



Lucila Balcazar Echeagaray

MAY 30, 2020



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Lucila Balcazar Echeagaray

MAY 30, 2020

Lucila Echeagaray Obituary

Lucila Balcazar Echeagaray fell asleep, awaiting the resurrection, on Saturday May 30, 2020, she was 91 years old. Lucila was born in beautiful Guadalajara, in the state of Jalisco, Mexico in 1928. She was the sixth of eight living children. She told her children about being taken to a private Kindergarten, run by her aunt, “Tia Nita”, to be enrolled early since she kept waking up her baby sister to play. Lucila passed the entrance exam and managed to keep up with the other children, no surprise for this future scientist who always excelled in academics. The family kept doves as pets and Lucila lovingly cared for them, this led to a lifelong love of birds. She adorned her walls with framed photos of colorful birds and spent many happy hours watching them at LCMP Carlisle Visitors Center’s Wildlife Observation Room. The family enjoyed a comfortable existence in Guadalajara as Lucila’s Father, Luis Balcazar Cambre, was a successful businessman and owner of the LUBAC Factory, which manufactured high quality skin and hair products. Lucila had fond memories of being allowed to help glue the labels onto the jars when visiting her father in his factory. In Lucila’s preteen years, her father moved the family to Mexico City, seeking more opportunities to grow his business. Tragically, Lucila lost her father when she was 16 due to a chronic health issue. That experience became part of her inspiration to make her career in the sciences, to further research into safer treatments for common medical conditions. After Luis’ death, life became difficult for the Balcazar Padilla family, but the family pulled together to make it through the hard times. As the older siblings graduated University and began working, they assisted their younger siblings with their higher education costs. Lucila earned money to purchase her college books by crocheting delicate lace collars and selling them to fellow students to adorn their blouses. She worked hard and earned university degrees in biology, chemistry, and pharmacology from UNAM, Ciudad



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Universitaria, located in Mexico City. After graduating, and before her marriage and subsequent move to the US, Lucila worked at a pharmaceutical company in Mexico. Lucila met future husband, Ignacio Echeagaray, through his sister Maria Luisa, who was her college classmate and close friend. Ignacio had legally immigrated to the United States from Mexico years earlier. He was living in Cleveland and working at NASA as an engineer when his sister wrote him about the brilliant and beautiful science major he might like to meet. Ignacio and Lucila were both smitten from their first meeting! They wrote letters back and forth for several years before marrying in Mexico City on April 2, 1956. Lucila loved to tell the sweet story of Ignacio's wedding gift to her. "Tell me what you want that will make you happy", Ignacio said to her. On the flight to her future home in Cleveland, Ohio, Lucila had seen an ad for a top of the line Pfaff sewing machine, that's what she told Ignacio she wanted. She recounted that she realized how much Ignacio loved her when he didn't blink when told the price. She made very good use of that beautiful Pfaff! Even after going back to work full time, she spent many evenings sewing lovely dresses for her girls, shorts and pants for her boys and stylish work outfits for herself. Lucila passed that love of sewing on to her two daughters and to her grandchildren as well. Sewing is still an important part of the family's culture and it all started with a wedding gift given and received with so much love. Lucila had grown up listening to her older brother, Jorge, play classical music on his violin, and he had taught her to love music as much as he did. Ignacio was a musician in his spare time so they had an appreciation and love for music in common. Lucila shared that love of music with her children and frequently played classical music records at home while cooking and doing housework, she remained a music lover for the rest of her life. When Lucila arrived in Cleveland, she knew very little English. She, along with Ignacio, took classes, studied hard, and eventually mastered English so well they were able to help their children with their English homework, even up into the college years. This dedication to learning English so fluently led to many opportunities for them both. Ignacio was to write many editorials in local newspapers and Lucila was to be responsible for a bilingual weekly column in the Lorain Journal. Ignacio eventually left NASA to work at Gilford Instruments in Oberlin as an electrical engineer. The



