

Jose Lopez

Jose Lopez received the Guadalupe Award from Bishop Marion Forst on the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe in 1971. At the time of the presentation, Bishop Forst cited Jose's many years of faithful service and generosity to the Church. Jose was an influential member of the Our Lady of Guadalupe men's club and helped to raise money for the construction of the new church. He kept the financial records of the church in the Village and continues with the upkeep of the present church. When Father Hernandez was hospitalized, Jose visited him daily until his death.

Jose was born on the feast of St. Joseph in 1900 in Mexico City. He went to work for the Santa Fe Railroad in Colorado Springs in 1917. On November 19, 1919, he stopped in Dodge City on his way to Chicago where he was going to look for railroad work. Jose explains that when he saw Our Lady of Guadalupe Church and the Mexican Village, he "felt something different and stayed here."

Father Hernandez married Jose and his wife Francisca on October 10, 1921. In 1935 they moved out of the Mexican Village to a house on the east side of town. At that time they were the only Mexicans there. Jose recalls that some of his neighbors moved away soon



after he arrived. His wife died on March 21, 1966. Jose worked for the railroad in the roundhouse until he retired on October 11, 1965, after 46 years of service. Like so many of the Mexicans who came to Dodge City, his entire working life was spent with the railroad. Jose served Mass for over 50 years and continues to attend Mass daily, a practice he started in 1924.

Margarita Amaro

Margarita Amaro is another member of the parish who received the Guadalupe Award. Her service to the church includes translating the parish bulletin into Spanish and organizing the Spanish choir. She is also active in the Altar Society and the Dodge City Council of Catholic Women.

Margarita is presently the Bilingual Coordinator in the Dodge City Public Library outreach program. Her position gives her the opportunity to become involved with a great many people and activities. She has been involved with teaching English as a second language, aiding those seeking naturalization, helping the handicapped develop handicraft skills and planning the local Mexican-American Heritage Week. She also visits the senior citizens' homes and provides the residents with library materials. Margarita is a life member of the Miller School PTA and a translator for Next Step, the local rape crisis center.

Margarita gives freely of her time and has been recognized for her tireless energy by many organizations. After receiving the Guadalupe Award in 1976, she received the Kappa Rho Diana Award in 1977; the "Women Helping Women" Award from the Dodge City Chapter of Soroptimist International in 1979; the Liberty Bell Award from the Ford-Gray County Bar Association in 1979; an Outstanding Service Award from the Dodge City Lions Club in 1982 and the Good Samaritan Award from Dodge City's Good Samaritan Center in 1982. She is definitely a "living example of the Good Samaritan parable."

Margarita and her husband Victor were married on January 15, 1947. They have five children: Victor, Cecilia, Patricia, John and Arturo.



She and her husband have been responsible for the revival of the Mexican Christmas tradition of Las Posadas (The Inns) in Dodge City. For nine days before Christmas, a group of young pilgrims bearing the Nacimiento (Nativity Scene) on a pallet visit homes seeking an "inn" for the Holy Family. The pilgrims visit a different house each night and sing Spanish songs. The residents deny admittance at first (as is the tradition), but eventually invite them in to share in treats prepared for them. On Christmas Eve the pilgrims end their search to find an inn for the Holy Family at Our Lady of Guadalupe Church. Following a religious ceremony in the church, the entire pilgrimage and many children who have joined the entourage each night, gather in the church basement for the breaking of a pinata and the sharing of gifts and treats. Las Posadas has been reenacted in Dodge City each year since 1976.

Florentina Sanchez

Florentina Sanchez, born on October 16, 1889 in Mexico, is the oldest living member of Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish. Her residency in Dodge City predates the existence of the parish. She and her husband Soledad arrived in Dodge City on May 19, 1910 after having paid two cents to cross the border. They had 13 children: Alvin, Romona, Lena, Rudy, Frank, Asuncion, Gavino, Louis, Isaac, Trinie, Mary, Mary Louise and Anita.

The Sanchez family was admittedly poor, but that did not stop them from sharing joyous family events with those in the Village. Each time the family celebrated a baptism everyone was invited to their home where there was enough food for all. Florentina is remembered by those who lived in the Village as the lady who watered the flowers growing around the church. Flowers usually adorned the altar in the church for Sunday Mass. She also helped unload the materials for the new church at the age of 59.

The Sanchez family moved out of the Village in 1942. Florentina's husband of 55 years died on January 12, 1967.

