

Helen Maes Viscarra-Reno (1945 - 2018)



Helen Viscarra-Reno passed away on July 4 at her home after an extended illness. She was courageous in facing the challenges of her disease, and was most thankful for the faithful presence and support of her family and friends over many months.

Born on December 16, 1945 in Carrizozo, Helen moved to Alamogordo with her family two years later where she continued to be raised by her grandparents, Maria and Hilario Maes. She attended Dudley Elementary School, Alamogordo Junior High School and Alamogordo High School, graduating in the class of 1963. In addition to her grandparents, her large and loving family consisted of her mother and stepfather, Juanita and Jose Delgado, and six brothers and sisters: Joe Delgado, Jr. (deceased in 2009), Jimmy Delgado (Mary), Larry Delgado (Mary Ellen), Felipa Kinsey, Mary Lou Sandoval, and Mary Ann Dietz (Joe).

Helen's first real job would also be her last, a career spanning forty-three years as a dedicated employee of the City of Alamogordo. Beginning in the Water Billing Department, Helen went on to serve as Assistant Finance Director and finally Acting Director of Finance before retiring in December 2014. Serving under a long list of City Managers, Commissioners and Mayors, she was well-known as an advocate for the poor and less educated in their dealings with the City.

Helen's marriage to Stephen G. Shorter in 1964 brought two sons, Stephen G Shorter, Jr. of El Paso and Clovis, and David Delgado Shorter of Los Angeles. She was deeply devoted to her sons during their growing-up years, and remained a proud and loving Mom through her last day. Her first marriage having ended in divorce, Helen married Richard Andrew Viscarra in 1988, a relationship giving her the opportunity to serve as a stepmother to his son, Richard Viscarra (Leia) now of Albuquerque. When Andy, by then a Captain with the Alamogordo Police Department, was diagnosed with a rare form of cancer, she became his nurse and caregiver until his death in 1996. Finally in 2008, Helen married Robert P. Reno, Pastor of First Presbyterian Church of El Paso until 2012, and then of First Presbyterian Church of Alamogordo until his retirement in 2016.

In their time together, Helen and Bob enjoyed visiting family in Albuquerque, Los Angeles, and Atlanta. Helen greatly enjoyed serving as a special friend to Richard and Leia's three sons, Richie, Diego, and Roman, who often visited Alamogordo to attend activities at the Space Center and other events. She was also very fond of her uncle and Padrino, Lucio Maes of Tularosa, and was sorely disappointed when her illness kept her from attending his 90th birthday party on June 2.

Helen always made it a point to keep track of and offer encouragement to numerous nieces and nephews, never forgetting a birthday, baptism, first communion, or graduation. During her long life in Alamogordo, she made many friends, but she was most appreciative for the unfailing love and support of her friend and co-worker, Ronnie Ortega. Words cannot express how much Helen's family and friends meant to her throughout her earthly journey.

A memorial service in witness to the resurrection and celebration of the life of Helen Maes Viscarra-Reno will be held on Saturday, August 4, beginning at 10 am in the sanctuary of St. John's Episcopal Church, 1114 Indiana Avenue, Alamogordo with a dinner reception following in the Parish Hall. The Viscarra-Reno family has entrusted their loved one to the care of Alamogordo Funeral Home to direct the arrangements.