



Mary Sofia Ozuna Torres

February 8, 1942 - September 27, 2024

Mary Sofia Ozuna Torres, an accomplished genealogist and community figure entered eternal rest on September 27th, 2024 at 9:56 pm surrounded by her family.

Mary was born on February 8th, 1942 in Harlingen, Texas to Estela M. Ozuna and Nicolas Ozuna. Following her birth her mother died, leaving her in the care of Adan M. Rosas who would raise her as his own along with the help of Rita M. Rosas and Pola Martinez. Though her circumstances growing up amidst familial turmoil and the perils of WWII—Mary carved her path, documenting her and her family's history along the way.

She attended Harlingen High School and credits her teenage days and events like her Quinceañera as some of her “...happiest and most memorable days...” Her educational journey paused while she married and moved to her first home of her own in Tennessee. There she would welcome three children while juggling her first job as a cashier to help make ends meet. Living outside of the norm of the idealistic 1960s woman, Mary questioned societal issues of the time like gender roles and discrimination.

In 1964 Mary returned to Harlingen and pursued a career as a secretary and bookkeeper before obtaining her G.E.D. and her Bachelor of Science in management from St. Edward's University in 1980. Raising five children, Mary

often juggled work, night classes, and life as a single mother. Her hard work would pay off—Mary would work as the CFO of the Laredo State Center until her retirement in 1999, but not before winning a suit against the company for forced retirement citing her identity as a Hispanic woman over 40.

Her passion and resilience are motifs that followed Mary through her life even into retirement. As a third-generation Texan, Mary dedicated herself to tracing her Hispanic ancestors from Texas back to the 1700s in Mexico. Mary served as president of the Rio Grande Valley Hispanic Genealogical Society, the Tip O' Texas Genealogical Society, the Cameron County Historical Commission, the Pan American Round Table and especially close to her heart the Harlingen Arts and Heritage Museum. She was a member of the Harlingen Public Library Advisory Board, a Representative for the Texas State Genealogical Society and a speaker at the 2016 RootsTech Conference in Salt Lake City, Utah.

Mary also penned a weekly genealogy column, "Harlingen Happenings," for the Valley Morning Star newspaper in Harlingen, Texas which received several annual TSGS Writing Awards. Her accolades stretched from local to national—she received an ELKS Distinguished Citizenship Award in 2008, was honored as an "Outstanding Woman in Texas Government" in 1993, received the H. William Card Jr. Library service award for her dedication to the Harlingen Public Library. She cemented herself into history on the streets of the Harlingen Walk of Fame.

Mary was energized by traveling the world, sewing, playing with her dog Louie, and spending time with her grandchildren. She was a lifelong speaker and mentor in her community, especially for her family. She is preceded in death by her parents and great-grandson Matthias Asher Decilos. Survivors include her children Rita Villarreal, Salvador Torres, Jr. (Connie), Estelle Decilos (Fernando), Roberta Hightower, JoAnna Garza, 12 grandchildren, 19

great-grandchildren, and two great-great grandchildren.

Mary will be missed by her family and her community. She leaves behind her legacy as a woman who persevered through life in her own delicate and strong fashion. Her life is added to the genealogical web she worked throughout her life to weave, and is remembered for her kindness, intelligence, and dedication to those around her.

Visitation will be on Wednesday, October 2, 2024, from 3:00pm until 9:00pm with a rosary at 7:00pm at the Rudy Garza Chapel of Peace in Harlingen. Funeral services will be held on Thursday, October 3, 2024 departing the Rudy Garza Funeral Home at 9:30am for 10:00am funeral service at St. Anthony's Catholic Church. A burial will follow at Ashland Memorial Park Cemetery in Harlingen. Arrangements are under the direction of Rudy Garza Funeral Home in Harlingen, Texas.

