



## Wilma Elliott

December 19, 1918 - October 14, 2008

Wilma Faye Elliott was born December 19, 1918, to Loretta Dantice and Vernon Hone Sanderson at the home they built on the Seven Mile Road north of Monte Vista, Colorado. Her parents met in the San Luis Valley after moving there from different parts of Missouri. Her paternal grandparents were Elizabeth Caroline Hone and William James Sanderson. Her maternal grandparents, James Lafayette Dantice and Eliza Jane Ash, died before their family moved to Colorado. After a short illness, Wilma passed away in the Poudre Valley Hospital in Fort Collins surrounded by family on October 14, 2008. She was a strong and vibrant eighty-nine year old, just two months short of her ninetieth birthday. Wilma attended Sargent Community School and the Sargent Community Church and graduated with the class of 1937. As a high school senior, she drove a school bus, as did her daughter many years later. She attended Colorado Women's College in Denver for two years and finished her degree at Colorado State Teachers College in Greeley where she was a member of a sorority. While in college, she joined the Episcopal Church. Wilma was a Sargent girl. As a schoolgirl, she played the piano and the accordion, rode her horse, and spent time with her brothers, friends, and a large extended family. While she was in high school, she met Cy/Thad Elliott who was a Monte guy. Being in Rainbow Girls and Demolay, respectively, they enjoyed those Rainbow dances in Monte Vista. Cy followed Wilma to college in Greeley. Wilma's mother insisted she get a teaching degree along with her business degree. She taught in Atwood, Colorado, and at Bear Creek High

School in the Denver area, which was then a small country school. She also worked as a bookkeeper in both Denver and Monte Vista. Wilma and Cy were married in Santa Fe on July 18, 1942. After WWII, Cy finished his education in Greeley, and they returned to Monte Vista for Cy to teach in the Monte Vista schools. Over the years, Wilma and Cy entered the farming profession. They built a wonderful life for themselves and their three children, Debbie, Thad, and Dona. Together they raised sheep and grew potatoes, alfalfa, and barley. Wilma's bookkeeping and accounting skills were an integral part of the business. She made most of her daughters' clothes, to include a wedding dress. She lived moderately, accepted with grace what came her way, never complained, and always expected the best. She was a spiritual human being who savored the sunsets, the birds outside her window, and all the seasons on the farm. She took great pride that all her children and grandchildren finished their college educations. Wilma and Cy celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on July 18, 1992, with all of their children and grandchildren at the cabin. Cy passed away on February 13, 2001, at home in Monte Vista. During her lifetime, she enjoyed many activities. Bridge was one of her favorites. Many of her friendships were formed during WWII when the men were overseas and the wives got together for bridge club. At one time, she was in three bridge groups. She was also active in a local extension club. Wilma and Cy's potluck group began following the war and continued throughout most of their lives. When Cy was a Rio Grande County Commissioner, they enjoyed traveling to meetings around the state. They felt fortunate to travel to Germany, Austria, and Italy when Dona taught in Brindisi, Italy. They also enjoyed trips to Hawaii, Lake Powell, New York City, Washington, D.C., California, New Mexico, the Southwest, and the Southeast. A special trip was a cruise in the Caribbean to celebrate their fiftieth anniversary. Wilma was a Cub Scout Den leader, a 4-H sewing teacher, a P.T.A parent volunteer, and a Sunday school teacher at the Sargent Community Church. A great memory is the P.T.A. mothers teaching the junior high students how to dance in the school cafeteria! Wilma and Cy took great interest in their children and

