



Jose Sanchez Vargas

November 29, 1948 - August 30, 2023

Jose Sanchez Vargas passed away the evening of August 30th, 2023 with his family by his side. Jose was born November 29, 1948 in Eagle Pass, Texas to Estanislado Vargas, originally of Mexico, but settled in Texas and Adela Sanchez of Texas. He was the fourteenth of fifteen children. Like many families in 1950s, the Vargas family traveled to the Yakima Valley as migrant workers eventually settling in Toppenish, WA. Jose followed in his father's and brothers' footsteps and worked the land, primarily driving tractor and irrigating crops. He was a man of his word who took great pride in his work. Above all, Jose loved his family, camping, laughing, the beach, the color blue, all Buicks and Old Spice.

In 1976 Jose met Melva Maxine Ramsey of Eugene, OR and it was love at first sight. Upon laying eyes on her, he knew that she was the woman he was going to marry and he did. True to their nature it took his great patience, as Maxine, always fiercely independent, pretended to not want to get married. They were married by the Justice of the Peace on July 15, 1977 and by the St. Aloysius Catholic Church on August 18, 1979. There wasn't anything he wouldn't have done for her. The stories the two shared of their drives and playful antics demonstrated the wholesomeness of their love.

One of Jose's greatest achievements was to purchase a house of his own and he did in 1980. Always a family man, he made sure his home was constructed

not far from his beloved mother's house so that family could visit every weekend and wave at each other while driving past on the way home. It was here that Jose and Maxine raised their children, Robert Ignacio, Amber Rose, Joanna Anastasia, Melissa Rae and Estanislado Matthew. The greatest wish for Jose and Maxine was that all their children would pursue a higher education. With this in mind, following the birth of his first two children, Jose made the brave decision to pursue a degree at YVCC which he did while continuing to work the land and support his growing family. Tongue in cheek, he would often joke that he held the record for longest time to complete an A.A.

After receiving his A.A. Jose began working for the Granger School District as an attendance counselor and Migrant Home Visitor. When asked about his job he spoke from experience and offered guidance. "Parents have to stress it to kids, especially about getting to school on time, I have five kids who are all ready for school by 7 a.m. It can be done. We help parents see the specific problem and assist them in working out practical solutions." The passion he had for helping students succeed was and is evident in the number of former Spartan students and parents as well as colleagues who all speak, not only to his dependability and humor, but his genuine concern for the students of the lower valley. Many people remember his smile, soft voice and listening ear all of which made them feel heard and seen, perhaps for the first time. And heaven forbid you were a student who was walking away from school or absent, the rumbling noise of his 1975 Buick behind you or slowly pulling into your drive was enough to send you running to school, not out of fear, but out of respect for a man whom you did not want to disappoint.

Having lived in the same house for more than four decades, his house was the site of numerous family gatherings. He took great pride in his yard which he kept sharp by watering, fertilizing and never cutting too short. The

neighborhood was accustomed to his presence either working in the yard, tinkering in the shed, or most often, sitting on the porch. He would wave at pedestrians and motorists alike; keeping track of those who ran the stop signs, skipped school, or trekked to the local store down the street. Those who knew him would come to expect his greeting and even those who did not know him came to count on his presence as he would often wave at people passing by just to see if they would greet him back. Such an impact did he have on those he knew that many would stop by to drop off fresh produce or share important news although, most simply wanted to feel heard and share a good laugh. As he aged, it was not uncommon for people to stop by to check on him if they had not seen him out for a while. The stories, nicknames and jokes were always abundant. Visiting with Jose surely meant leaving with a side stitch, tears in the eyes and somehow lighter of heart.

Jose is preceded in death by his parents and siblings Tomacita, Ignacio, Anastacia, Leopoldo, Catarina, Narcisa, Juanita, Maria, Petra, Esiquio, Teresa and Irma, He is survived by his wife Maxine; children Robert (Valerie) Vargas, Amber (Emanuel Gonzalez) Vargas, Joanna (Audel) Chavez, Melissa Vargas and Matthew (Adrianna) Vargas; fourteen grandchildren (Saul, Isabelle, Mariela, Lisette, Reuben, Isaiah, Viviana, Gabriela, Natalie, Fabian, Ava, Tuari, Annabelle and Mariana) and his sisters Marie and Berta.

His simple presence every day for the entirety of his life guaranteed that you felt loved, appreciated and safe. Although difficult, it was our honor to be present as you climbed into your Buick, and with one final wave and just a hint of Old Spice, shut the door and drove home. Until we meet again, much love from us all.

Previous Events

Memorial Service

SEP **22**. 2:00 PM - 4:00 PM (PT)

Colonial Funeral Home
228 S. Alder
Toppenish, WA

Burial

SEP **23** (PT)

Elmwood Cemetery
Elmwood Road
Toppenish, WA

Tribute Wall



“ *Melissa Vargas lit a candle in memory of Jose Sanchez Vargas*



Melissa Vargas - December 21, 2023 at 04:53 PM



“ *Jose Sanchez Vargas*

October 05, 2023 at 11:22 AM



“ *So sorry about your loss, he was a great neighbor. My condolences.*



Lupe Martinez - September 21, 2023 at 03:32 PM



“ *Sending our condolences to the family.*



Elva Martinez - September 21, 2023 at 03:30 PM

CC

“ So happy to have shared some memories with Mr. Vargas. May he rest in peace.

