



Mary R. Ontiveros

February 19, 2022

Our beloved Mary “Nini” Renee Ontiveros of Fort Collins passed away on Saturday, February 19th at the age of 70. She was born on April 13, 1951, in Pueblo, Colorado to Sara and Joe Ontiveros, Jr., and spent most of her adult life in Fort Collins. After graduating from high school in 1969, she left to start her journey at Colorado State University where she became a life-long Ram for fifty-one years. As a first-generation college student, Mary earned her Bachelor of Science degree in Psychology and Master’s degree in Student Affairs in Higher Education. She married Billy L. Burt (on June 5, 1976) whom she met while attending Colorado State University. They welcomed their son, Matthew in 1983, who instantly became a loyal and enthusiastic member of the Ram family.

Inspired by her father’s political activism and the movements and marches that were happening across the country in the 60’s and 70’s, Mary took this spirit to heart in becoming a leader for education equity. Serving in the varied leadership positions that she held at the university, she has been well-described and widely-respected as a “CSU Pillar.” From serving as the executive director of admissions, associate vice president in the Division of Enrollment and Access, a faculty member in the School of Education, and consultant to CSU Pueblo, to her most recent position as CSU’s first vice president for diversity, Mary’s transformative impacts influenced not only administrators, faculty, and staff, but especially the thousands of students

whom she supported over the years.

Mary's many hobbies included her love of reading and working on puzzles. She enjoyed painting, going to the movies, playing golf, and, of course, cheering on the Rams in football, basketball, and volleyball games. Her greatest joy, though, was being surrounded by family.

She was preceded in death by her parents, sister Josephine Self, brother Joe Ontiveros, nephews Augustine Guzman II, Austin Powers, and brother-in-law Donald Biehl.

She is survived by her husband Billy, son Matthew, her sisters Rebecca Ontiveros (and David Perez) of Trinidad, Colorado, Teresa Biehl of Plano, Texas, Dolores (and Augie) Guzman of Fort Collins, and her nephews and nieces, Bennett Self, Michael Biehl, Jolene Rogers, Lyndsay Johnson, Sara Self, Joey Guzman, Joseph Ontiveros, Ricky Guzman, Hauna Kelly-Ontiveros, and brother-in-law James Self.

Visitation will be held from 10:00 until 10:45 a.m., on Monday, February 28th at Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic Parish. Funeral services begin at 11:00 a.m. with a reception to follow. The interment at Grandview Cemetery, Fort Collins, will be held at approximately 2:30 p.m.

A second memorial service will be held at 11 a.m. on Friday, April 22, 2022 at St. Joseph's Catholic Church, Pueblo, CO. Please visit goesfuneralcare.com to read Mary's full obituary.

In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation to the Ontiveros Latinx Fellowship Program, courtesy of the Colorado State University Foundation, <https://advancing.colostate.edu/ONTIVEROSLATINXFELLOWSHIP>.

Previous Events

Memorial Service

APR **22**. 11:00 AM (MT)

St. Joseph Catholic Church
1145 S. Aspen Road
Pueblo, CO 81006

Tribute Wall



“ *Mary R. Ontiveros*

October 25, 2022 at 06:14 PM



“ *It is hard to write these few words. It is impossible to encapsulate everything Mary did In words. It would take us a lifetime to unpack the ways in which Mary contributed to our lives and to our community.*

Mary was unstoppable, a steady force that propelled us in so many ways to be better, to do better, to examine ourselves: as individuals and as a collective.

At work, I always marveled at the job of people helping her with her schedule as thousands, not hipérbole, sought her guidance, mentorship, and comfort. At yet, when I was with Mary she was fully present, fully there. I can say Mary could see me more clearly than sometimes I see myself.

Mary was my friend for over 6 years. She was a mentor, a lineage holder, a source of comfort and wisdom. During a super difficult time in my life, one of those that helps you define who is truly a friend, who truly believes in you or not, Mary came as a heroine with shiny armor and defended me with the fierceness of a mother.

I will miss how her presence shifted a room, I would miss her beautiful ideas, her love for people, her conviction in a world that could do better for people of color. Her assurance that the long game was on our side, her humor, her honesty, her love for me.

I will miss more than anything her laughter and her smile. How even in the darkest of times, her smile was a beacon for my soul to rest.