grandchildren's activities. Wilma always felt a need to be informed over the years using the World Book encyclopedia and World Atlas for information. She never entered the "google era" but she knew how to access information. She used her computer to do the books and to play bridge, and she enjoyed her daily paper, crossword puzzle, and Sudoku. Books, to include library books, enriched her life. Wilma's passion was her family. She was a matriarch in every sense of the word, and her family was devoted to her. Wilma made her home for sixty years on the Five Mile Road north of Monte Vista where she always welcomed her growing family. Everyday, Wilma looked to the west to see the beautiful San Juan Mountains beyond her flower garden and to the east to see the Sand Dunes and the Sangre de Cristo Mountains. She and Cy enjoyed picnicking on the Rio Grande River and taking care of their cabin at the Legion Park between South Fork and Creede. Wilma, like her mother, loved having a beautiful lawn and garden. Thanks to her son, she was able to enjoy her later years in her own home. She looked forward to her daughters' daily phone calls and the upcoming visits of family and friends. All will miss her homemade applesauce, rhubarb pie, and Danish Christmas roll. She was her family's liaison between the past and present. Her husband, Cy Elliott, parents, Loretta and Vernon Sanderson, special aunt Leafy Travis, and brothers Keith and Calvin Sanderson preceded her in death. Two daughters, one son, two sons-in-law, and one daughter-in-law to include Debbie and Tom Graff of Fort Collins, Thad and Deanne Elliott, who live in the home where Wilma was born and raised, and Dona and Jim Force of Annapolis, Maryland, survive her. Her grandchildren are David and Jamee Graff and great grandchildren Ellie, Ryan, Marc, and Addie of Elmendorf Air Force Base, Anchorage, Alaska; Amy and Tracy Terrell and great granddaughters Madison, Megan, and Katelyn of Medicine Bow, Wyoming; Kevin and Brooke Graff of Centennial, Colorado; Emily and Kyler Brown of Reno, Nevada; Carrie Elliott of Breckenridge; Laura Elliott of Arcata, California; and great grandson Kelton Force of Maryland. Her children, grandchildren, and community are the

beneficiaries of her great generosity. Many nieces and nephews and special friends also survive her. A memorial service will be planned in Monte Vista. At that time, her ashes will be buried in the family plot at the Monte Vista cemetery. Watch the newspaper and email for notice of this event. The memorial may be in December, but the plans are tentative. Memorials in Wilma's memory may go to Monte Vista Carnegie Library in care of Wilma Elliott Memorial, Carnegie Public Library, Attention: Carol Lee Dugan or Becky Gossard, 120 Jefferson, Monte Vista, CO 81144

# Tribute Wall



“ *Wilma Elliott*

October 25, 2022 at 06:14 PM



“ *I will always remember going to the Elliotts and playing in their playroom. Wilma was a great lady and I'll always remember her sweet smile.*

**Karen Deacon** - October 14, 2008 at 12:00 AM



“ *I knew Wilma from many years ago while I was at the Air Force Academy. But my memories are fond and lasting. And I know what she meant to her family. That is perhaps the greatest tribute.*

**Kenneth Hudacsko** - October 14, 2008 at 12:00 AM



“ *What an incredible lady. Totally living her life to the fullest! I can see she was involved in many activities and she had a devoted family! My thoughts and prayers are with the family!*

**Helen Kaplan** - October 14, 2008 at 12:00 AM



“ *Wilma was one of the class mothers who looked after us all; we appreciate that much more now than we appeared to then.*

**Gary Dillon** - October 14, 2008 at 12:00 AM

DH

“ *Dona/Jim and your family. Please accept our condolences. Wilma seemed to have lived a rich, full life. I wish I had known her personally. I believe I now know where Dona gets her spunk and spirit. I hope you are comforted by the warm, loving memories. All our love, Denise & Wayne*

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**Denise & Wayne Handschur** - October 14, 2008 at 12:00 AM

JG

“ *Wilma was always so kind to put up with a bunch of renegades from high school when we had stay up all night slumber parties. Don't know how she did it but we always had fun at the Elliott home.*

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**JoAnne (Chambers) Good** - October 14, 2008 at 12:00 AM

FS

“ *Debbie, So sorry for the loss of your mother. What a lovely lady. May the memories of your happy times with her in Monte Vista be a comfort to you at this time.  
Love, Karen Schaffter*

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**Fran, Donna & Bryan Sutherland** - October 14, 2008 at 12:00 AM

AS

“ *I feel so very blessed to have been able to share your mother with you. She was a kind, caring and welcoming woman who will leave us all with such wonderful memories. My thoughts are with you, Debbie, and you loving family. Abbie*

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**Abbie Schnorr** - October 14, 2008 at 12:00 AM

VT

“ *What a beautiful tribute you wrote about your Mom. I am thinking of all of you and your loss. I cannot even imagine your sadness with the loss of your Mom. She was a very special person and reminds me so much of my Mom. I will never forget her helping me sew that dress we made when I visited at their home when we were in college. Love you and am thinking of you. Vicki*

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**Vicki Townsend** - October 14, 2008 at 12:00 AM

VC

“ *Your Mom sounded like a remarkable woman. She was so involved throughout her life. I know how special your relationships with your Mom and Dad were to you. May your special memories help at this time with your grief. I love the image of the two birds flying toward the mountains! They are reunited and soaring together again, how beautiful.*

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**Vickie Coover** - October 14, 2008 at 12:00 AM

