

Mary Louise Islas (1930-2011)



Mary Louise Islas

Mary Louise Islas joined her Lord Savior Jesus Christ on January 2, 2011.

Mary was born in Barstow, Calif., on April 13, 1930, to Pedro and Angela (Rodriguez) Islas and moved to Long Beach in 1969. She was a long time City of Long Beach employee and community activist. Mary began her Long Beach career in the Department of Community Housing Authority in 1973. She worked as an Occupancy Specialist and in Community and Tenant Relations. She served the city as an employee for 25 years, retiring in 1998.

Mary continued to serve Long Beach as she was appointed to the Civil Service Commission of Long Beach in 2001. She served as President of the Civil Service Commission until her retirement on December of 2009.

Mary served as a community volunteer and activist beginning shortly after her arrival in Long Beach. She was a founding member of Long Beach's first Head Start Program in the early 70's. She was a member of LULAC (The League of United Latin American Citizens) and supported and participated in Cesar Chavez's United Farm Workers movement. Mary graduated from the City of Long Beach Neighborhood Services Bureau and the 15 week Community Police Academy. She served on the Board of Directors for the Women's Community Police Academy and served as an election polls Inspector. She was a Senior Police Partner and served on the Long Beach Police Chief's Latino Advisory Board enhancing communication and serving as a conciliator between the LBPd and the Latino community. She was a volunteer at the Long Beach Senior Center and taught Spanish. She was active in Long Beach Centro CHA (Community Hispanic Association) and served as a long time board member. In 2004, Mary was an Honoree at the Nuestra Imagen Awards Dinner Fundraiser through Centro Cha and was presented the Community Service Award by Commander, Robert Luna (former award recipient).

She was honored in 2001 by the American Business Women's Association as "Woman of the Year". A certificate of recognition was given to her in 2001 by State Senator Karnette for her commitment to the Spirit of Community Service.

Mary was known not only for her devotion to civic volunteerism, but also her ability to make people laugh easily with her quick wit. Her motto was, "GO L.A. LAKERS!" Her second motto was "Lead follow or move out of the way." She taught her children, the Lord should be first in their lives and instilled in them to be honest and hardworking. Mary leaves behind many friends. Her family appreciates the love and support given to her. They also thank Dr. William Lyons (Oncologist) for his care and kindness through the years. Mary respected him dearly.

Mary was preceded in death by her parents, Pedro and Angela; brothers, Pedro, Jesse, Ruben, and Tito; sisters, Isabel, Esther, Nellie, Julia, and Angelina; and grandson, Paul Lewis.

She is survived by her sister, Ruth Islas (Riverside); brothers, Bob and David Rodriguez; and her children, David Castillo (Kathi) of Woodland Hills, Calif., Lydia Lewis of Barstow, Calif., Daniel Rodriguez of West Valley City, Utah, Mary Ann Serafin (Joe) of Barstow, Micaela Adams (Mickie) of Lomita, Calif., Angie Reiman (Paul) of Temecula, Calif., Peter Castillo of Long Beach, Calif., and Mona Knopp (Ron) of Long Beach, Calif. She has 15 grandchildren and eleven great-grand children

Visitation will be held at McKenzie Mortuary, 3843 East Anaheim Street, Long Beach, on Monday, Jan. 10, 2011 from 7 to 9 p.m.; Funeral service will be held on Tuesday, Jan. 11, 2011 at 11:15 a.m., at Cottonwood Christian Center, 3311 Sausalito, Los Alamitos, Calif., with an Interment to follow at Forest Lawn Cemetery, Cypress, Calif. A reception will follow with open microphone, Jewish Center, 3801 E. Willow, Long Beach from 3:30 to 7 p.m.

Donations can be made to Centro CHA, Inc to establish a scholarship fund in Mary's name. 727 Pine Avenue, Long Beach, Calif. 90813.

Published in the Daily Press on January 7, 2011