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family subsequently moved to Oberlin where Lucila lived until her death. Lucila and family truly appreciated the sincere and warm welcome to Oberlin from Mrs. Margaret Portman, on behalf of the “Welcome Wagon” program. Mrs. Portman soon became Lucila’s dearest and closest friend. During those early years in Oberlin, Lucila’s niece, Maria (Maribe) Compagny, came to live with her for a few years and attended Oberlin High School. In later years, Lucila was to say that those first years in Oberlin were the happiest of her life. She had true friends, a loving husband, a beautiful home, a welcoming community, and four healthy children. Having her beloved niece, Maribe, join the family only increased Lucila’s happiness. Maribe had been a flower girl at her wedding and was very much like a daughter to her, they remained close throughout Lucila’s life. Ignacio and Lucila made sure their own children got to know the family they had left behind in Mexico. They packed up the family nearly every summer and drove to Mexico City from Oberlin, Ohio. It was a very enjoyable and educational road trip for the family. Lucila always had many humorous stories to share about those long car rides with four kids! Before going back to work, in the 1970’s, Lucila was a member of the local chapter of AAUW (American Association of University Women) and participated in their fund raising activities for the Martin Luther King Memorial Park in Oberlin. Although Lucila enjoyed her association with other professional women in service to her community, she ended her relationship with the organization when she returned to work. It was just too much of a commitment with a full time job and four children at home. Lucila was a very loving and devoted Mother who was very selective in how she spent her time outside of her home and away from her children. Once Lucila’s youngest child was in school all day, Lucila began working at the Lorain Public Library in their “Project Libros” initiative to help increase literacy in Lorain County’s growing Hispanic population. Her unique background and outgoing personality were tailor made for her new position. She was equally literate and proficient in both languages, so was able to effectively communicate with her colleagues, and both the English and Spanish speaking Patrons. Part of her job was organizing and conducting events at the library that brought the community together. Lucila conducted Latin American cooking classes (where she taught Patrons how to make authentic tortillas from



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scratch amongst other popular dishes), Spanish Language movie nights, and bilingual puppet shows for children. Lucila's programs were well attended and became very popular! She had a cheerful nature and infectious smile, these personality traits helped her really shine when working with children. Besides the puppet shows she performed, Lucila also visited local schools in Lorain, hauling a projector, to show students cartoons and movies in both Spanish and English. Lucila was also tasked with translation services at the library, translating public health pamphlets, fliers for community events, and even personal letters from Spanish speaking pen pals. Her Project Libros duties also eventually included a weekly bilingual column in the Lorain Journal, and taking part in a Spanish language radio show at a local station. Lucila never shrank back from, or avoided, opportunities to grow professionally. She bravely threw herself into all of the different opportunities made available to her through the library and Project Libros. With her natural charm, bubbly personality, and innate intelligence, Lucila always managed to succeed in all she did. Over the years, Lucila's job at the library evolved and she became a reference librarian. She was tasked with maintaining a good selection of science themed books for the reference department. She was happy to have a chance to once again use her science degrees to help others while working in the reference department. One of Lucila's personal goals for her job at the library was to encourage Spanish speakers to learn English, knowing how much it would help them in their daily lives. No matter what department she worked in, that goal remained. Lucila spent her career at the library truly advocating for the Hispanic community and made it her personal mission to help integrate them into the community. Lucila did not retire until she turned 70. She was sad to leave the library and her colleagues who had become close friends, but, she had a goal for her retirement. "Don't buy me a rocking chair" Lucila told her children after her retirement party, "I won't have time to sit at home and use it since I will be spending even more time going door to door teaching people about the Bible". Lucila was very proud of the hard work she had done at the library for 25 years for both the English and Spanish speaking Patrons, but was eager to have more time to share the comforting good news from the Bible with more people. Sadly, Ignacio and Lucila got divorced after Ignacio's retirement.



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Neither remarried, and she and Ignacio remained close and supportive friends until Ignacio's death. In the 1970's, two women had come to Lucila's door to read her a scripture. Lucila subsequently spent many hours reading her own Bible, which she knew was the word of God. She wanted to learn more so she began a Bible study. Lucila loved learning from the two women about a God of love, his personal name Jehovah (Psalms 83:18), and his many promises for the future. She became determined to share the Bible with others as those two women had done with her and was baptized as one of Jehovah's Witnesses on May 3, 1980. Lucila remained a faithful and zealous Witness of Jehovah until her death. Her love for Jehovah and unshakeable faith in the resurrection hope gave her much courage and solace in her later years when she faced several life-threatening health issues. Lucila was always young at heart and was a very jovial and fun-loving person who never lost her sense of humor or wit. Many in the family will miss her laughter most of all. She was so young at heart that age differences melted away as she and her extended family talked and laughed together. Lucila had many joyful years enjoying the company of her children, grandchildren, great grandchildren, and other relatives. She was deeply loved and truly cherished by her entire family. Lucila enjoyed wonderfully good health until age 80 when she first became seriously ill. Due to her healthy diet, positive attitude, and active lifestyle of sharing the Bible with others door to door, she was able to beat that illness and several more life threatening illnesses in her last decade of life. She somehow always managed to find the humor in all of her health struggles and never stopped smiling, or showing sincere concern for others, even when seriously ill herself. The world would be a much better place if we all treated each other the way Lucila treated everyone she met, with sincere warmth, kindness, and love. Lucila worked hard to retain her cognitive health as she aged by living a healthy lifestyle, working crossword puzzles, keeping up with current events, and diligent Bible reading and research. She was quite pleased that her efforts were successful. With her usual humor, she often boasted to family and friends that she "still had all of her marbles". Lucila was fiercely independent but grew more frail as she aged and needed help and care with some tasks. Lucila lived with main caregivers, Judy, Jeff, and Tatiana, who provided most of her daily care needs with



