

**THIS CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION  
IS PRESENTED TO THE  
ESPERANZA FRANCES FRAGA VALDEZ FAMILY**

**ON AUGUST 1, 2015  
AT THE ANNUAL FRAGA PICNIC**

**HONORING HER LEGACY  
OF**

**LOVE**

**WHEN ESPERANZA FRAGA VALDEZ WAS BORN IN MEXICO ON  
NOVEMBER 5, 1914, HER PARENTS, OUR BEAUTIFUL  
GRANDPARENTS VALERIANO & MARTINA FRAGA, COULDN'T  
KNOW WHAT A WONDERFUL DAUGHTER, SISTER, WIFE AND  
MOTHER SHE WOULD BECOME...WHAT A FULL AND  
MEANINGFUL LIFE SHE WOULD HAVE...BUT THEIR LOVE WAS  
STRONG AND THEIR FAITH WAS DEEP AND HELPED PREPARE HER  
FOR WHAT WAS AHEAD.**

**AS A CHILD, ESPERANZA RECALLED COMING TO THE U.S. WITH  
OUR BELOVED GRANDPARENTS AND THE MANY, MANY  
HARDSHIPS THEY ENDURED UNTIL, LIKE IN A STORYBOOK,  
FORTUITOUSLY MAKING THEIR WAY FROM MICHOACÁN TO  
MICHIGAN, TO LAY DOWN ROOTS IN WHAT WOULD BECOME  
FOR MANY OF US THE FAMILY FARM ON NORMAN ROAD NEAR  
IMLAY CITY.**

**AS A YOUNG GIRL, HER SCHOOL TEACHERS, HAVING DIFFICULTY  
WITH HER GIVEN SPANISH NAME, SIMPLY CALLED HER FRANCES.  
THIS BECAME THE NAME BY WHICH SHE WAS BEST KNOWN.**

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ESPERANZA CONTINUE.....

YOUNG FRANCES HAD A SHARP AND INSIGHTFUL MIND AND ABSORBED KNOWLEDGE AND INFORMATION LIKE A SPONGE. SHE OFTEN RECALLED IMPRESSING THE LOCALS WITH HOW WELL-SPOKEN SHE WAS WITH ONLY AN 8TH GRADE EDUCATION.

SHE USED TO LOVE MAGAZINES ABOUT THE HOLLYWOOD MOVIE STARS OF THE DAY AND LEARNED A FORM OF WORLDLINESS AND SOPHISTICATION FROM THEM. EVEN WITH ONLY AN 8TH GRADE EDUCATION, ALL THROUGH HER LIFE SHE COULD TALK EASILY AND INTELLIGENTLY WITH ANYONE FROM

ANY WALK OF LIFE ABOUT ANY TOPIC - BECAUSE SHE WAS GENUINE AND SPOKE FROM THE HEART...

AMONG THE SPECIAL GIFTS WITH WHICH SHE WAS BLESSED, WAS THE ABILITY TO TRULY *LISTEN* FROM THE HEART, MAKING YOU FEEL THAT YOU WERE THE *ONLY* PERSON IN THE WORLD WHEN SHE SPOKE TO YOU. IMAGINE THE IMPORTANCE OF THAT SPECIAL GIFT WHEN YOU'RE BLESSED WITH 18 CHILDREN.

BUT SHE WORKED HARD HER WHOLE LIFE, AS A CHILD IN THE SUGAR BEET FIELDS WITH HER FATHER, AS A YOUNG GIRL ON THE FARM HELPING TO TAKE CARE OF HER MANY LOVING SIBLINGS AND THEN AS A YOUNG WOMAN AND SOON TO BE MOTHER, SWEEPED OFF HER FEET BY THE HANDSOME RANCH HAND WHO WOULD BECOME OUR DEAR, DEVOTED FATHER, NATIVIDAD VALDEZ.

AGAIN, LIKE IN A STORYBOOK OR A MOVIE, THEY ELOPED AND WERE *ESTRANGED* FROM HER PARENTS BACK ON THE FARM UNTIL THE BIRTH OF THEIR FIRST CHILD, ISABELLE, IN DETROIT IN 1935. HER PARENTS' HEARTS, THOUGH BROKEN BY HER DISOBEDIENCE AND HER DEPARTURE FROM THEIR CLOSE KNIT FAMILY, WERE SOFTENED AND HEALED BY THE BIRTH OF THEIR FIRST GRANDCHILD - THOUGH 2

LITTLE ANGELS LATER DIED AT BIRTH, THEY NEVER SUSPECTED SHE WOULD PROCEED TO GIVE THEM 16 MORE TO LOVE AND TO FUSS OVER!

SHE ROSE TO EVERY ONE OF LIFE'S CHALLENGES WITH GRACE AND A FOUNDATION OF FAITH INHERITED FROM HER PARENTS... AND NO MATTER WHAT SHE WENT THROUGH, SHE FOUND THE STRENGTH TO WIPE HER TEARS AWAY AND LAUGH AND SAY "I'M A LUCKY DOG!"

WE ARE ALL BETTER FOR HAVING HAD HER IN OUR LIVES. HER SENSE OF HUMOR AND HER LOVE OF WORDPLAY LIVE ON IN SO MANY OF HER CHILDREN - JUST ONE OF THE MANY BEAUTIFUL TRAITS THAT SHE HAS PASSED ON TO US, AND THROUGH US TO HER LOVING CHILDREN'S CHILDREN, AND ON AND SO ON...

ALONG WITH HER HARD-EARNED WISDOM AND POSITIVITY IN THE FACE OF ADVERSITY, HER UNWAVERING FAITH AND SPIRITUALITY, HER GENTLE KINDNESS AND LOVE OF NATURE, HER HARD WORK ETHIC AND STRONG MORAL CODE...AND HER ENDLESS LOVE OF FAMILY. "*THE MESSAGE IS LOVE*".

SHE ONCE SAID WHEN ASKED WHAT SHE THOUGHT WOULD BE HER LEGACY...AND SO, *THE MESSAGE IS LOVE*.

ON HER LAST DAY WITH US IN 2001 SHE ASKED "WHEN IS THE NEXT FAMILY PARTY?"

WELL, ESPERANZA FRANCES FRAGA VALDEZ, WE CELEBRATE IT EVERY DAY BY REMEMBERING YOUR SMILE, LOVING EACH OTHER FOREVER - AND TRYING TO BE AS GOOD AS YOU SHOWED US HOW TO BE - BY THE EXAMPLE OF YOUR LIFE. WHERE THERE IS LIFE, THERE IS HOPE...AND ESPERANZA MEANS HOPE.

HUMBLY SUBMITTED WITH UNDYING LOVE AND AFFECTION BY  
RALPH ANTHONY VALDEZ, 2015

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RALPH VALDEZ & THE VALDEZ FAMILY