

## Barbara Ann Mejia Anderson Life Sketch

Barbara Ann Mejia was born on March 2, 1943 to Fulgencio Lagera Mejia and Marina Hendrickson, in the Queen of Angels Hospital, Los Angeles, California. Fulgencio was born and raised in the Philippines in the little town of San Nicolas. He came to America because it was the land of opportunity. He found himself in Los Angeles, California where he met Marina. Marina was from the little town of Four Mile Kentucky. It was against the law for Filipinos to marry Caucasian women at that time in California, so they had to travel to New Mexico to be married.

Fulgencio joined the army during World War II and was sent overseas shortly after Barbara's birth. Barb was three when he returned after the war, and she had no idea who her dad was. She quickly warmed up to him and they grew very close. Barb's mom and dad both had to work two jobs each to make ends meet. When Barb was really young, she remembered being woken up at 4:30 in the morning and her mom wrapping her up in a blanket and taking her to her "Black Mammy" as Barb called her. As she grew up, a neighbor down the street watched her while her parents were at work.

When Barb was young, she had a cat named Lucky. She loved her cat and it followed her wherever she went around the neighborhood. One day Lucky got into a fight with another cat, and her luck ran out. Barb and her friends buried her in a shoebox near the railroad tracks. Barb's family did not have a fridge when she was young. They had an icebox, and the iceman would drive his truck around the neighborhood delivering ice to the houses. Barb and her friends would ride on the back of his truck as he delivered in her neighborhood.

Because her parents were working so much, they rarely saw each other and started to grow apart. When Barb was eight, her parents divorced and she went to live with her mother. Both of her parents remarried and through those marriages she acquired 4 brothers and a little sister that she loved. Her stepfather (whom she called Daddie Dean) had a small farm. He raised some rabbits and taught Barb how to kill and skin them. Barb didn't mind, until he had her kill the rabbit that had become her pet. After that her mom and dad had to do the dirty work.

Barb learned how to play the piano, violin and cello while she was in school. Unfortunately her teacher just put red tape on her instruments and put numbers under the notes on the page so she never did learn how to read the music.

Her mother moved when Barb started junior high school so she went to live with her father in Long Beach. While in junior high, Barb became very involved in school activities. She was active in the Girl's Athletic Association doing tumbling, volleyball and beginning tennis. She was involved in student government and played in the

orchestra. She later gave up the orchestra to take a type class which opened the door to her future career in business.

Barb did not get along with her stepmother Sadie, but she became very close to her stepbrother Don. He had a souped up car that he loved. He must have loved Barb a lot too, because he taught her how to drive in his car. She said she almost gave him his first heart attack when she almost ran into a hole and a gate.

Barb had a beautiful soprano voice, and while in high school she joined the a-cappella choir. She tried out for the singer of the school dance band but lost to her friend Thelma Jackson who went on to become the famous singer Thelma Houston. One of the requirements for passing the 10th grade was being able to swim the length of the pool. Barb had lived near the ocean all her life and loved the beach, but she had never learned how to swim. In order to pass the requirement she swam the length of the pool underwater, but never swam again. During that summer, Barb got a job as a housekeeper and decided that she hated it. She couldn't wait for school to start again.

After high school Barb immediately enrolled in college and took business classes. In June of 1962 she went to work for North American Aviation, in the Space and Information Systems Division later known as North American Rockwell. She started out as a stenographer and secretary in the Purchasing Department; then moved to the Engineering department for five years. After that she transferred to the Command Module Engineering Department and then to Documentation where she ended up as an executive secretary. She loved working there and met a lot of interesting people such as Alan Sheppard and Neil Armstrong. She also had the opportunity to help type up the procedures used on the Apollo 13 mission.

