



Vicente Martinez

February 28, 2011

Vicente J. "Marty" Martinez, age 86, a resident of Los Lunas, N.M., passed away on Saturday, Feb. 26.~ He was born in Vallecitos, N.M.~ He was a life-long Catholic and a member of the San Clemente Parish, in Los Lunas.~ He was also a member of Knights of Columbus~ Espanola Valley Council #3314.~ Growing up, he spent his summers working on the family farm and ranch, but in the fall his mother would take him and his brother and sister to Santa Fe, N.M. where they could receive a better education.~ In Santa Fe, during the height of the Great Depression, Vicente earned extra money by selling the Santa Fe New Mexican newspaper.~ He attended SFHS and was an outstanding football player until he was called to serve his country in WWII.~ At that time, his brother Manuel Martinez, a soldier in the ill-fated 515th Coast Artillery was already listed as missing in action in the Philippines.~ Manuel was taken prisoner by the Japanese army and did not survive the infamous Bataan Death March.~ Vicente never forgot his beloved elder brother who never returned home from war and spoke of him often.~ Vicente proudly served his country in WWII as a United States Army Air Corps staff sergeant and ball turret gunner aboard a B-17 Flying Fortress.~ He flew in 20 bombing missions before being shot down over Hungary and captured by enemy forces.~ Vicente was held as Prisoner of War at Stalag Luft IV.~ During Vicente's last three months as a POW, he and thousands of other American prisoners were forced to leave camp and set out on what would become known as the Black March, a 500 mile journey westward across northern Poland and Germany, as their

German captors retreated from the advancing Soviet army.~ This was a time of extreme hardship and hundreds of men died on this march due to disease, exposure, malnutrition and mistreatment.~ After WWII, Vicente attended New Mexico Highlands University where he earned a Master's Degree in Physical Education.~ He continued his football career at Highlands and was an All-Conference guard for three consecutive years.~ A few days after graduation, he married Barbara Valdez, a student of Library Sciences at Highlands and they eventually had eight children.~ Vicente began a career in teaching and coaching.~ He coached and taught in the Pecos, Tierra Amarilla, El Rito and Los Lunas schools for 36 years.~ He twice coached his El Rito Eagles to Class-B State Basketball Championships and his life-long dedication to youth earned him a place in the Northern Rio Grande Conference Hall of Fame.~ Vicente was recently honored by his former players with a plaque "In appreciation for guiding us and instilling discipline, courage and strength.~ You gave us the skills and tools we needed to go out and succeed always with our motto:~ All for one, one for all."~ Vicente was an avid hunter, fly fisherman and gardener.~ He found these activities recreational as well as useful to help feed his ever growing family.~ He was preceded in death by his wife, Barbara Martinez and two of their daughters, Gloria and Catherine; his parents, Roque Martinez and Aurelia Gonzalez; his brother, Manuel Martinez and his sister, Josefita Lujan.~ Vicente is survived by his children, Phyllis and husband, Charles, David and wife, Anna, Michael and wife, Debbie, Patrick, Albert and Christopher and wife, Jo Dee; nine grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.~ He is also survived by his in-laws, Leo and Margorie Arellano, Henry and Erma Sanchez, Robert Valdez and Connie Beverley.~ All services will be held at San Clemente Parish, beginning with a visitation at 7:00 p.m., on Wednesday, March 2, and a rosary to be recited at 7:30 p.m.~ A final visitation will be held at 9:30 a.m., on Thursday, March 3, with a Funeral Mass to be celebrated at 10:00 a.m.~ Interment will be held at 2:30 p.m. at the Santa Fe National Cemetery.~ Sign Vicente's online register book at www.romerofunerallhomenm.com. Romero Funeral Home~609 N. Main St.~Belen, NM. 87002

Tribute Wall

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“ *I miss my grandpa and grandma very much. I pray for you guys every day. I LOVE YOU BOTH.* ”

Gabriella Martinez - June 10, 2013 at 11:44 PM