



Elvira Chavarria

June 26, 1950 - April 30, 2020

Elvira Chavarria, a kind, gentle, sweet and generous person, and a loving wife beyond compare, passed away at her Austin home on April 30, 2020. Drawing her last breath at dawn, her spirit filled the sky with warmth and light. As in life, her radiance, laughter, poise and courage touched many, and she will be greatly missed.

Born in El Paso, Texas on June 26, 1950 to Jose and Elvira Perez Chavarria, Elvira grew up with her brother Jose Luis and her sister Marta Perez. After graduating from El Paso's Austin High School, she earned a BA in English Literature and a Master's in Library Science from the University of Illinois. She later attended and graduated with a MBA from the University of Michigan.

During her rich and varied professional life, she worked as a department secretary at the University of Texas El Paso; as a librarian at the Nettie Lee Benson Latin American Collection at the University of Texas at Austin; as the Director of the Procurement Outreach Center at El Paso Community College; as Community Affairs Manager for Levi Strauss; and in various positions in IT, marketing and business planning at 3M spanning 20 years, retiring in 2015. While at 3M, she was recognized for her extensive volunteer work and co-founded HOLA, a program highlighting the advantages of diversity and celebrating Hispanic culture.

Elvira volunteered for many years at Wooten Elementary, using the Junior Achievement curriculum to inspire and prepare young people to succeed in a global economy, as well as teaching Reading is Fundamental (RIF) to bilingual classrooms. Throughout her life, Elvira was also a strong supporter of the ACLU, Planned Parenthood and early childhood education.

Elvira met the love of her life, John Baker in the early '90s and they married in Central Park on April 27, 1996. Throughout their life, they traveled extensively over 6 continents, having many exotic adventures together, exploring different cultures and lands, and meandering on great walks through beautiful and unforgettable landscapes.

During her life, Elvira developed a wide array of culinary talents that were appreciated by family and friends. She delighted in trying new recipes that most often met with approval by her husband, her officially designated food critic. An avid fan of action movies, Elvira also enjoyed reading and watching detective series, especially those set in foreign locales where she had visited. She was a collector of fine art, and her talent for jewelry making later in life showcased her natural aesthetic gifts. Until the last week of her life, she loved taking morning walks and meeting the day with a good cappuccino.

Elvira is survived by her husband, John D. Baker; her step daughter, Kelly Cockrell; her granddaughter, Raine Cockrell; her brother and sister in law, Jose Luis and Irene Perez; her nephew, Joey Perez; her nieces Ceci Saucedo and Cindy Calderon; her great and grand nephews and nieces, Eric, Laila and Lexi; Amanda, Riley Jo and Jude; Ryenne and Robby; Isaac, Mathew & JoJo; and her nephew Frank Saldivar and his children, Briana and Tasha, all of whom she dearly loved. She was preceded in death by her parents and by her sister, Marta.

Elvira's family would like to thank the doctors, nurses and staff at MD Anderson Cancer Center who extended her life for over 6 years, as well as the incredible friends and colleagues who loved, prayed and supported her and whose friendship she cherished. A special thanks to John's extended family, both the Bakers and Chalkleys, who held her close in their hearts, including Joe and Judy Baker, who provided unconditional support and refuge during her treatments in Houston.

The Consortium for Graduate Study in Management was instrumental in helping Elvira obtain her MBA. She would be pleased if donations of any amount were made there in her memory. The Consortium is a 501(c)3 dedicated to ensuring the equal representation of African Americans, Hispanic Americans and Native Americans in management careers in the business community in the USA. <https://cgsm.org/about-us/how-to-donate/>

The Consortium for Graduate Study in Management
attn: Elvira Chavaria Memorial Fund
229 Chesterfield Business Parkway
Chesterfield, MO 63005

A memorial service is planned once larger gatherings are authorized in Austin. At her request, her ashes will be scattered in the Franklin Mountains that surround El Paso.

Comments



“ Emerald Garden Basket was purchased for the family of Elvira Chavaria.



June 02 at 12:31 PM



“ John - I am a dear friend of Linda Miracle. Condolences & peace on your deep loss. I wanted to let you know that Linda made a donation in Elvira's memory to the Stride & Thrive Below the Belt Run/Walk sponsored by Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore. This event now in it's 5th year was founded by our late beloved friend Dr. Susan Burgert for whom their cancer survivorship program is now named. Linda said Elvira and Susan are now both angels.

Chris Riley - May 31 at 06:23 PM



“ 9 files added to the tribute wall



Glen Novinger - May 31 at 08:13 AM



“ 9 files added to the album Evira Chavaria - A Tribute



Glen Novinger - May 31 at 06:45 AM



“ What a precious creature God created in Elvira. An elegant, intelligent and kind friend, Elvira was a beauty who made everyone feel welcome and lived her life with grace and resilience. So blessed to have known her. May she Rest In Peace.