And as Tony Frank said today, “but more than anything, I will miss my friend”

Johanna Ulloa - February 28, 2022 at 09:23 AM

JP

“ As a Chicana student at CSU from 1970-76, (and also from Pueblo County), I have many great memories of students like Mary, who kept their promise to assist other minority students realize the dream of a higher education and form a commitment to serve their communities. May her memory serve to give solace to her family and inspiration to others. Lo siento, que descanse en paz.

Judith Casias Peasley - February 28, 2022 at 05:45 AM

BC

“ De la familia Cosyleon en Pueblo, Colorado en este tiempo muy dificil les mandamos el pesame. Que la Virgen de Guadalupe la bendiga en la Gloria.
Domino Vobiscum
Bonifacio Cosyleon
CSU Sys. - BOG 2008

Bonifacio Cosyleon - February 26, 2022 at 04:25 PM

“The Pueblo Central High School community, in its entirety, is deeply, deeply saddened to learn of Mary's passing. Mary never forgot where and who she came from, and, though Ft. Collins became her adult lifetime home, Pueblo AND her Alma Mater, Pueblo Central High School, remained in her heart and at the core of her "roots." Mary had one of the most profound, life-changing effects upon the Wildcat family when she created the "CSU Alliance" Partnership with 10 Colorado high schools. By including Central High into that circle, she opened the door for any Central graduate who can achieve CSU's admissions requirements, to attend and obtain educational opportunities and goals that may have, prior to, seemed impossible or very difficult. Mary believed in the students at Central because those that have attended CSU-Ft. Collins have done exceedingly well, just like Mary and her family. Just like Mary, she believed that if it were not a crippling financial burden to the parents, CSU-Ft. Collins was an ideal place to further one's education and succeed in life, as Mary and her siblings had done. But, most importantly, she wanted youth to seek further education, regardless, in order to open up more and new doors to them! We mourn the loss of our champion, our crusader, our cheerleader, our friend, our alum extraordinaire. As students, staff and countless others walk past the Central High School "Wall of Honor," they will see Mary Ontiveros, Class of 1969, celebrated and recognized for all of her accomplishments, achievements, success, and most of all, being the amazingly intelligent, kind, accepting, magnificent, admirable, generous, friendly and loving woman and proud Central grad, who grew up "in the Blocks, right behind Pass Key," as she always told our kids on her many visits to Central. They were her and she was them.

Dear Mary, may you be restored and at peace in your Heavenly home. Thank you for changing the lives of countless young people, inspiring them beyond their own imaginations, actually changing this world for the better, for greater and equal opportunities, for more fair practices, for giving voice and a "hand up" to groups of underserved, unheard people. You personify Wildcat Pride and the

best of both it and Ram Country. Through your beautiful family and through the thousands of students and through your lasting impact upon diversity and policies that have forever better changed CSU-Ft. Collins, and for those students and parents of the 10 Alliance high schools, your legacy remains beyond our measure of time.

You became not only my mentor and advisor and supporter, you, most importantly, became and remained my friend who blessed my life like no other. I cherish you forever in my memories and my heart. I shall miss you immensely, beloved friend.

Heartfelt sympathy to her family, colleagues and friends. Let us celebrate a life so powerful and positive, fulfilling and rewarding. What a blessing and privilege to honor Mary. Peace and comfort to all.

*Lois Conatore-Houpe,
Central graduate, retired faculty member, Alliance ambassador and friend*

Lois Conatore-Houpe - February 25, 2022 at 08:44 AM

LW

“*Matthew, My most sincere condolences to you and your family in the loss of your mom. May you hold your most cherished memories of her close to your heart.*

Leilani Weirich

Leilani Weirich - February 24, 2022 at 11:31 AM

DE

“ I remember Mary as a loving, caring person. Whenever there were celebrations for the family they were usually held at Marys home. If they were happy or sad celebrations Mary was always there to celebrate with the family. Dolores I am so sorry for the loss of your great sister.

Debbie and Michael Weddle

Debbie - February 23, 2022 at 02:44 PM

IM

“ Condolences. Our sincere condolences for Mary Ontiveros family

Iraj and Shireen Mazaheri - February 23, 2022 at 02:01 PM