



Manuel Ralph Martinez

September 20, 1922 - July 25, 2023

Manuel Ralph Martinez, two months short of 101 years old, passed away surrounded with love from his family to be with his Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ on July 25, 2023. Manuel was born September 20, 1922, in the now non-existent rural community of Puerto, New Mexico (close to Moses, NM) in the far northeastern corner of New Mexico, three miles from the Oklahoma border.

Manuel was preceded in death by his eldest daughter Sharon, his eldest son Adolph "Marty," his first grandson Patrick, his wife of 65 years Lucinda, his parents Isaac and Luisita Martinez, his sisters Cipriana J. Stifler and Maxine Mestas Stephens, and by many other relatives. We are positive that his family was waiting to greet him the moment he arrived in heaven.

What a joyous occasion when they celebrate being together once again.

Manuel is sure to have plenty of stories from days past to share with them as he relished doing the same storytelling to those of us who have remained behind. His interests in the news of the day from politics to history were topics of discussion as well as the latest gossip, although he would deny being part of such conduct. He really was interested in the well-being of all his family and friends. Manuel shared his knowledge, wealth, advice and the proverbial "shirt off his back" to all the people he encountered. He genuinely loved his neighbor as himself.

He is a fourth-generation descendant of Spanish and Native American Indian

heritage. Manuel did not speak English until he was around four years old. His parents and family members were startled when he said the phrase, "Look at that airplane go." He learned while playing with other children when community members gathered to help each during a round-up. The paternal family roots are from Santa Cruz, NM in the Espanola valley and the maternal family roots originate from Ocate, NM some 26 miles to the northeast of Mora. His parents and grandparents migrated from Ocate, NM to Garrett, Oklahoma. Not staying long in Oklahoma, the families moved back to New Mexico to take advantage of the Homestead Act of 1862. The families made their claims of 160 free acres of federal land. Unfortunately, the move was made just in time for the Great Depression, and they were also located near the exact center of the coming Dust Bowl. As a result, many left the region, but others remained. Isaac and Luisita (Manuel's parents) were creative and resourceful. Even in those challenging times they found the wherewithal to buy an established post office, gas pump, and small store known as Moses, NM. They managed to survive with the help of family and good neighbors. One man, Mr. W.B. Lum, was an exceptional neighbor who played a significant role in the lives of the Martinez family. Mr. Lum was a landowner, rancher, businessman, plumbing contractor, and great friend to the Martinez family. Mr. Lum also became employer, counselor, mentor, and lifetime friend to Manuel.

Manuel lived through and experienced these tough times, but as a child he said he never was hungry or felt scared, as his parents and other families helped each other to get through each day. At the early age of ten, Manuel was already working a horse drawn plow to prepare a pinto bean field for planting. That was just the beginning as his father became ill when he was in his later teens. He had to drop out of high school in Seneca, NM and began making dirt dams using horse drawn equipment as part of government funded projects to supplement income to the family. After two years his determination to finish high school did not falter; he graduated Clayton High School when he was twenty years old. He planned to attend Highlands University in Las Vegas, NM but had only enough money for his first semester.

Soon after, the bombing of Pearl Harbor by the Japanese occurred, and several young men in the town of Clayton enlisted in the military. Figuring his draft number would come up soon, he enlisted in the US Marine Corps. He was sent via train from Santa Fe to San Diego for boot camp and Camp Pendleton for basic training. He graduated to become part of Company K, Third Battalion, 25th Marines, 4th Marine Division. He was then shipped out from San Diego to fight in the Pacific Theatre in January of 1944 and participated in four different beach landings/campaigns – Kwajalein Atoll, Tinian, Saipan, and Iwo Jima.

Manuel, or “Marty” as he was known to his brothers-in-arms operated as a scout, which put him in front of the platoon during missions to survey the area for enemy soldiers. This would put him in significant danger throughout his tenure in the Pacific. However, Manuel would later reiterate, it also might have saved his life because the enemy would wait for him to pass before they attacked the main body of his unit. His heroism did not go unnoticed, and he was awarded multiple medals: the Bronze Star in Saipan, the Silver Star in Iwo Jima and two Presidential Unit Citations. Manuel has been recognized for his service to the country and heroism by the local schools, civic groups, and military organizations. Numerous online videos, newspaper articles, and historic books include a record of his service to his country.

When Manuel returned from service he married Lucinda Sandoval of Chico, New Mexico on November 28, 1948, in Springer, NM. They moved to the town of Clayton, New Mexico in 1945 and moved to Roswell, New Mexico in 1948. Together they had three children: Sharon, Adolph, and Michael. When Patrick, his grandson, was one year old, his mother Sharon passed away. Patrick was then raised by Manuel and Lucinda as their third son. While living in Clayton, Mr. Lum offered Manuel a position as a plumber’s apprentice and thus he began a lifetime career of 75 years as a plumber and member of UA Local

412 Plumbers & Pipefitters.

Mr. Lum recognized the growth potential of Roswell after the war and established his business of W.B. Lum Plumbing and Heating contractor at 814 South Main. Manuel then moved to Roswell as part of a team of skilled tradesmen who worked for Lam Plumbing. These men became the heart of a flourishing plumbing business for the next thirty years. Lum Plumbing was the primary plumbing contractor for over seventy commercial size projects in southeastern New Mexico. Their contracts included almost every new school, in Roswell, from Del Norte Elementary to El Capitan Elementary to the schools in Hobbs, and even a contract at Carlsbad Caverns. Many major businesses buildings such as the Petroleum Building, Roswell State Bank, and Telephone Building to the Poor Clare Monastery and Roswell Country Club. Manuel was extremely proud of his work and the satisfaction expressed by the customers he served. When Mr. Lum retired, Manuel and his son Michael purchased the building in 1980 and remained in the plumbing business under the name Lum Plumbing until 1998.

