



Rudolph "Rudy" Chavez

November 18, 2011

Well-known educator Rudolph "Rudy" Chavez, 63, a lifelong resident of Belen, passed away unexpectedly on Wednesday, Nov. 16. A beloved husband, father and papo, he was born on Aug. 29, 1948, to Jose Ramon and Josefita P. Chavez, a descendant of a pioneer Belen family. With his parents, brothers and sisters, he worked while growing up in his father Jose Ramon's grocery store and service station on South Main in Belen. In 1970, he married JoAnne, his high school sweetheart. During their 41 years of marriage, he loved nothing better than to spend time with his family. He attended school at St. Mary's, graduating from Belen High School in 1967. With a love for children and a decided talent for working with them, his lifelong ambition was to become a teacher. He earned a bachelor's degree in elementary education from Western New Mexico University in 1971 and, later, a master's degree in education from the University of New Mexico. He had earned 45 credits toward a doctoral degree. He began his teaching career in a sixth-grade classroom at Central Elementary School, working under the mentorship of principal Eloy Padilla. After about a decade of teaching, he was named principal of Henry T. Jaramillo Elementary School, replacing another storied longtime Belen educator, Al Fischer. In 1990, he opened the new La Merced Elementary School in Rio Communities as its first principal. In the late 1990s, he was interim superintendent of the Belen Consolidated Schools. After his retirement, missing his work with youngsters, he returned to his profession, first as principal of St. Mary's School in Belen and then back to the classroom

at Mariposa and Desert View elementary schools in Los Lunas. He retired a second time after a few short years. A lifelong member of Our Lady of Belen Catholic Church, he was thrilled to be named, with Joanne, Fiestas Padrinos in 1994 and Christmas Padrinos in 2010. He also served on the St. Mary's Advisory Board. He was preceded in death by his parents, Jose Ramon and Josefita P. Chavez; his brothers, Robert Silverio Chavez, Bennie Chavez and Ben Chavez; his sisters, Mary Padilla and Susie Artiaga; and a sister-in-law, Lorraine Chavez. Rudy is survived by his loving wife of 41 years, JoAnne; two daughters, Rachel, and husband, Jon Romero, of Seboyeta, and Amy and husband, Mark Garcia, of Los Lunas; four grandchildren, Jenna and Keely Romero of Seboyeta and Aidan and Alex Garcia of Los Lunas; a sister, Florie, and husband, David Chavez, of Los Chavez; a sister-in-law, Frances Chavez; and brothers-in-law, Cayetano Padilla of Jarales and Sal Artiaga of Florida. A viewing will be held at 2 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 20, at Our Lady of Belen Catholic Church followed by a rosary at 3 p.m. Visitation will be held at 9:30 a.m. Monday, Nov. 21, at Our Lady of Belen, with a Funeral Mass following at 10 a.m. Interment will be in the Our Lady of Belen Memorial Gardens. Pallbearers will be James Chavez, Filbert Chavez, Chris Chavez, Damian Aragon, Alfred Padilla and Larry Griego. Sign Rudy's online register book at www.romerofuneralhomenm.com. Romero Funeral Home, 609 N. Main St., Belen.