servant leader. The consistent thread through it all was how, with joy and grace, she lived out Jesus' commandment "to love one another, as I have loved you."

On December 9, 2022, Elma passed away from natural causes. She leaves behind her five younger sisters, Evelina (Oscar+) Barrera, Romanita (Shirlon) McCoy, Elizabeth (Carlos) Cantú, Sylvia (Pablo) Cusco, and Blanca Barrera, as well as many adoring nieces, nephews, great-nieces, and great-nephews.

The family would like to thank The Springs Healthcare and Rehabilitation in Cedar Park, Texas and Magnolia Hospice, especially Nurse Sheena Roffino. As an expression of sympathy in lieu of flowers, the family welcomes donations to St. Mary's Catholic Church and Elma E. Barrera Elementary in Santa Rosa, Texas.

Visitation will begin Thursday, December 15, 2022 from 5:00 to 9:00 pm with a rosary at 7:00 pm at Rudy Garza Funeral Home in Harlingen, Texas. Funeral service will begin Friday, December 16, 2022 departing Rudy Garza Funeral Home in Harlingen, Texas for a Mass of Christian Burial at 10:00 am at St. Mary's Catholic Church in Santa Rosa, Texas with burial to follow at Restlawn Memorial Park in La Feria, Texas. Pallbearers will be Carlos Cantú, Javier Barrera, Olga Cusco, Maria Cantú Hexsel, Ana Cantú Ortega, Marili Cantú Burbes, and Noe Moriada III (honorary).

# Cemetery Details

## Restlawn Memorial Park

14166 U.S. 83 Business  
La Feria, TX 78559  
(956) 797-2322

# Previous Events

## Visitation

DEC **15**. 5:00 PM - 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>

## Rosary

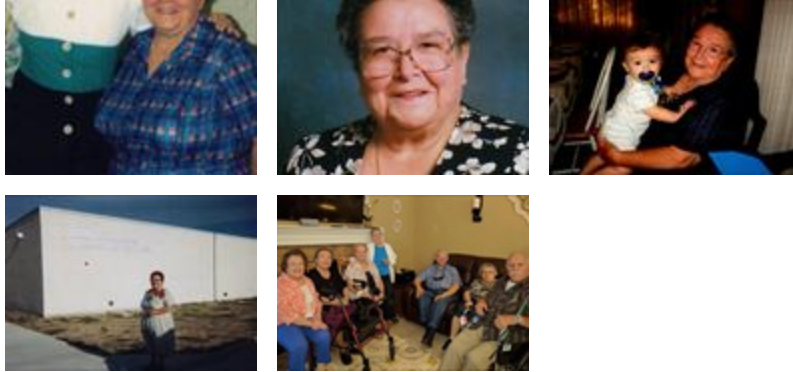
DEC **15**. 7:00 PM (CT)

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# Tribute Wall

EA

“ 30 files added to the album Tia Mita Remembrance Photos



Elma E. Cantu Aldrete - December 20, 2022 at 05:23 PM

MA

“ First and foremost Elmita, thank you for being such a great friend to my mom, Maria Louisa. I pray that you find each other soon and share your stories like you always have. To your family, my condolences and my congratulations for always being such a model family to all who know you. Prayers from all the Garzas, Lupe Jr, Margret (John), Ruth(Pete),Cris and myself Maria Elena and all our families. We are blessed to have known her and may God bless you during this time.

Maria E and Luis A Aguilar - December 15, 2022 at 10:03 PM

BC

“ Our mother, Aida Barrera, has very fond memories of Mita and was very saddened to hear of her passing. Please accept our most heartfelt condolences.

Barrera Family from California - December 15, 2022 at 05:55 PM



“ *Arrive in Style was purchased for the family of Elma E. Barrera.*



December 15, 2022 at 02:02 PM



“ *Aaaaaaaaawe Miss Barrera was a great mentor, friend and servant of God. She was always involved with activities for school, her family and her church. Her heartwarming, joyful and caring personality gave me and everyone else, I believe, inner peace, motivation and encouragement. She will be remembered as a beautiful young lady. May she Rest In Peace and her family and friends receive God’s Grace for peace and comfort. Blessings and Smiles*

**Olivia Garcia** - December 14, 2022 at 07:30 AM



“ *My deepest condolences and prayers to all the family so sorry for your loss. May she RIP.....GREAT TEACHER, GREAT PERSON AND GREAT ROLE MODEL will never forget her 🙏🙏🙏🙏❤️❤️❤️❤️❤️❤️*



**Juanita Ovalle** - December 13, 2022 at 11:22 PM

FC

“ *From J. Carlos and Jessica Cantu purchased the Love's Journey for the family of Elma E. Barrera.*



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**From J. Carlos and Jessica Cantu** - December 13, 2022 at  
03:05 PM