Ginger miller Lowry - May 29 at 07:17 PM



“ Elvira was such a graceful and respected soul. She made the world a better place as a wonderful example of kindness and generosity that I certainly strive to emulate. Sending condolences and prayers for Elvira and her family during this very tough time. It was an honor to be her friend and to see all the goodness that she brought the world. Her spirit will certainly shine on . . .



Leary Walker - May 29 at 09:16 AM



“ It seems that our dear friend Elvira left this life as she had lived it, with nobility and modesty. We wish we had a small fraction of her grace, and leaving us here, our hearts are numbed, our mouths are hollowed of words and there is no comfort. She leaves a hole that nothing can ever fill. W.H. Auden says it well:

Stop all the clocks, cut off the telephone,
Prevent the dog from barking with a juicy bone,
Silence the pianos and with muffled drum
Bring out the coffin, let the mourners come.

Let aeroplanes circle moaning overhead
Scribbling on the sky the message He is Dead,
Put crêpe bows round the white necks of the public doves,
Let the traffic policemen wear black cotton gloves.

He was my North, my South, my East, my West,
My working week and my Sunday rest,
My noon, my midnight, my talk, my song,
I thought that love would last forever: I was wrong.

The stars are not wanted now: put out every one;
Pack up the moon and dismantle the sun;
Pour away the ocean and sweep up the wood.

For nothing now can ever come to any good.

Our love to our precious John. If we are to be without Elvira, we can at least be together in this place, while perhaps Elvira can make a refuge for us in some other place.

Edward and Donna Povey - May 28 at 04:41 PM



“ It seems that our dear friend Elvira left this life as she had lived it, with nobility and modesty. We wish we had a small fraction of her grace, and leaving us here, our hearts are numbed, our mouths are hollowed of words and there is no comfort. She leaves a hole that nothing can ever fill. W.H. Auden says it well:

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Edward Povey - May 28 at 05:21 AM



“ WELL SAID!!!!

Just would like to say that I will miss my Aunt Lila greatly.

She was part of my life in many ways and all positive.

As one of not only my life building blocks but a person I was able to take many of her traits which has inspired me to this day.

She will always be in my heart and will truly be missed.

Aunt I love you and may you RIP and continue your new journey and mission the Lord has planned for you.

Love you Aunt Lila

From your Nephew

Frank

Frank Saldivar - May 28 at 05:53 PM



“ Elvira was a dear friend whom I'll miss and treasure the 20 years of knowing her. She was a wonderful mentor to me during my tenure as 3M HOLA Chair. Her professionalism, caring nature & friendliness really stood out. Even after retiring she continued to volunteer at Wooten Elementary helping the students believe in themselves. My sincere condolences to John & family.



Leticia V. Hernandez - May 27 at 02:55 PM



“ Elvira was such a kind soul. One of my vivid memories is when we were driving through Santa Fe and spent some time with John and Elvira. My son, Gavin, was not feeling well and she took care of him and watched Terminator with him while John, my oldest son, Jonah and I went to eat lunch in town. He will always remember that.

Robert Portinari - May 27 at 02:21 PM



“ Elvira was a very dear friend and I will miss her. She was such a great mentor to me during my tenure as 3M HOLA Chair. She was always so professional, caring & friendly.
Even after retiring she continued to volunteer at Wooten Elementary helping students believe in themselves. I will treasure the wonderful times with her. My sincere condolences to John & family.



Leticia V. Hernandez - May 27 at 02:20 PM



“ I am saddened to hear of Elvira's passing at such a young age. She was a dear friend who I first met while attending Austin HS in El Paso, TX. Later, I had the pleasure of working along side her on economic development projects during her employment with the El Paso Procurement Outreach Center. The last time I saw her was at the funeral services for her mother here in El Paso, My sincere and heartfelt sympathies to her family. May she rest in peace.

Larry E. Ortiz - May 27 at 01:09 PM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Elvira Chavaria.



May 27 at 10:46 AM



“ Elvira was a women of class, good taste, intelligence and humility. She was always a good conversation and will be missed!

The Clements Family

Andrew Clements - May 26 at 08:52 PM



“ Elvira was a former employee @ User Friendly @ 3M in Austin and I treasured her hard work and kind soul during her time with the company. We remained friends until her passing and would continue to celebrate our birthdays, which was a User Friendly company tradition. Elvira was an extraordinary role model for all women and I was blessed to have met her and been able to call her my friend. We shared many hours of lunches together with laughter and just the simple joy of fellowship. When she married John in Central Park, I was thrilled for them and for their choice of venue. I have such lovely treasured memories of Elvira and the unique class she was always so poised to grace each day with. My condolences to John Baker and her family because losing Elvira has been a tremendous loss to the world of a very special and beloved person.

Linda Conner-Miracle - May 26 at 07:45 PM