



Ismael "Miley" Gonzalez

July 30, 1946 - November 29, 2020

On the morning of Sunday, November 29, 2020, Ismael "Miley" Gonzalez lost his courageous battle with cancer and passed away, peacefully, at the age of 74. He was surrounded by family and friends at his home in the San Simon Valley in southeastern Arizona.

Miley was born in the small town of Ysleta, Texas on July 30th, 1946 to Julio Urive Gonzalez and Maria De La Luz Gonzalez (née Ramirez). Being born into a migrant family, he learned about hard work, dedication, and family at a very young age. These ideals would see him through an amazing life. His earliest memories were of picking fruit in California and after the family settled in San Simon, Arizona, he gained experience raising animals and numerous types of crops. He was an active member of the 4H Club and the Arizona FFA and received many awards from both organizations. He attended the University of Arizona to pursue an undergraduate degree and even worked a couple of holiday breaks at the famous Stanfield feedlot owned by John Wayne. Miley graduated with a BA in agricultural education in 1969. After graduation he was a vocational agricultural teacher in Avondale, Arizona at Agua Fria High School, managed crops in Venezuela, and returned to Arizona to teach agriculture at Parker, AZ. While raising cattle and working various operations in Arizona and northern Mexico he earned his master's degree in agricultural education in 1976 from the University of Arizona. Miley earned his PhD in agricultural and extension education in 1982 from Pennsylvania State

University. During his career he held positions at Penn State, Arizona, Iowa State, Montana State, New Mexico State, and CATIE in Costa Rica. He was the secretary of agriculture for the state of New Mexico, was selected as the Undersecretary for Research, Education, and Economics at USDA by President Clinton in 1997, and in 1998 he was named among the 100 Most Influential Hispanics by Hispanic Business Magazine.

It is true what they say, “a rolling stone gathers no moss.” And anyone who ever met Miley knows he never stopped moving. There were always more projects, ideas, or more importantly, people to help. It is easy to list off the titles and positions he held, his professional accomplishments; and they are too numerous for this tribute. But the things he never forgot were his friends and family, and his greatest impact was on all of us. This nature he inherited from his parents; remember your community and your duty to those around you. Even at home, we can all recall the tireless man working on something on the car or house, planning a visit to an exotic location, or cooking. For those that knew him, know that he expressed his love through food and always loved to entertain friends and family and regale them with tales from the six continents he visited many times over. If you were fortunate enough to sample his creations, you can still remember the taste of his pozole, green chile guiso, or his famous holiday cheeseball. I recall someone asking him where he goes to eat good Mexican food, while living in Iowa, to which he replied, “my kitchen.” Possessing a razor wit, a keen intellect, and an affable nature made him easy to love. For if you did know him, you couldn’t help but do that. He was always willing to open his home to someone in need and lend an ear if you had a problem. His time was never more important than someone needing him. Inspiring to the end, he had the spirit of his ancestors, an Eagle Warrior waiting to take flight and return home.

Miley is survived by his wife, Julie. His brother and his wife Rick and Belinda Gonzalez. His brother Julio Gonzalez. His sister and her husband Olga and

Bill Pride. His daughters and their husbands Carmela and Jeff Thode, Jennifer and Chad Casady, and Marina and Mike Garrison. His sons and their wives Andrew and Victoria Hesler, and Damian and Jaime Gonzalez. His 12 grandchildren and 5 great-grandchildren.

In lieu of flowers, please consider donations to the following scholarship funds that have been established in his name. They continue his dedication to education and access to higher learning.

<http://weblink.donorperfect.com/AZFFAFoundationDonation>

<https://catie.ac.cr/en/hacer-una-donacion.html>

A memorial service will take place at a future time.

Tribute Wall



“ *Ismael "Miley" Gonzalez*

January 30, 2023 at 12:50 AM



“ *Dearest Julie and Family, my sincerest condolences on Miley's passing. We have lost a great man. I will always treasure my wonderful memories of the many years I worked with Miley at New Mexico State University. He was passionate about 4H and FFA his entire life. He was passionate about ensuring that all people had access to higher education. He was so proud of his family and roots. He certainly loved nuestra comida and I would always remind him that Hatch chile was the best chile in the world. We shared so many great laughs and great stories. Julie, you were always by Miley's side and helped him shine. God bless you all! Vaya con Dios, Miley!*

Christina Chavez Kelley - January 23, 2021 at 01:44 PM



“ *Dear Julie and Family, I'm sending you my love and prayers for the loss of Dr. G. He was a wonderful man to know work for and to have worked for. I have never forgotten his and your kindness when he worked in AXED at NMSU. Please accept my condolences for your loss.*

Lupe Dominguez-Flores - December 18, 2020 at 08:16 AM



“ *I am so saddened for your loss Julie. My condolences to you and the family. God bless you and I send prayers your way. 🙏❤️*

Betty Jo Garza - December 17, 2020 at 04:46 PM

NM

“ Our deepest condolences to all of the Gonzalez Family. God welcomed Miley into Heaven with open arms for sharing His love with others through the life he lived. I remember Olga speaking fondly and affectionately regarding her brothers when we were both students and beginning our friendship at Cochise College. Yogi and Bill, our prayers are with you and all of your family. Fondly, Bob and Norma Mena

Norma Mena - December 16, 2020 at 12:50 AM

OP

Thank you Bob & Norma for your kind words. It is a great loss. We miss our big brother immensely.
Love,
Bill & Yogie

Olga Pride - January 02, 2021 at 11:26 AM

SC

“ My sincere condolences to Julie and the entire family. Miley was such an inspiration and beacon of hope to my husband and I. When Rick received his diagnosis he stated he would fight like Miley, and not let this darned cancer get in the way of living life to the max. He will be missed, but his presence will be felt for generations.

Shannon Cox - December 15, 2020 at 01:59 PM

AE

“ My condolences to Miley's family. I had the pleasure of working with him at New Mexico State University in the field of Research Administration. I always found him to be professional and down to earth - a kind soul.

Ancelmo Encinias - December 15, 2020 at 08:24 AM

MA

“ Martha lit a candle in memory of Ismael
"Miley" Gonzalez



Martha - December 07, 2020 at 09:24 AM

RL

“ Robert and Martha Lentz purchased the Healing
Tears - Blue and White for the family of Ismael
"Miley" Gonzalez.



Robert and Martha Lentz - December 07, 2020 at 09:01 AM

RL

“ Robert Lentz lit a candle in memory of Ismael
"Miley" Gonzalez



Robert Lentz - December 07, 2020 at 08:53 AM

SJ

“ Shelly Jacobs lit a candle in memory of
Ismael "Miley" Gonzalez



Shelly Jacobs - December 04, 2020 at 01:27 PM

LM

“ *Licurgus S Mahan lit a candle in memory of Ismael "Miley" Gonzalez*



licurgus S Mahan - December 02, 2020 at 07:10 AM