

CECILIA MARTINEZ DONES, North High Class of 1959



Dones Family (Cecilia Martinez Dones)
Robert, Cathy, Raymond, Cecilia, Husband Ray, and Rupert

My grandparents (maternal) were from Jalisco, Leon, Mexico. My dad was born in Salamanca, Mexico. My mother was born in Pueblo, CO. Just for the record my grandparents, Joseph Zendejas & Charolette Suarez Zendejas, and my dad became American citizens. I never met my dad's parents.

I was born in Huntley, WY. I came to Colorado when I was a year old. I have lived here since 1941, so I really consider Colorado my home.

Both of my parents worked for Gates Rubber Company, it no longer exists. They worked there for 30 years and retired from there. My grandfather worked for the Denver Rio Grande Railroad until he retired. It no longer exists either.

I went to Maria Mitchell Elementary school while we lived at 3410 Downing St. When I was 13 we moved to North Denver at 2225 Lowell Blvd. There I attended Lake Junior High and later went on to North High School.

When I was 16 years old, I contracted the first signs of tuberculosis. If anyone remembers, most of my classmates had to take a tuberculosis test. I was admitted to National Jewish Hospital in May of 1957 for treatment.

I met a young man named Raymond Dones. He was 17 years old at that time I didn't care to know him. It took a couple of months before we got acquainted. He also had the first signs of tuberculosis. Ray is from Houston, TX.

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I remember taking about 20 pills (horse pills) and shots a day until I was completely well. Ray and I were dismissed in November 1957. I went back to school and he went back to Houston, TX. In the meantime, Ray and I wrote to each other and spent a lot of time on the telephone weekly. When I graduated in 1959 from North High, I was really happy that Ray came to the graduation.

We were married on June 4th 1960. I have four children, Raymond 48, Cathy 45, and my twin sons, Rupert and Robert will soon be 41. I have nine grandchildren ranging from 27 – 7 year old twin girls. Robert is the father of the twin girls. All of my grandchildren have kept me busy with their sports activities etc. This year will mark our 49th wedding anniversary.

My brother Ben and I both have diabetes now. He has been on dialysis for a couple of years. Ben's wife tried to donate a kidney but was not compatible. My son Rupert decided to donate his kidney to him. Rupert had to go through many tests and it took about a year before they could proceed with the operation. On July 16, 2007 my brother received his new kidney. Ben went from a super low to a super high once he received the kidney. Ben's appetite increased immensely the day after surgery while my son could only eat yogurt and soup. They were both discharged on July 20, 2007 from St Luke's Presbyterian. Ben is doing really well now and so is my son. What a gift to be able to donate.

About 2 years ago we went to a Health Fair and we met a nurse, Shelly from National Jewish Hospital. My husband told her that we once were patients at the hospital. She was very interested in our story. She had William the Public Relations representative give us a call. William wanted to meet us and gave us a grand tour of the hospital. It has been at least 30 years since we had been there. There have been quite a lot of changes. William put our story in the news letter.

In 2008, I had a call from Wayne Miller a director and David Bettencourt a film maker. Both had been working on a documentary about tuberculosis going back to the 1900's. They wanted to come to Denver to interview Ray and me.

This year on Feb 13, 2009 we went to Rhode Island to view the documentary. It was great and we met some really nice people and former patients. The documentary will be shown on PBS channel 12 on June 8, 2009 at 9:00 p.m. Both Ray and I are thrilled about the viewing. We have about 1 minute in the documentary.

I am retired from Wells Fargo Bank downtown location at 17th and Sherman and I am also an Avon Representative of 20 years which keeps me busy but I enjoy my customers. Once a month on the 3rd Thursday, the retirees from the bank meet. Each one of us takes a turn at hosting a coffee at our homes. Then we go

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to lunch. It is such a good time. There are about 15 gals that get together. I have been meeting with them for 6 years. My husband is also retired. He belongs to the Elks and the Eagles Club. He meets his buddies twice a week.

I also have friends that graduated in 1958 & 1959 from North High. We keep in touch. We meet each year at one of our homes for a potluck, it is always fun! Plus we talk during the year and sometimes meet for lunch or dinner. Life is so good and we are blessed.



Maternal Grandparents Joseph & Charolette Zendejas



Parents: Elenor and Gabino Martinez