In 1962 Barb met Lonnie Morse and the next year they were married. Connie was born into this union on September 29, 1963. Unfortunately, things didn't work out between Barb and Lonnie and they were divorced in 1967. In 1969 Barb married her fellow high school classmate Jim Allen. Jim was from Utah and planned for her and Connie to go see his family. While in Utah, Barb visited Temple Square. As they came through the gate, one of the missionaries asked her to sign the visitor register. She signed it, without knowing that her life was to be changed forever. While at Temple Square she saw the film "Man's Search for Happiness" and it really touched her. She wanted to know more but didn't know how to go about getting the information.

Two weeks after she returned home to California, two young men in suits came knocking at her door. They wanted to share a message about Joseph Smith and the LDS Church. A special feeling came over Barb and she agreed to meet with them. She listened to their message and knew that what they were telling her was true. They set a date for her and Connie's baptism.

Barb wrote in her journal, “About two weeks before we were baptized, some of my co-workers started giving me a “bad time” and relating anti-Mormon stories; almost every day they would bring a doom story to me. Fortunately, a man in my same department, and a member of the ward I was attending, helped me through these questionable times. The day before I was baptized, I was sitting at my typewriter and this presence, like a black cloud, came over me and actually impressed me that, if I joined the Church, something evil would happen. I remember breaking out in a cold sweat and felt weak all over, almost faint.

I recalled the missionaries’ discussion on prayer and dropped to my knees and prayed with all my heart to my Father in Heaven to know if I was doing the right thing, and asked to get rid of the feeling I had, and the evil presence of that dark cloud. Before I could finish my prayer, my boss came in and picked me up off the floor and wanted to know what was going on. He said I was white as a sheet. I tried to explain a little bit of what I was experiencing, but of course he couldn’t understand and called for Joe (the ward member). Joe gave me a blessing and we knelt in prayer. I felt a great weight lift from my shoulders and knew without a doubt, being baptized was the right thing to do. Connie and I were baptized October 30, 1970.”

Two years after her baptism, Jim thought he could get a job working on his grandpa’s ranch near Fairfield, so the family packed up and moved to Utah. He wasn’t able to get the job, so he and Barb had to find work elsewhere. Barb found a job working at the Lehi Block Company in Lehi. After several years in Lehi, Barb and Jim ended up getting a divorce. Barb and Connie were at that time living in her beloved 10th Ward.

Barb met Ralph Anderson while she worked at Lehi Block. During that time, his wife Shirley passed away from cancer. Ralph and Barb became good friends, and were married on September 05, 1975. Her new life with Ralph had many trials. Ralph had ten children that had just lost their mother. Barbara was willing and perhaps naïve enough to take on the tremendous challenge of stepping into the role of their mother. Ralph always said that he had married two of the craziest women in the world; one that was willing to have ten children and one that was willing to become part of a family with ten children. There were many trials, but Barbara did the very best she knew how and through her determination and love for Ralph and his children she was able to overcome them.

Barb was a hard worker and very outgoing. She had several jobs over the years ending up working for the Utah County Health Department in the Vital Records Department. She loved working there and excelled in her duties.

Barb had a wonderful singing voice and sang in her ward’s choir each week. She enjoyed acting and singing in the roadshow’s that performed in different ward buildings

around the stake. She served as a Young Women's leader for several years. One year she thought it would be fun if her stepson Lee and his friends came to Girl's Camp to give the girls a little scare. Lee and his friends were armed with masks and a baseball bat and appeared just at the right time in the story telling around the campfire. Unfortunately, the scare was a little more than Barb had thought and after girls fell in the fire, tore down tents, and were hysterically screaming and fleeing in every direction, she realized that it probably wasn't such a good idea.

Barb loved holidays, especially Halloween and Christmas. She loved a good party. She started a tradition on the Saturday before Thanksgiving of getting together with Ralph's first wife's family to have a huge Thanksgiving dinner. That tradition still continues and Barbara's family still meets on the Saturday before Thanksgiving so that they can all be together. On Christmas Eve, her family gathered together in her family room. There were so many of her family members, they had to sit three deep with an aisle down the middle of the room in case someone had to walk through. Barb also had all of the family meet at her house for dinner and to celebrate the birthday's for the month each Fast Sunday. She loved to shop, and would take the grand-daughters with her every chance she got. She enjoyed going with Ralph's siblings once a month out to dinner, and cherished the relationships she had with each of them. She had many wonderful friends that she enjoyed spending time with. Barb was definitely a people person.

