



Josefina M Gonzales

September 29, 1938 - September 10, 2021

Josefina Ballesteros Mariz was born in the valley town of Amatlán de Cañas, Nayarit, México on September 29, 1938. Her mother, Guadalupe Mariz Ramos, and father, Moises Ballesteros Lopez, were also from Amatlán. The many chapters of her life story were marked by the names she was referred to, defined by the people she knew, and whose stories she remembers. Josefina, or Chepina, as her family and community called her at the time, spent her childhood in Amatlán. She was raised by her mother's grandparents after her father passed away. Her grandmother Paulina Ramos Sandoval, also from Amatlán, and grandfather Jose "Chepe" Mariz Olmedo instilled in her the values, culture, work ethic, and legacy that would define who she was.

Chepina's childhood consisted of assisting her grandparents in everyday chores, engaging in the community's social life, and going to school where she discovered a passion for literature. At about the age of twelve Josefina and her family, grandparents and uncles, migrated to a town on the outskirts of Mexicali, Baja California called Polvora. There she spent most of her adolescence continuing the same activities she did in Amatlán albeit with more responsibility.

At this time her mother married and migrated to the United States, along California's central valley, then finally to Oakland. Chepina would frequently visit her mother and new family. Upon every visit her mother would invite her to stay with her and every time Chepina would say no. Her home was with her grandparents and American life did not appeal to her.

But as time would have it, Chepina decided to take up residence with her mother and family in Oakland. There was a small community of people and relatives from Amatlán in Oakland (even to this day), nestled within the Mexican/Latino community located in West Oakland. By the early 1960's the family, along with other community members, moved to East Oakland, mostly the neighborhoods just east of Lake Merritt, San Antonio and Fruitvale.

Chepina, or as her siblings referred to her as Josie, was now a resident of Oakland. Josie continued similar activities as she did in Mexico: assisting her mother in daily chores and younger siblings, working, and taking part in the social aspects of family and community. Over time she became more independent as she made a living for herself as a skilled laborer at a local paper mill.

By the late 1960's she would meet and marry Ruben Gonzalez Ballesteros and establish a family. He would refer to her as Jose, a shortening of her name. By 1970 Paulina Gonzalez Ballesteros was born, named after Josefina's grandmother. Then came Ruben Gonzalez Ballesteros, Jr. in 1974. Lastly, Alexis José Gonzalez Ballesteros came in 1982. Raising a family a world away from her own, both she and Ruben maintained their culture, language and traditions that defined them and would educate their children in the similar manner as their ancestors did. Her children refer to her as amá while she is known as grandma or abuelita by her grandchildren: Xol Ayana (b.1999), Emilio Zeta (b.2005) and Maceo Calixto (b.2012).

Josefina was a nurturer, always willing to be of help. She was an avid reader of history and fiction, had a witty sense of humor, and was a great storyteller. She had an uncanny memory of her family's names and story. She was the type of person who spoke with her eyes, introverted until you got her in a room with peers. She was great at creating rich food dishes that echoed generations before her. Also, anything to do with sewing and fabrics she mastered. Her garden flourished as well with the hand of her green thumb. She was very headstrong, humble, funny, and knowledgeable. Josefina, mi ama, a very caring woman, mother, and grandmother that would give everything she had to offer to her most cherished loved ones.

Events

OCT 13 **Viewing** 05:00PM - 07:00PM

St. Jarlath Church
2620 Pleasant St, Oakland, CA, US, 94602

OCT 14 **Mass** 11:00AM

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2620 Pleasant St, Oakland, CA, US, 94602

OCT 14 **Interment** 02:30PM

Holy Sepulchre Cemetery
26320 Mission Blvd, Hayward, CA, US, 94544