

Eulogy for Daddy

August 2, 2004

91 years ago in the sleepy little pueblito of San Vicente, Nuevo Leon, Juliana and Pedro López welcomed their second male child. His birthdate fell on "el día de San Casimiro" in the Mexican Calendar. As was the tradition during those days a child was named accordingly. Casimiro Armando López González joined his older brother Regino and two years later they were joined by a baby sister Herlinda López González.

Not long after, when Dad was only 3 years old, our grandfather Pedro López died of unknown causes leaving Grandma Julia to raise her 3 little ones. Our grandmother was fortunate that her sisters and brothers, our grand Tíos and Tías, were there to help and console her. She managed to raise her children by making and selling *pan dulce* and *quiltas*. Our Grand Tías became Dad's fairy god mothers of a sort. They doted on each of Grandma's children as if they were their own. Consequently Dad, Tío Regino and Tía Herlinda were raised with much love and tenderness. Grandma Julia never remarried.

When Dad was a young man of 13 he moved with Grandma, Tío Regino and Tía Herlinda to Donna Texas. There Dad, being a conscientious and hard working boy found employment in a pool hall sweeping floors and cleaning out bathrooms. He first saw our Mom Beatriz Ávila Muñoz while she stood in the balcony of the local Catholic Church singing in the choir. He said often times that he knew immediately that this was the girl of his dreams and that someday she would be his wife. She was only 12 years old at the time Dad was 16. Dad was a man of his word. He waited 10 years to be able to court and win the heart of his beautiful "Bea" his *palomita*. At first her family, a well established and wealthy Tejano Family, for whom Dad worked at the pool hall, was reluctant to have a poor boy marry their daughter. But as was his way Dad worked hard and eventually won their hearts and their approval.

Beatriz Ávila Muñoz and Casimiro López González were married on June 18, 1939. They had a wonderful 3 day wedding "fiesta" where dozens of *chivos* were roasted on open spits and several cows were cooked in deep pits to feed the hundred of friends and workers who came to celebrate their marriage. According to Daddy a long line of carriages and a few motor cars

followed them out of town to the Mexican boarder where they finally said their last adieus to the new bride and groom.

They honeymooned in Monterrey, México and up until recently Dad could quote what they had for breakfast that first day of their married life. A year later they welcomed a tiny baby girl born 2 months early to the family. It was a day of joy and sadness as Mom's mother, Adela Ávila Muñoz, our dear Grandmother passed away due to a heart attack early the next day. She would never know the big beautiful family her daughter and son-in law would someday have.

As the years went by Casimiro and Beatriz would welcome a total of 7 daughters and 3 sons to their family making them a family of "*una dozena completita*".

Shortly after the birth of their 8th child they joined the growing multitude of migrant workers moving out to California to work in the fields and help make ends meet. Due to the depression many of the canneries in Texas where Dad worked had closed down. They arrived in California with 13 cents in their pocket. They were welcomed by other family members who had come over earlier and who were now established in a small farming rancho called "La Garra".

The day of their arrival, hot and tired from the long ride over in their old 1949 Plymouth, which we lovingly referred to as "*el chocolate*" along with 8 hungry children, one still nursing, that would be Judy, and one more still in the oven, they were overjoyed to see that the family was celebrating a "fiesta" of sorts with *carne asada*, *cerveza* and lots of good things to eat. They were soon seated next to loved ones and friends enjoying a feast of good eats.

Dad soon got a job with the local farmer, a Japanese American who also knew how difficult it was to be a foreigner in this new country. Dad knew from the start that he did not want his children to grow up working in the hot and dusty California fields and as soon as he could he found a job working in a packing house in Parlier, CA. He worked for many years making boxes at the Chris Sorensen Packing Company and after the birth of their last child Rosalinda, "Rosie", *la coyotita*, Mom began her career as a packer at the same company.

We owe a great debt of gratitude to the Sorensen Family as they provided jobs for almost all of the family throughout the years as we pursued our own educational goals. Dad worked hard and eventually became the Cold Storage Foreman and Mom the Head Floor Lady. They worked for the Sorensen family until they retired. Dad was well loved and admired by all who knew him. He was a kind and generous man. Dad took the time the new guys needed to give them advice and often overlooked their hangovers and tardies. He would council with them like he counseled with his own sons and daughters. Dad was a man of much patience. He had not had a father growing up and knew these boys just needed somebody to help them out a little. Dad was also a compassionate man.

We all remember him coming home late at night and sitting at the dinning room table with his pen and notebook working out the hours, the number of "*vagones*", or train cars that had been loaded and adding long columns of numbers to make sure of his figures. He didn't want anyone to be short changed, not the workers, not the boss or the farmers who entrusted their precious crops to the company. Dad was an honest and conscientious man.

We all remember how much Dad loved to tell a good joke. His compadres, some of whom he has now joined in Heaven, would sit and tell joke after joke "*dicho*" after "*dicho*", entertaining the whole family for hours on end. Dad loved to laugh and was a talented storyteller. It was never beneath him to cry if he felt so inclined.

Often times when we had parties for birthdays, anniversaries or weddings his favorite part of the party would be the reading of the cards. Dad was a sentimental romantic. I believe it was due in part to being raised by women. Dad was not afraid to show his heart to his children. I am proud to say that all his sons, and sons-in-law, are made of this same endearing fabric.

Almost ten years ago a thief in the night came and cast a shadow over our home at 8672 Wrico Street. It took not silverware or gold but with it, it took the precious memories that our father had so adoringly treasured during his life. That thief was the disease of Alzheimer's. Little by little it robbed our family of this once joyful man with the ready wit and quick smile. Eventually Daddy could not remember our names and often he asked

all who came around to please take him home to his "*casd*". He felt lost in a strange home with friendly strangers. He would sometimes leave a tip at the dinning table for the kind waitress who had served him his favorite meal unaware that it was his own daughter Evita or Ana or his beloved wife who had set the plate so loving prepared in front of him. Dad was a generous man even in this state of darkness.

Even though he often felt lost he was not afraid. He knew that his Father in Heaven and the Holy Spirit would guide him in his hours of darkness. We often commented on how, even in the fog and shadows of this dreaded disease, he never forgot how to pray. Dad was a man of great Faith who loved his Father in Heaven and his brother Jesus the Christ.

He was often heard asking for the Holy Spirit to guide him and to protect his loved ones who he could now not find.

Casimiro López González was fondly and lovingly embraced by his mother, father and brother who had gone before him on Wednesday July 28. We know that our Lord Jesus Christ and our Father in Heaven must have been pleased to welcome, finally, our dear and loving father to "*su casa*" to which he had wanted to return to for so long.

Casimiro López González is gone now but will never be forgotten by those privileged enough to have known him. He leaves behind a great legacy of adoring children, grand children, great grand children and great, great grand children. He leaves behind a family that admired and that truly and deeply loved him. It is our prayer that each family member will treasure his memory and be a bright and shining example to others, as he was in life to all of us. Daddy, we love you, "*Besitos y Abrazos*" to our dearly departed who are now holding you in their safe and loving arms.

Our family would like to thank each and every one of you who have traveled from distances near and far to be with us this very special day of Good Byes for our loving Father, Brother, Uncle, Grandpa, Great Grandpa, Great Great Grandpa, dear friend, beloved husband of Beatriz López- Ávila Muñoz. Please join us immediately following the interment of our Daddy for a luncheon reception. And again, from each and every one of the López Family members, "*mil gracias por su presencia, sus consuelos y sus oraciones.*"