KH

“ *The world has lost a true lady. My deepest sympathies to her wonderful family - Dona, Thad and Debbie*

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**Ken Howerton** - October 14, 2008 at 12:00 AM

SW

“ What a fulfilling life your mom had! Her three children are testimony to the fact of what a great mother she was. Each one of you carries a part of her in your heart and in the daily things that you do in your life. You know she was so very proud of all of you. Her love of life and love of education/books is being passed on to each one of you. This is her legacy that you will now pass on to your own children/grandchildren/great grandchildren. What an extraordinary lady she was! When I view the mountains from farmland and see the birds in the air, I will always think of your mom. My thoughts and prayers are with all of your family at this time. Love, Sue

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**Sue Wintheiser** - October 14, 2008 at 12:00 AM

BS

“ I never met Wilma, but having grown up in the San Luis Valley, I enjoyed reading about her life. Wilma certainly raised a beautiful daughter - Debbie. I know you miss your mother; I will visit soon so you can tell me more about her. My thoughts and prayers are with you and your family. Sincerely, Beth

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**Beth Sunderman** - October 14, 2008 at 12:00 AM

BC

“ It sounds like your mother lived her life to the fullest. What a great role model for young people. I'm sorry for your loss. Blessings, Barbara and Clayton Schwerin

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**Bob Cook** - October 14, 2008 at 12:00 AM

KF

“ Wilma was a wonderful parent as we could see in the children that we had as students. Our thoughts and prayers are with you at this time of your loss.

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**Keith & Claudette Fisher** - October 14, 2008 at 12:00 AM

MG

“ To Wilma's Family, Our sincere condolences on the loss of your Mom and Grandmother. We both enjoyed knowing Wilma, as she was such an engaging and kind person. We remember fondly our County Commissioner conferences that we attended together. She was always so proud of her family and we knew her family was such an important part of her life. She'll be dearly missed. We hope your wonderful memories of her will be a comfort in the days ahead. Our thoughts are with you. Marsha and Tim Gallagher

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**Marsha and Tim Gallagher** - October 14, 2008 at 12:00 AM

JG

“ Wilma will always hold a special place in my heart. She was a wonderful person and had such kindness for everyone. Bless you Wilma, My love, JoAnn:)

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**JoAnn Gulczynski** - October 14, 2008 at 12:00 AM

GS

“ Wilma was the sweetest, kindest lady and she will be missed. She always reminded me of my nana, Arlene Blakey, her close friend. I always heard such wonderful things about Cy and Wilma from my grandparents, Rix and Arlene, and I know both couples were close, life-long friends. I'm sure Papa, Nana, and Cy have been waiting for Wilma to join them for awhile and we can rest assure knowing that they are all finally together again. Love you Elliotts!!

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**Gretchen Senne** - October 14, 2008 at 12:00 AM

CD

“ What a great lady, which was obvious in many ways, but especially because of the wonderful family she raised. My sympathies are with you, and you are in my prayers. Love, Mary

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**Carol Lee Dugan** - October 14, 2008 at 12:00 AM

HW

“ *Debbie, Thad, and Dona - My deepest sympathy for the loss of your mother - I know she was a wonderful lady because she had wonderful children - what a rich full life she led! My thoughts are with you - Helen*

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**Helen Gilbreath Weed** - October 14, 2008 at 12:00 AM

CW

“ *Debbie, Thad and Dona - I am sending sincere condolences from the 3 Worth girls. My, don't we have the best memories of our parents enjoying Stampede! We were so lucky to be raised in the San Luis Valley! Your mom was a very special lady! May the memories of her keep a smile upon your faces. Always, Cathy, Vicki and Janet*

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**Cathy (Worth) Woolley** - October 14, 2008 at 12:00 AM

LL

“ *Wilma was one of my BEST FRIENDS MOM!! who I always looked up to and enjoyed her laughter and never ending smile!! She always welcomed me into their home which was like my own home full of life and most of all LOVE!! I will miss Wilma very much!! But the most important thing that Wilma & Cy taught all their children's friends is that we were always welcome in a most humble and loving manner!! That we all counted, and that their generation gave us so much to be thankful for, most of all their LOVE OF FAMILY!! PEACE BE WITH CY & WILMA FOREVER!! Larry*

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**Larry Linville** - October 14, 2008 at 12:00 AM

TB

“ Thad, Deanne and family: We were so sorry to hear about Wilma's passing. We had just commented on what a vibrant and energetic woman she was, but it was her time to go and she will missed greatly by all. May God be your strength through this time. God Bless

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**Tim & Marci Bachicha** - October 14, 2008 at 12:00 AM

JE

“ Our thoughts and prayers go out to you. It was really nice that your mom got to stay at home all this time, Thad. I know what good care you gave her, especially since your dad died. We pray for Deanne every day. Hope she is feeling better.