Ralph and Barbara also had a tradition of going to the National Finals Rodeo in Las Vegas every December. She loved going, and Ralph enjoyed sharing that part of his life with her. She supported Ralph in all of his endeavors and hobbies, including rodeo, roping and training border collies. She loved all of the dogs that came through our family, and many cats. She especially loved a poodle named Tootsie that she brought home for Ruby.

She seemed to love everything about her life, and had overcome many obstacles. She was always very respectful of Ralph's first wife, and always talked of her with great respect, and was very loving to our her parents who lived close by. Ralph and Barb sent all of their sons and one daughter on missions, and loved to see their family increasing as their children married and started having babies of their own.

Barb had her first heart attack at age 50. She was able to recover and get back to her life, but five years later she had a stroke. This limited her somewhat, but she was still able to work, though Ralph had to drive her back and forth to the Health Department each day. Two years later, she had her second stroke, which changed her life. After that stroke, her body and mind were affected so that she wasn't able to work and was forced to take a medical retirement. That was very hard for Barb. Her whole life had changed. She lost her independence, her ability to care for herself, the activities that she loved, and even being able to keep up on relationships that she cherished.

Ralph and Barb were together continually, with Ralph taking care of Barb the best he could possibly do. He studied about many herbal remedies, and had her on numerous different supplements to help her regain her health as much as possible. Ralph did what he could, but as they got older it became harder and harder to go anywhere. Everything was a struggle. Her health continued to decline and so did Ralph's. They needed assistance.

In the spring of 2010, all of the kids got together and did a remodel on their home to make things easier for them. Ralph and Barb came to her stepdaughter Rachel's house to stay while the rest of the family got to work and updated the house to make it handicap accessible. They were only back in their home for a little over a month when Ralph's health took a dramatic turn, and he passed away on June 14, 2010. That was a very dark and lonely time for Barb. With Ralph's passing, she had lost almost everything that was near and dear to her; her husband, her home, her career, relationships with family and friends, her health, and even her personality. The only thing that seemed to remain was her testimony of the gospel.

Barb came to live with Rachel for the next 3 years. Rachel stated that it was a pleasure to care for her. She was always so appreciative of everything that was done for her. She loved the people in her new ward, and loved to attend church and all of the relief society activities. She loved being around the family, and even though it was hard for her to come out of her room most of the time, because of anxiety, she always wanted to have her door open so that she could hear everything going on and feel a part of the family activities.

In July of 2013, Barb moved into Abbington Manor in Lehi. It was a scary move, but Barb faced it with courage and grace. She quickly adjusted to the schedules there and the new people, and over the following year started regaining some of the personality she had lost. She loved her aids and the other residents that lived at Abbington Manor. She tried to go to all of the activities and participate in everything that was going on in her new home. She enjoyed when she had visitors and always wanted whoever was visiting to eat in the dining room with her.

Shortly before her death Barb and Rachel were able to go to the viewing of Barbara's dear friend that had passed away. They had a very enjoyable visit. As they were travelling to and from Provo, they visited about many things, but mostly about many things that were so important to her. Even though Barbara wasn't able to attend the temple any more, she had recently gotten her temple recommend renewed. That was so important to her. The two things that she loved the very most were her family and friends, and the gospel. She was continually reading and studying to gain more knowledge of the gospel.

Barbara not only endured, but endured well. She had many challenges in her life, but she set a wonderful example to those around her of being gracious, humble, long suffering, kind, loving, and unselfish. She did her best to magnify each calling that she was given. Always accepting whatever challenge was given to her and doing her very best to continue on the best she could.

