



**Enrique E. Guerra**

Enrique E. Guerra, age 86, died peacefully on Wednesday, the 16th of March 2016, at the family ranch in Linn, Texas. He was preceded in death by his dear wife of 64 years, the late Lydia Lopez Negrete de Guerra, who recently died in January of this year; and by his parents, Enrique E. Guerra, Sr. and Judith Fernandez de Guerra. A man who loved his family, Enrique is survived by his six children, Lydia G. Dewey (+Guillermo), Judith G. DeLeon (Edward), Regina G. Garcia (Jose Refugio), Enrique “Kiko” E. Guerra III (Melissa), Jose “Che” Manuel Guerra (Becky), and Juan Carlos Guerra (Luisa); his grandchildren, Lydia Lorena Dewey Gutierrez (Ivan), Guillermo Dewey-Guerra, Regina Fernanda Garcia, Daniela Mariel Garcia, Jose Refugio Garcia II, Enrique Eduardo Guerra IV, Diego Andres Guerra, Lorenzo Tomas Guerra, Jose Manuel Guerra, Jr., Francisco Luis Guerra, Rebecca Elizabeth Guerra, and Luisa Fernanda Guerra; and by his 4 great-grandchildren.

Born in McAllen, Enrique went to Lincoln Grammar School in 1936. He then proceeded to Austin to attend St. Edwards Military Academy in 1943, and St. Edwards University in 1946. He returned home after his Father’s death to care for his Mother. He met and married his wife, Lydia, in 1951, in Mexico. He spent 38 years farming and cattle ranching in Mexico before finally moving to his beloved ancestral ranch, San Vicente, near Linn.

Enrique Guerra, a twelfth-generation Texan, was always the consummate gentleman and a conservator of his family’s early history in Texas. His ancestors arrived in the Rio Grande Valley in the mid-1700s during the early Nueva España colonization of the province of Nuevo Santander. At the turn of the century in 1908, Enrique’s father, his brothers and his Grandfather, Diodoro Guerra, were instrumental in the development of commerce in McAllen. They opened several downtown businesses and managed land-clearing projects from buildings nestled along a street that came to be known as Guerra Street. This street is now known as 17th street. During an interview by Texas Highways Magazine in 2014, he beamed and commented proudly, “You have the famous saying of six flags in Texas, we have lived under all six flags.”

Enrique vigorously collected Spanish and Mexican Colonial art and artifacts on both sides of the border. He was an avid reader of historical books and documents. He would easily explain important historical events with such enthusiasm that they became exciting adventures to any person listening. He also loaned items to museums as visual illustrations and learning tools of early life along the Rio Grande. Steven M. Karr, President of the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum in Oklahoma once said, “The family’s collecting passion helps to tell the story of the region’s shared history and traditions – Spanish, Mexican, the Republic, and Statehood. It embodies the often changing political and social circumstances that continue to define the region today.”

Enrique had been a commercial cattleman with registered stock of different types but the Texas Longhorn was his favorite. During one of his last recorded interviews, with Red Steagall in 2015 for “Cowboy Corner,” he fondly discussed longhorns. “I started ranching with Criollos, the real true Texas longhorns, raised between Laredo and Brownsville and north to Corpus and San Antonio.” Enrique was instrumental in the re-introduction of the original Spanish blooded longhorn into the treasured Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge in the 1950’s. He traveled thousands of miles through the Desert Mountains of Mexico and acquired approximately 69 head of skinny, bony longhorns that he recognized as having the characteristics of the original Spanish strains. He hired ropers and brought them down from the mountains into his Mexican ranch. He keenly described how he and his cowboys trained these wild longhorns to eat out of troughs by chopping up burnt cactus “Chamuscado” leaves and putting cottonseed meal over it. He slowly domesticated them and brought about 20 bulls to replenish the Wichita herd with the approval of the herdsman at the time, Claud A. “Heck” Schrader. “I’ve raised everything you can think of, I have never seen an animal as smart and intelligent as a longhorn,” he has said many times over.

Enrique served on many Boards and Associations over the span of his life. He was a member of the Texas Gun Collectors Association and past President, as well as an Advisory Board member of the Museum of South Texas History at Edinburg, and Chairman of the Advisory Board of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission. He was a charter member of the Cattlemen’s Texas Longhorn Registry, where he served three times as President, and a charter member of the Cattlemen’s Texas Longhorn Conservancy, where he served as the organization’s first President for eleven years until he died. He was an Exhibitor and Contributor to the following museums in Texas: the Texas Ranger Museum at Fort Fisher in Waco, the Institute of Texan Cultures and the Briscoe Museum of Western Art in San Antonio, the Bob Bullock Museum in Austin, and the Museum of South Texas History in Edinburg. He has received many awards and recognitions of community support including, The Texas Historical Foundation Citation of Outstanding Achievement in Historic Preservation, the Linn-San Manuel Pride of the Community Award, the 2014 Bixby-Sponenberg

Breed Conservation Award, among numerous others. On April 15, 2016, Mr. Guerra will be inducted into the Hall of Great Westerners at the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum in Oklahoma City.

A close friend sent a card that said it best, "Enrique was a true Texas institution... This great gentleman will be greatly missed." On Saturday, the 19th of March, the family gathered for a private Mass of Christian Burial at St. Anne Catholic Church in San Manuel, Texas, where Fr. Amador Garza, Rector of the Basilica of Our Lady of San Juan del Valle, served as Celebrant. The Rite of Committal and interment service immediately followed at the family ranch.

A special event, to celebrate his life, was held Tuesday evening, the 26th of April, at the Nuevo Santander Gallery, 717 North Main Street in McAllen.