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**Jim and Debbie Ehrlich** - October 14, 2008 at 12:00 AM

DS

“ We send our most sincere sympathy at the passing of Wilma. She was a brave and gallant lady. We appreciate that your way has been most difficult recently, and we do send you our best wishes. We know that good memories of our mothers are a great comfort, and we trust this will be true for you, too. Sincerely, Don and Peg Schall

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**Don and Peg Schall** - October 14, 2008 at 12:00 AM

MN

“ Tom, Debbie, Thad, Deanne, Jim, Dona, and family, You are all in my thoughts and prayers, and I love you very much. It is hard to believe that all four of our precious parents are no longer on this earth. Cy and Wilma were always my second set of parents. The Blakey/Elliotts were blessed with a very special relationship. I will always remember all of the good times we have had together and will continue to have together. Love, Stan and Ramona

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**Marilyn and Ed Nix** - October 14, 2008 at 12:00 AM

SV

“ Sending my love to Donna and your whole family. Let's be sure and keep in touch. I have very fond memories of our school years together and your whole family. Much Love, Shirley and Darrel

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**Shirley Vanlwarden** - October 14, 2008 at 12:00 AM

EH

“ I will always remember the family reunions out at aunt Loretta and Uncle Vernon's home in Sargent. Aunt Molly, Lesley and all of the other aunts and cousins in the kitchen, along with your mom, cooking up a storm. And all of us kids getting underfoot! Your Mom was always there and your Dad too, trying to help where they could. (You've got to admit we could be a challenge.) Ahh, what great memories. I often find myself driving by that beautiful old home and wondering who lives there now. Please let me know when services will be. Deepest Condolences. Edelynn

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**Edelynn Haefeli-Finehout** - October 14, 2008 at 12:00 AM

RB

“ I cannot believe you are gone. My thoughts and prayers are with your family, especially with Dona, as they cope with your loss. I am so glad I was able to know you, and know what a grand person you were. Love, Robin

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**Robin Blanchard** - October 14, 2008 at 12:00 AM

JH

“ Debbie, Thad, Dona, I'm sorry about the passing of your mother! She always had a smile on her face. All of you are a great testimony to what a great mother and person Wilma was. What a privilege to have known her. She will be greatly missed by the community.

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**Jeff Hinkley** - October 14, 2008 at 12:00 AM

GS

“ Dear Debbie, Thad, and Dona, We will really miss our Wilma. I remember staying at the Elliott's house growing up and feeling so welcomed and comfortable because of Wilma's quiet and gentle manner. We always loved Wilma and all the Elliotts! Our thoughts and prayers are with you. What a remarkable woman and family. Love, The Sennes

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**Gloria and David Senne** - October 14, 2008 at 12:00 AM

DS

“ We are so sorry to hear that Wilma has passed. She was a wonderful person, always so personable and outgoing whenever we would visit. So warm, friendly and gracious, she lived a full life and will be missed greatly. Our thoughts and prayers are with you. From: Darrel, Kerry, Connor and Kara

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**Darrel and Kerry Schueler** - October 14, 2008 at 12:00 AM

BC

“ To The Families of Wilma Elliott, We were so saddened to hear the news about Wilma. We know you must all miss her dearly. We so much enjoyed our conversations with her over the years when we were celebrating various events with Tom and Debbie Graff and Family. We were always so inspired by her enthusiasm for life. Please know that our thoughts and prayers are with all of you. Bill, Meagan and Natalie Cotton

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**Bill, Meagan and Natalie Cotton** - October 14, 2008 at 12:00 AM

LI

“ *Dona was the first teacher that I met when we entered our new school about 20 years ago. She has been a bright and shining dear friend ever since. I had the good fortune of meeting her dear parents and she was able to meet mine. Dona and I often shared the great similarities between her parents and mine. Both remarkable couples, loved by devoted family and friends. My Mom also had the love of sunsets and birds just like Wilma. My Mom also died at age 89, 2 months before turning 90. She, like Wilma, was vibrant and energetic. After my Mom's service we watched in amazement as two geese arose up from the water and parted as one headed toward the "heavens". It was symbolic to us of our Mom leaving our Dad. Just as in the story of the two birds joining, symbolic of Wilma joining Cy. I believe that some day two geese will rise up from the water and head upward together as my Dad joins my mother. Dona and I have been truly lucky to have such remarkable, dear Mom's. My thoughts are with all of her family and friends at this time.*