Cemetery Details

Ashland Memorial Park Cemetery

21037 Godwin Rd
Harlingen, TX 78550
(956) 425-2939
<https://www.rudygarzafunerals.com/ashland>

Previous Events

Visitation

OCT 2. 3:00 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

OCT 2. 7:00 PM (CT)

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

Burial

OCT 3 (CT)

Ashland Memorial Park Cemetery
21037 Godwin Rd
Harlingen, TX 78550
(956) 425-2939
<https://www.rudygarzafunerals.com/ashland>

Church Service

OCT 3 (CT)

St Anthony Catholic Church
1102 E Van Buren Ave
Harlingen, TX 78550-7176
(956) 428-6111

Pending

Tribute Wall

AW

“ Aries, Clar, & Paula, Vision Works purchased the Beautiful Heart Bouquet for the family of Mary Sofia Ozuna Torres.



Aries, Clar, & Paula, Vision Works - December 23, 2024 at 02:21 PM

MT

“ I want to extend my sympathy to all of Mary's family. I didn't know her well but our contacts where mostly through genealogy but I always enjoyed our visits. After reading her beautiful obituary, I am amazed what she accomplished. she lived, through hard work, the American dream. she has left a beautiful legacy to her family. God bless- Marian Topp

Marian Topp - October 06, 2024 at 04:55 PM

CS

“ On behalf of Coakley Middle School, we extend our deepest condolences to Vanessa & Luis Hinojosa and their family during this time of mourning. May you find comfort and strength in the cherished memories shared, and know that our thoughts and prayers are with you as you navigate through this difficult time.

Coakley Middle School - October 02, 2024 at 11:33 AM

MC

“ Mark and Angel(Paxton) Cobb planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Mary Sofia Ozuna Torres.

Mark and Angel(Paxton) Cobb - October 02, 2024 at 11:02 AM



“ Sentiments of Serenity Spray was purchased for the family of Mary Sofia Ozuna Torres.



October 02, 2024 at 11:02 AM



“ Tobias Family purchased the Treasured Lilies Spray for the family of Mary Sofia Ozuna Torres.



Tobias Family - October 02, 2024 at 10:49 AM



“ Michelle Lopez & Melonie Flores purchased the Sweet Tranquility Basket for the family of Mary Sofia Ozuna Torres.



Michelle Lopez & Melonie Flores - October 01, 2024 at 11:30 PM



“ Ofelia O. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Mary Sofia Ozuna Torres.

Ofelia O. - October 01, 2024 at 04:35 PM



“ Sentiments of Serenity Spray was purchased for the family of Mary Sofia Ozuna Torres.



October 01, 2024 at 12:46 PM



“ With Mary's passing, the community has lost a strong, dynamic voice for the greater good. We each mourn the loss of our funny, smart, big-hearted friend.

Eileen Mattei - October 01, 2024 at 09:52 AM



“ HOGAR de Dallas (genealogy) purchased the Divine Peace Bouquet for the family of Mary Sofia Ozuna Torres.



HOGAR de Dallas (genealogy) - October 01, 2024 at 07:29 AM



“ Tivi Lopez Family planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Mary Sofia Torres.

Tivi Lopez Family - September 30, 2024 at 04:53 PM



“ *Lavender Reflections Spray was purchased for the family of Mary Sofia Ozuna Torres.*



September 30, 2024 at 04:53 PM



“ *Harlingen Elks Lodge 1889 planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Mary Sofia Torres.*

Harlingen Elks Lodge 1889 - September 30, 2024 at 04:02 PM



“ *Harlingen Elks Lodge 1889 purchased the Enchanted Cottage for the family of Mary Sofia Ozuna Torres.*



Harlingen Elks Lodge 1889 - September 30, 2024 at 04:02 PM



“ *All the RGVHGS Members planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Mary Sofia Torres.*

All the RGVHGS Members - September 30, 2024 at 04:00 PM



“ *Lavender Reflections Spray was purchased for the family of Mary Sofia Ozuna Torres.*



September 30, 2024 at 04:00 PM