When Manuel was not working, he loved to spend time with his family and friends. He would always say he considered his nieces and nephews “as one of his own” children. Thus, began many, many fishing experiences, hunting expeditions, travel adventures, and celebrations of birth, marriage, graduation, picnics, easter egg hunts, Christmas and just hanging out together. Since the times spent together were so frequent, the friends and relatives of the nieces and nephews also were invited to call their new friend “Uncle Manuel”. Therefore, many people in the community came to know, recognize, and call him “Uncle Manuel” as well. Those who made Manuel’s acquaintance while doing business with him in the plumbing world would call him “Mr. Lum”. He felt very honored to be known by either of those names. He helped many of his family and friends to achieve their dreams with good, solid advice. He was also not reluctant to share whatever material goods or money he had so that

they might fulfill those dreams.

We are all so lucky to have known and loved “Uncle Manuel” for so many years. We will surely miss the days of seeing him at family gatherings when he would be the first one on the dance floor. Telling excellent stories about his youth, New Mexico history, his wartime experiences, and especially his love of his country and flag – the United States of America. Those of us left to cherish these memories are his son Michael and his “daughter” Joan, granddaughter Tanya Johnson and husband Richard, grandson Joshua and wife Shontel Martinez, and his greatest joy in the world his great-grandchildren Madelyn, Aubrie, and Ezra. His nieces and nephews he considered “as one of his own” children, that are still living are: Isaac S. Smith, Alan S. Smith, Angela Davis and husband Charles, Arthur Mestas and wife Ramona, Louis Mestas and wife Carol, Charles Mestas and wife Florine, Loretta Mestas and best friend Nancy, Eileen Jaramillo and husband Cliff, Michelle Smith and husband John; as well as all their children. We are all so blessed to have so many “brothers” and “sisters”.

Manuel was a very devoted Catholic and enormously proud of his catholic heritage. He attended St. Peter Parish for the past 65 years, but when he first came to Roswell in 1948, he was a parishioner at St. John’s Catholic Church where he helped install the plumbing at the Ave Maria Center. That same year while working for W.B. Lum Plumbing & Heating he also installed plumbing at the Poor Clare Monastery when they first began major construction. In 1981, Manuel and his son spent Christmas Eve in knee deep water in the basement of St. Peter Church due to a boiler failure and worked well into the night pumping out the water and making repairs to the system. When not attending to plumbing issues for his church, he made it a priority to thank his Lord and Savior Jesus Christ for all the help and support He provided to him for over 100 years.

A heartfelt thank you is extended to Manuel's "across the street neighbors" – John and Cathy Melton. They made it one of their most important considerations to help him on a daily basis and ensure he was safe. Many, many times the Meltons were always prepared to lend a helping hand and we are forever grateful to them both for their support and kindness.

Last, but most important, we are eternally grateful and want to express our deepest thanks to Corporal James E. Hogan, 3-K-25, USMC, and all the men of the 4th Marine Division that were with Manuel on the island of Iwo Jima. If not for James and the other men in Manuel's platoon, some of the Martinez family may not even exist today. To CPL James E. Hogan (now age 102) and all the men who served and protected each other's "six" during the Battle of Iwo Jima. Thank you. Semper Fi.

A rosary for Manuel will be recited at 6:30 p.m. at St. Peter Catholic Church on Friday, September 22, 2023. Deacon Chris Gutierrez will officiate. A Funeral Mass will be celebrated at 10:00 a.m. on Saturday, September 23, 2023, at St. Peter Catholic Church, burial with military honors will follow at South Park Cemetery. Father Charlie Martinez will officiate.

Please leave online memories or condolences for the family at www.andersonbethany.com. In lieu of flowers we respectfully request to please donate in Manuel's name to the Poor Clare Monastery, 809 E. 19th St., Roswell, NM 88201.

Previous Events

Rosary

SEP **22.** 6:30 PM (MT)

St Peter Church
111 E Deming St #6127
Roswell, NM 88203
(575) 622-5092

Funeral Mass

SEP **23.** 10:00 AM (MT)

St Peter Church
111 E Deming St #6127
Roswell, NM 88203
(575) 622-5092

Interment to follow at South Park Cemetery.

