



Federico Pacheco

May 12, 1930 - December 23, 2020

“They can take your home, your car and everything you own, even take your life---but no one can ever take your education from you.”.....My Dad, Federico Pacheco.

Federico Pacheco--proud Texas A&M Aggie, proud husband and father, and Professional Civil Engineer—passed away quietly and unexpectedly on the evening of December 23rd 2020 in Harlingen, Texas. He was nearly 91-years old. Mr. Federico Pacheco—our Dad---is gone from this world, but he has left a strong and lasting legacy of love and dedication to his family, dedication to hard-work in his chosen profession, dedication to military service, dedication to higher education, and dedication to his beloved Alma Mater--Texas A&M University at College Station. Federico is survived by his wife of 62 years, Maria Minerva Pacheco, and three children--Maria, Juanita, and Carlos. He took extreme pride in his two grandchildren—Allison Deborah Minerva Pacheco (24 years), and Audrey Jordan Pacheco (8 years). He is also survived by one sibling (Idalia Ginn Pacheco of Mankato, Minnesota), one loving daughter-in-law (Sandra, wife of Carlos), and one loving son-in-law (Salvador Garcia, partner of Maria).

Federico Pacheco was born in Laredo, Texas on May 12, 1930, the youngest child of Federico and Maria (Nino) Pacheco. His two older siblings were Idalia Pacheco, and Olga Pacheco--whose death from cancer as a young woman was a source of sorrow his entire life. His father was a soldier, and law

enforcement officer—his mother a homemaker. Federico’s family believed fiercely in the value of education, and taught Federico the same. He was born and came of age during the Great Depression, during the rise and fall of Nazism and Fascism in Europe and around the world. Federico lost both his parents early in life. His father died when he was nine years old, and his mother died when he was fifteen. Losing his parents so early affected him his entire life--he never lost love or respect for either parent, and frequently wept when he shared memories of them, especially memories of his mother. After his parents died, Federico was raised by three loving and supportive aunts—his father’s three sisters--- Clara, Juanita, and Elisa, who continued to encourage him about the value of education. Federico was a precocious student, and graduated from Laredo Martin High School in 1944 at the young age of 15 as World War II came to an end. Despite being the youngest student in his High School graduating class, he finished in the top 5 percent academically. After graduating at the age of 15, without financial resources—and still too young for college---Federico worked odd jobs for three years as a dish-washer and waiter in a restaurant in order to accumulate money for college. Federico had always dreamt of attending the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (his “dream school”), but he would ultimately remain closer to home.

In 1948, at the age of 18, Federico applied to Texas A&M University, and was accepted after passing week-long entrance exams required by A&M during that era. He began his studies as a Freshman at A&M in August of 1948, and was one of less than one percent of Mexican-American students who attended A&M during the Post-World War II era. With mandatory membership in the Corp of Cadets, Federico served as a Corp of Cadet Unit Leader and a member of the prestigious Corp of Engineers. He graduated in May of 1952 with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Civil Engineering, and an Officer’s Commission in the United States Army. He was also 3 credit hours short of receiving a second degree in Industrial Engineering. As an Officer in the United States Army, he rose to the rank of First Lieutenant. Between 1952 and

1955, Federico was a Company Commander with the U.S. 7th Army NATO Forces in Germany, attached to the 11th Combat Engineers Group. During that time, he had between 150 and 250 men under his command. Federico always took great pride in his service in the U.S. Army during the Korean Conflict and Cold War years. He left active duty in 1956, but remained an Officer in the U.S. Army Reserves until 1963, when he was Honorably Discharged from the Armed Forces.

Upon leaving active duty, Federico began his career as a civil engineer in 1956 with the Texas Highway Department (now known as TXDOT) in the Laredo--Rio Grande Valley Sector. He remained an Engineer with the State of Texas for more than 45 years. His first assignment as a young engineer brought him to the Rio Grande Valley where he met his wife—Maria Minerva Saldivar---in San Benito, Texas in March of 1956. His very first words spoken to our mother on a San Benito side-walk were “Pardon my boldness, but since there is no other way that I’ll be able to meet you, I’d like to introduce myself—my name is Federico Pacheco.” Federico married Maria Minerva in March of 1958, and their first child, Maria Olga, was born in July of 1959. Their second child, Juanita Candelaria, was born in May of 1961, and their third child, Carlos Arturo--was born in November 1963.

Throughout their courtship and early married life, Federico shared his passion for education, big-band music, and dancing with his wife. He always encouraged Maria Minerva to continue her education in spite of minimal educational opportunities available to her at that time. Our mother eventually earned both a Bachelor’s Degree and Master’s Degree in large part due to Federico’s guidance and encouragement. Both Federico’s daughters, Maria and Juanita, also graduated from college, attending TexasA&I University in Kingsville. Carlos attended The University of Texas at Austin and The Texas A&M School of Public Health. The young couple ultimately settled in McAllen, Texas, where they raised their children at their home on 333 North 7th Street for 15 years.

As a Civil Engineer, Federico excelled. During his career in the Rio Grande Valley, he participated in the planning, designing, construction, and maintenance of hundreds of pioneering projects in the area. For example, he was especially instrumental in much of the design, planning, and construction of both the Queen Isabella Causeway on South Padre Island, and much of U.S. Highway 83 from Brownsville to Laredo. He also supervised hundreds of highway construction projects from Alice to Brownsville and from Laredo to Corpus Christi. In 1978, The Highway Department promoted Federico to Engineer in Residence in the Hebbronville-Alice Sector, where he was in charge of all highway construction projects in the six South Texas Counties of Duval, Jim Hogg, Jim Wells, Brooks, Zapata, and Kenedy. Before his retirement from the Texas Highway Department in 1990, he was the District Maintenance Engineer in the Rio Grande Valley Sector. Throughout his career, Federico was well-known and well-respected by his peers and colleagues for his exceptional engineering problem-solving skills, his vast knowledge, and his professional judgement.

Federico once told me that regardless of anything a person does in the world, the most important thing a person can have in life is their children—as he said, “I will work hard to insure that all my children have everything they need, especially a college education. When I am gone, the way my children are going to pay me back is to insure that all my grandchildren also have everything they need—especially a college education.” Early in his retirement, Federico took great pleasure spending time with his first grandchild Allison, often chasing her around the house for hours. Later, for the last seven years of his life, he spent many hours with his youngest grandchild Audrey (Sandra)--teaching Audrey many familiar lessons about life and school. Everyone that remembers Federico Pacheco---our Dad---is asked to kindly remember him as a loving father, grandfather, and husband, a dedicated Civil Engineer---and a fiercely proud Texas A&M Aggie.

Due to the world-wide COVID Pandemic, there will be minimal services—mostly family-members in small numbers. Services will be held at Rudy Garza

Funeral Home in Harlingen, Texas on Wednesday, December 30, 2020 and burial date will be announced in the near future.

Cemetery Details

Rio Grande Valley State Veterans Cemetery

2520 South Inspiration Road
Mission, TX 78572
(956) 583-7227

Previous Events

Visitation

DEC 30. 2:00 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 30. 6:00 PM (CT)

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Chapel Service

DEC **30**. 7:00 PM (CT)

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Tribute Wall



“ *Emerald Garden Basket was purchased for the family of Federico Pacheco.* ”



December 29, 2020 at 03:26 PM