

OBITUARIES

CARMEN MARIE MENDOZA

**Jan. 8, 1942 –
July 31, 2009**

Carmen Marie Mendoza, 67, passed away in her home the afternoon of Friday, July 31, 2009, after a year-long battle with ovarian cancer.

Carmen was born in the local Tehachapi Hospital to Eulalia Terrazas Pena on Jan. 8, 1942, and was raised by her mother, and step-father Jose Pena.

Carmen grew up in the Keene and Tehachapi area where she attended the local Tehachapi schools. As a young girl, she was once caught up in the flood waters at Keene with her cousin Fred Munguia, and was nearly washed away. Thereafter, she had a strong dislike for thunderstorms and cloud bursts and would cringe at the sound of thunder clapping in the distance.

Carmen graduated from Tehachapi High School in 1958, took some college courses, and then began working at Tehachapi Hospital.

On Jan. 7, 1961 she married the love of her life, Ralph Mendoza, whom she had met while working at the hospital. She later gave birth to two daughters, Corinne and Sonia at this



same hospital. Carmen and Ralph were married for 36 years until Ralph passed on due to cancer in 1997.

Carmen began working part-time in the school office at Wells Elementary School when her youngest daughter began kindergarten. She eventually became a full-time clerk, and then the Principal's Secretary, and was employed at Wells Elementary School for the better of 29 years. She was a devoted and loyal Wells Bobcat employee who cared for and assisted hundreds of students and teachers who passed her way. The Wells Elementary School staff was an integral part of her family whom she remained in constant touch with even after her retirement in

2002. They continued to have their "Wells" group outings to breakfast and Las Vegas, which she always looked forward to attending.

Upon retirement, Carmen developed the travel bug and began her journeys across the globe, to include destinations such as France, Ireland, Italy, Florida, New York and New England to name a few, as well as trips to see family in Colorado, New Mexico and Georgia.

Retirement further allowed Carmen to pursue her task of being a devoted grandmother and aunt, who spent time visiting with her grandchildren, nieces and nephews, and supporting them in all of their endeavors from piano recitals, saving box tops and admiring class projects to providing a hot dinner during a work break and sitting in the stands at college graduations. She provided the kids with encouragement even up to her death.

Carmen was active in her church, St. Malachy's Catholic Church, where she was baptized, made her first communion, and was confirmed and married. She volunteered in the front office, was a Catholic Daughter, participated in crafts, and thoroughly enjoyed the camaraderie of the group.

Additionally, Carmen had enjoyed belonging to a local Red Hat group that organized various outings. Though her illness limited her ability to physically participate in outings, she still provided support to

the best of her abilities.

Carmen is preceded in death by her husband, Ralph, her mother Eulalia, and step-father Jose Pena.

She is survived by her two daughters, Corinne Cortez, husband Greg, and their son Jacob, all of Tehachapi; and Sonia Chavez, husband Jose, and their three children, Amanda, Sara and Daniel, also of Tehachapi; sisters Irene Riley of Columbus, New Mexico; Bekki McCurdy of Visalia; and Priscilla DeLira and husband Armando, of Wasco; nieces and nephews Joe DeLira, Karissa Hinojosa, Mikayala DeLira, AJ Delira, Andy Delira, Kyle McCurdy, Keely McCurdy, Gina Kaiser, Carmen Madrid, and various other nieces, nephews, great-nieces and great-nephews.

A funeral mass was held at St. Malachy's Catholic Church on Wednesday, Aug. 5. Carmen was laid to rest beside her loving husband Ralph at Westside Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be made to the American Cancer Society, Kern Chapter, Optimal Hospice, or St. Jude's Children's Research Hospital.

Special thanks and appreciation are extended to Dr. Madan Mukhopadhyay and his caring staff at CBCC, caregiver Toni Silva and the wonderful staff and caregivers with Optimal Hospice for the loving care and assistance during our mother's illness.

Wood Family Funeral Service, Inc. handled the arrangements.

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