Tribute Wall

JH

“ I'm sorry to learn of Manuel's passing. I had the honor to meet him a few times when he had visited my Uncle William Hudson in Los Alamos on some of his milestone birthdays. My uncle had served with him on Iwo Jima in the 4th Marines, and they were in the same platoon. My uncle always told me that Manny Martinez was the bravest man he had ever known. A true hero, my condolences to the Martinez family. - John Hudson

John Hudson - October 22, 2024 at 01:13 PM

TH

“ Corp. James E. Hogan and family extend their heartfelt sympathies and prayers to the family of Manuel Ralph "Marty" Martinez. Dad enjoyed his many phone calls with Marty especially the last one roughly 2 weeks before Marty's passing. SEMPER FEDELIS.

Tom Hogan - September 22, 2023 at 06:46 PM

RM

“ Our most sincere and heartfelt condolences on the passing of our beloved Manuel. He always treated us with such genuine warmth and kindness. We will miss our telephone conversations with him. Due to health issues we will not be at the services but our prayers will be with you. God Bless You. Ricardo and Dinah Martinez 🙏

Ricardo and Dinah Martinez - September 20, 2023 at 07:23 PM

MR

Our family moved to Roswell in 1974, but did not know that we lived in the same neighborhood with a World War 11 hero, until a full page article in the Roswell Daily Record, told of the heroism of Manuel Ralph Martinez. A very special memory of this humble hero after he retired, was his faithful presence at daily Mass at St. Peter Church. Mr. Martinez's exemplary life is an inspiration for all. R.I.P.

Margaret Rodriguez - September 23, 2023 at 10:36 AM

BN

“ As a member of the Roswell Veterans Honor Guard it is my honor to attend and participate in Mr. Martinez honor service..... Thank you and your family for your service.....May God bless RIP Sir....

Burnie Nicholson - September 20, 2023 at 02:41 PM

JS

“ My favorite memory was watching Manuel ring the bell at the Sacred Heart Mission Church at Moses, NM, that he used to ring as an altar boy at the historic church. Rest in peace, sweet Manuel. 🙏

Judy Steen - September 19, 2023 at 08:39 AM



“ I first met Manuel when I was just 17. My sister, Jackie, married his son Marty. From the day I met him I considered him my grandfather. When ever I traveled I would send Manuel a post card and when ever I visited Roswell I would always make sure to visit Manuel. I even was one of the special people to see him during Covid. My parents also loved him and I am sure they are having a great reunion in heaven.

Connie Russell - September 18, 2023 at 04:02 PM

JF

“ Mr. Martinez will always be a hero to me. As I was learning the plumbing trade, he would always give me direction on how to do something and would always remind me to take pride in myself and my work. But most of all, he stood for our freedom and fought for us! What a man! Jack(Fergie) Ferguson

jack ferguson - September 17, 2023 at 08:59 AM

CF

“ Corp. James E. Hogan and Family purchased the Peaceful White Lilies Basket for the family of Manuel Ralph Martinez.



Corp. James E. Hogan and Family - September 13, 2023 at 06:57 PM

FL

“ Mr. Martinez was on the top of the list of Best Friends. Such a nice Man. After each visit, I left with a smile on my face.

Fred C Laredo. - August 17, 2023 at 11:11 PM

KE

“ My sympathies go out to your family! I'm sorry that I only got to spend one lunch with Manuel, but it's a lunch that I will never forget. He was a wonderful person and the world is a little darker without him.



Kate Ediger - August 08, 2023 at 01:23 PM

MW

It was an honor to be part of that lunch with Manuel! What an honor to know Manuel and his family. Our prayers are with Michael, Joan and his family.

Mary Wiggins - September 29, 2023 at 01:03 PM

SF

“ My deepest sympathies to Mike and Joan. I have so many memories, decades of them. Manuel seemed to me to be a man of quiet dignity, and that demeanor could disguise the sudden appearance of a very keen sense of humor. Mostly, I remember him as a very kind man. Considering the tribulations he faced from WWII on, including family tragedies, I have thought many times in recent years that he was the finest man I ever met.

Steve Folkes - August 06, 2023 at 11:33 PM

AG

“ Amanda Granados lit a candle in memory of Manuel Martinez



Amanda Granados - August 02, 2023 at 11:34 AM

GB

“ I am so sorry for your loss. Mr. Martinez was such a joy to visit with after Mass. His presence will be missed.

Gina M Buldra - August 01, 2023 at 07:43 PM

CR

“*Manuel was the only grandfather I remember having and he is not my real grandfather. My sister Jackie married Manuel's son Marty. They had a daughter, Tanya. Even though Jackie and Marty divorced, Manuel still considered Jackie, me and Irene (Jackie's twin) family. Irene and I never failed to stop and see Manuel on every trip to Roswell and sent post cards when we traveled. My life was richer because Manuel was a part of it.*

Connie Russell - July 29, 2023 at 12:13 PM

IH

Connie, You expressed this perfectly. What a wonderful and caring person he was, We'll miss you Grandpa!! Your kindness and caring were so appreciated, Love you! Herman (aka Irene),

PS I loved sending him post cards and especially loved visiting him when We were in Roswell.

Irene M Haskins - September 18, 2023 at 05:47 PM