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additional assistance from Lucila's other children. She was very proud of the way her children, and grandchildren, showed love to her, and to each other, by cooperating so well to care for her so she could continue to live at home with her family. Her dear Christian Brothers and Sisters also lovingly participated in her care. Lucila often commented that the loving help and care she received from family and friends was a great source of joy and comfort for her in her last years. Perhaps Lucila's greatest legacy was how she taught her family and others by example. She taught them how to love by the way she loved them, loyally, tenderly, and abundantly! Lucila was preceded in death by her mother Maria de Refugio Padilla Velasco de Balcazar, father Luis Balcazar Cambre, brothers Oscar Balcazar Padilla (died in infancy), Francisco Balcazar Padilla (died in infancy), Luis Balcazar Padilla, Jorge Balcazar Padilla, Guillermo Balcazar Padilla, and Javier Balcazar Padilla, sisters Maria de Refugio Balcazar Padilla de Aztegui, and Maria (Yoya) Balcazar Padilla de Compagny, as well as dear friend and former husband, Ignacio P. Echeagaray. She is survived by sister Maria Josefina Balcazar Padilla de Agraz, daughter (niece) Maria Berenice "Maribe" Compagny Balcazar de Villarreal, and many beloved nieces and nephews, all of Mexico, daughters Patricia Lucila Echeagaray (husband Juan Machado), Judith Ann Echeagaray (husband Jeff Junior), and sons Al Echeagaray, and Randolph Eric Echeagaray (wife Christine (Scott) Echeagaray). Also grandson Elocadio "Leo" Rojas Urias III (wife Ashley Velazco), granddaughters Tatiana Lucila Junior, and Elizabeth Patricia Machado (partner Calvin Nolan). Also, two great-granddaughters who brought her such great joy in her final years, Vaida Elizabeth Urias, and Mila Lucille Urias. Lucila also leaves many dearly loved friends, and Christian brothers and sisters, and she deeply loved all of them. She will be truly missed by many! A memorial service will be live streamed Saturday, June 20, 2020 at 2:00 pm via youtube:<https://youtu.be/QVYzupE9J6w>

To send flowers
to the family or plant a tree
in memory of Lucila Balcazar Echeagaray, please visit our floral store.

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Tribute Wall

Lucila Balcazar Echeagaray

LN

Leigh Nieter posted:

Judy and Tatiana, I am so sorry to hear of your mothers passing. She was definitely one of the best people that Ive known in my lifetime. My heart and prayers go out to you guys and your family.

June 12 at 8:00 PM

CB

Chris Bereznay posted:

What a beautiful tribute to your mother. I wish I would have had the opportunity to meet her and get to know her. My thoughts and prayers are for you and your family.

June 9 at 8:00 PM

RE

Rose Echols posted:

It was such a pleasure to become acquainted with Sister Echeagary. She truly was a loving and kind person in every sense. Her smile was contagious and it drew me to her. I lived in Lorain and met her at the library where worked. Basically that was where I had contact with her. We always were able to have rich spiritual conversations together as spiritual sisters. Looking forward to welcoming her back soon to be able to spend forever together!

June 9 at 8:00 PM

LI

Laura Iskenderian posted:

I remember bringing long letters from my mother in law Blanca to Lucila for translation . She would get us something to drink and we would sit and visit while she translated the words into meaning. She had a wonderful warm Smile and her energy was uplifting. I have vivid memories of happy dinners at your home in Oberlin when we were children . All sitting at a long clothed table along a window , Randy running in his diaper , i can aee your mothers smile and hear your daddy's deep voice. My Grandmother admired Lucila so. She touched so many lives and lived a beautiful life. Such an eloquent testimony to the beauty of who she was and all she did to better the communities in which She lived. God Bless you May her love and these memories lift you up during this sad time of loss ᄇᄇ™ᄇᄇ»

June 8 at 8:00 PM

JV

Joyce Vincent posted:

Sincere sympathy and blessings and prayers for the family.

June 8 at 8:00 PM



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Valerie Smith posted:

I remember back to 1974 when Lucila joined our library staff (just a few months after I started work there in February, 1974). Lucila is listed on the library's website history page to this day for the popular cooking demonstration she presented that same year.

<https://www.lorainpubliclibrary.org/about-lpls/history-of-the-library> She was a pleasure to have as a friend and fellow library employee. I am sure that knowing her has enriched the lives of many people through the years. You were truly blessed to have her in your lives and to care for her so lovingly.

June 8 at 8:00 PM



Barbara Schweitzer posted:

Such a beautiful tribute Judy wrote to a most beautiful person. My husband Alan worked with Lucy at Lorain Public Library and always considered her a wonderful friend. I also got to know her and was amazed by her positivity and selflessness. She was truly an angel on earth.

June 8 at 8:00 PM



Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Lucila by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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