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**Lin Irey** - October 14, 2008 at 12:00 AM

LS

“ I was so saddened by the death of Wilma. I have so many fond memories of growing up on the "Five Mile Road" and the Elliott family. Many years have passed since those times, but the memories will always remain. My sympathies to Debbie, Thad and Dona. You are in my thoughts and prayers. May the following poem bring your family peace in your time of grief. In Memory of You I find an old photograph and see your smile. As I feel your presence anew, I am filled with warmth and my heart remembers love. I read an old card sent many years ago during a time of turmoil and confusion. The soothing words written then still caress my spirit and bring me peace. I remember who you used to be the laughter we shared and wonder what you have become. Where are you now, Where did you go, When the body is left behind and the spirit is released to fly? Perhaps you are the morning bird singing joyfully at sunrise, or the butterfly that dances so carelessly on the breeze or the rainbow of colors that brightens a stormy sky or the fingers of afternoon mist delicately reaching over the mountains or the final few rays of the setting sun lighting up the skies edging the clouds with a magical glow. I miss your being but I feel your presence, In whatever form you choose to take, however you now choose to be. Your spirit has become for me a guardian angel on high guiding, advising, and watching over me. I remember you. You are with me and I am not afraid.

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**Lee (Leland) Sanderson** - October 14, 2008 at 12:00 AM

CS

“ I love you, Wilma. I am so sad you are gone and sad I didn't get to say goodbye. Yet I am comforted to know your passing was so peaceful and that you were surrounded by love. Our families were (and still are) such great friends. What a gift to grow up with you, Debbie, my best childhood friend, and with your family. Wilma had many talents which were beautifully expressed in her obituary. What I remember most, is how comfortable and warm your home was in every way. In later years, it remained a joy to visit Wilma ---- always welcomed with a big hug, something to drink, and conversation around the kitchen table, while looking out the picture window at the bird, flowers, and the San Juans. I was always amazed at how very sharp she was and what a positive and grateful attitude she maintained. Somehow I would leave feeling a little lighter after a visit with Wilma. My mind keeps picturing that Miner/Elliott spot on the 5 Mile Road and realizing how still and quiet it must be there now. But don't you know----Cy and Wilma and John and Ardell are probably never really very far away, still watching over their "broods" from afar.

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**Carolyn Skinner** - October 14, 2008 at 12:00 AM

RT

“ I'll always remember that quiet smile and gentle way of Wilma's-- even as you, Debbie, were cutting up your mother's wedding dress to make me a gift. She made you feel that whatever you did, or whoever you were was just fine. The chaos whirled around her as she enjoyed from the sidelines. It is hard to imagine almost all of the 4 & 5 mile teams are not with us now. It's a joy to look back and see the framework all these parents created for us. Debbie, Thad and Dona -- my condolences to you all. Debbie, thanks for being in my life.

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**Rebecca Thompson** - October 14, 2008 at 12:00 AM

VT

“ *Debbie and Tom. I am so saddened to hear about the death of your mom. I know she meant the world to you and you have spread her love and kindness to all your friends and students through the years. Our hearts are with you at this time. Love, Val & Dan*

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**Valerie Teska** - October 14, 2008 at 12:00 AM

AL

“ *Our heartfelt condolences to all of you. We wish you peace in your hearts this holiday season. One of you get that danish christmas roll recipe and start baking!  
Wilma will be missed here on earth but Cy is rejoicing he gets to spend Christmas with her this year!  
You are in our thoughts and prayers.*

*Love,  
The Logan Family*

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**Ann and Brent Logan** - October 14, 2008 at 12:00 AM

MR

“ *Thad, and to the rest of the family am so sorry for your loss. Your mother was one great lady. May God be with all of you and all of you must know that your mother is now at peace with the Lord.*

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**Merlin Rich** - October 14, 2008 at 12:00 AM

LR

“ Am very sorry for her loss,not able to visit (Aunt Wilmas) & Cy before they past on. I loved their daughter Debbie for years ( puppy love ). I have always missed them and family. Loved her pies with real milk. Ate Wilmas Christmas Rolls for 11 years. I was force to go to school in San Francisco at the age of 12. They were very wonderful people. Always treated me like family. Will miss both of them.

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**Lauren W. Ruybal** - October 14, 2008 at 12:00 AM