C. Cardenas - September 20, 2023 at 10:02 PM

VB

“ Jose was a staple in our GHS halls, he was kind and humble and had the best comebacks for any joke. He always had a smile on his face. He was my co-worker but always a friend first.

You will be missed, but, your memory will live on through your children and grandchildren. Granger loves you 🙏 May you rest in peace.



Veronica Bermudez - September 20, 2023 at 03:03 PM

BH

“ Condolences to the Vargas family. Jose was such a wonderful man. Loved his sense of humor! I was privileged to work with him at Granger and have him as a friend.



Brenda Hubert - September 19, 2023 at 09:49 PM



“ Country Basket Blooms was purchased for the family of Jose Sanchez Vargas.



September 19, 2023 at 12:47 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Jose Sanchez Vargas.

September 19, 2023 at 12:47 PM



“ Randy and Irene Gomez purchased the Sweet Tranquility Basket for the family of Jose Sanchez Vargas.



Randy and Irene Gomez - September 15, 2023 at 11:59 PM



“ Beautiful Dreams was purchased for the family of Jose Sanchez Vargas.



September 13, 2023 at 01:40 PM



“ Melissa Vargas lit a candle in memory of Jose Sanchez Vargas



Melissa Vargas - September 13, 2023 at 03:00 AM



“ *Melissa Rodriguez-Hernandez lit a candle in memory of Jose Sanchez Vargas*



Melissa Rodriguez-Hernandez - September 12, 2023 at 08:32 PM



“ *Maxine Vargas lit a candle in memory of Jose Sanchez Vargas*



Maxine Vargas - September 12, 2023 at 02:06 AM



“ *Medium Dish Garden was purchased for the family of Jose Sanchez Vargas.*



September 10, 2023 at 02:16 PM



“ *I love you, Papa Bear. Always and forever.*



Estanislado Vargas - September 09, 2023 at 06:32 PM



“ I offer my condolences to Maxine, Jose's children, and his grandchildren. Sending you and yours prayers for comfort, strength and guidance as you face such a difficult time. Jose, Jennifer and I worked as a team at Granger Middle School/High School....we managed to find the correct words amongst each other to help our students with their needs, even if that meant we had to be stern and disciplined. Many times we gathered for conversations around our triple threat of our team to discuss consequences, to get ideas for assistance to a student family needs, or to vent about our own life challenges. In confidence we vowed to keep our discussions secret, our trio was a small but powerful circle with good humor, quick come back's, and always ended with a hug. Jose was like a brother to Jen and I, we managed to move on in life....and it looks like he was blessed with beautiful grandchildren. I have so many good memories with Jose and Jennifer at GHS. May he rest in peace in the comforts of heaven for he deserves blessings for all the wonderful lives he crossed paths with here on earth.

Kianpum Angeline Phillips-Sappallel - September 08, 2023 at 01:22 PM

MV

Thank you. He spoke of you two often.

Maxine Vargas - September 08, 2023 at 01:33 PM

KL

“ Jose Vargas was a kind and gentle man. We got to meet him through our daughter's friendship with Johanna. What a great family the Vargas's are. Our sincere condolences to this wonderful family. Jose was an important member and will be missed by many family and friends. Hugs and prayers, Richard and Karen Lommers



Karen Lommers - September 08, 2023 at 10:52 AM

KL

What a precious picture of Saul and Jose. Thank you , Joanna, for sharing!

Karen Lommers - September 08, 2023 at 10:55 AM

SC

“ *I enjoyed working with Jose at Granger School District. Loved his sense of humor. He always had a smile on his face and a cheery greeting.*

Sandra Childress - September 08, 2023 at 10:46 AM

MV

Thank you.

Maxine Vargas - September 09, 2023 at 12:10 AM



“ *Florist Choice Bouquet was purchased for the family of Jose Sanchez Vargas.*



September 07, 2023 at 05:20 PM

FJ

“ *Heading in to my freshman year of high school I didn't know what to expect, who to see and whether anyone knew me. Mr. Vargas changed all of that with a simple "Mr. Alegria, how's it going". I was really unsure of how he knew of me but after 15 minutes and going through my family tree it was almost like Mr. Vargas was Family. For the remainder of the year, every morning was "Good morning Mr. Alegria - how's the family?" He retired at the end of that year. I am glad that i was able to know him and talk to him every morning. Great man he was and he will live on in our hearts.*

Frank Alegria Jr. - September 06, 2023 at 07:58 PM

SE

“ Uncle Joe you will be truly missed by many. I remember when i was at the middle school trying to skip class but every time i tried I always saw you outside or sitting on the porch. Lol one time i was at the granger school picking up some friends to go skipping and i saw them running towards us n right behind them i saw you. All my friends said Sonya why you hiding. I said that's my uncle n he's going kick my booty. Let's just say i never went back to granger again. Just a few years ago my husband Jon n I delivered a water slide to your house for a gathering first thing that came out of your mouth was DONT I KNOW YOU he asked Jon. My husband said yea you chased me down in your car for skipping school. Lol needless to say my uncle was well known n loved by many. Tio your not suffering no more no more pain, Love you.

sonya elizondo - September 06, 2023 at 02:34 PM

EF

“ Uncle Joe we love you and will always remember the jokes and laughter and hugs and smiles..... We will remember you always and tell stories to our children, grandchildren and so on so that you are never forgotten....
R.I.P.



Esiquio Vargas Jr and family - September 05, 2023 at 05:37 PM

MV

Thank you.

Maxine Vargas - September 11, 2023 at 03:23 AM