



## Elsa Stella Pena

June 29, 1949 - February 21, 2025

Our beloved mother, Stella, went home to be with the Lord on Friday, February 21, 2025, after a courageous battle in the hospital. She received exceptional end-of-life care at Kaiser, surrounded by the deep love of family and friends.

Stella was a selfless soul, born on June 29, 1949, in Fresno to Theresa and Martin Ortiz. She graduated from Roosevelt High School in 1970 and soon after married Augustine Gonzales, beginning her most cherished role as a mother to her two children, Augie and Ann Marie.

A woman of unwavering determination, Stella had an incredible work ethic and a natural gift for sales—she could sell anything to anyone, whether they needed it or not! Her talent led her to positions at Gottschalks and later Macy's, where she specialized in selling Estée Lauder and Lancôme products. Throughout her working journey, she formed lifelong friendships with colleagues who cherished her warmth and charisma.

Stella was known for her signature style and vibrant personality. A true “girly girl,” she loved a fabulous hairdo, a fresh manicure, and, of course, her signature red lipstick—always accented with a touch of sparkle. She was the life of the party, lighting up every room she entered with her radiant smile and lively conversations. Time spent with Stella was always filled with laughter and

joy.

At 47, she met the love of her life, Manuel Peña, at Castillo's Mexican Restaurant. They married soon after, and she devoted herself to caring for him until his passing. Together, they faithfully served St. John's Cathedral, particularly the 10:30 a.m. Mass, where Stella proudly stood by Manuel as he served as an Usher and as a Knight of Columbus. They were also active members of the Mexican American Golf Association, where she embraced the role of a golfer's wife.

At 53, Stella faced breast cancer with the same fierce determination that defined her life. Her unwavering fighting spirit, driven by the deep love she had for her family, made her a true warrior. She faced every challenge head-on, never backing down, and never losing the warmth and generosity that made her so special.

Above all, Stella was a devoted mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother. She loved endlessly and gave selflessly to her family, including her children, 10 granddaughters, one grandson, five great-grandchildren, and numerous nieces and nephews. While we will deeply miss her guidance and strength, we find comfort in knowing that she will continue watching over us from above.

We love you always, Mom—"till payday."

# Cemetery Details

## St. Peter's Cemetery

264 N. Blythe Avenue  
Fresno, CA 93706

# Previous Events

## Rosary

MAR 13. 6:00 PM (PT)

Chapel of the Light  
1620 W. Belmont Avenue  
Fresno, CA 93728  
michael@chapelofthelight.com  
<http://www.chapelofthelight.com>

## Funeral Mass

MAR 14. 10:30 AM (PT)

St. John's Cathedral  
2814 Mariposa Street  
Fresno, CA 93721

# Tribute Wall



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Elsa Stella Pena.

March 13, 2025 at 09:30 PM



“ Arreola family planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Elsa Stella Pena.

**Arreola family** - March 13, 2025 at 01:20 PM



“ Arreola family purchased the Sentiments of Serenity Spray for the family of Elsa Stella Pena.



**Arreola family** - March 13, 2025 at 01:20 PM



“ Love The Torres Family purchased the Be My Love Bouquet with Red Roses for the family of Elsa Stella Pena.



**Love The Torres Family** - March 12, 2025 at 10:44 PM

FF

“ *Felix, Sylvia and Gago Family purchased the Sweetest Sunrise Bouquet for the family of Elsa Stella Pena.*



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**Felix, Sylvia and Gago Family** - March 12, 2025 at 09:25 PM



“ *Be My Love Bouquet with Red Roses was purchased for the family of Elsa Stella Pena.*



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March 12, 2025 at 06:34 PM

DJ

“ *Doris and Jennifer purchased the Strength & Solace Spray for the family of Elsa Stella Pena.*



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**Doris and Jennifer** - March 12, 2025 at 11:40 AM

PH

“ *Stella was my ex sister-in-law. She will be missed dearly. If you had the pleasure of knowing Stella you were very lucky.*

*We did not keep in touch much but when I did run into her, it was like we never lost touch.*

*She always had so much to talk about and always spoke of her children and grandchildren.*

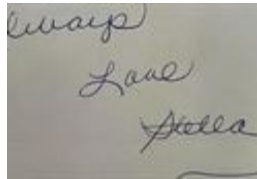
*Stella, fly high with the Angels and Rest in Paradise*

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**Patricia Hidalgo-Gonzales** - March 11, 2025 at 07:36 PM



“ *111 files added to the album Life Tributes*



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**Chapel Of The Light Funeral Home and Mausoleum** - March 11, 2025 at 05:41 PM

MB

*So beautiful!!!! I never saw too many photos of Stella younger!!! I loved her so much! She used to call my little girl her baby! We still have many gifts she gave to us. Stella gave my little girl a doll that looked just like her. I will miss her so much. We love u Stella.*

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**Michelle B** - March 12, 2025 at 12:44 AM

AG

“ Following the Cemetery Services for our dear mom, Stella, the family warmly invites you to join us for the Remembrance Reception at the Dante Club.

Augie Gonzales - March 08, 2025 at 09:02 PM

MK

“ Marty Michelle and kids planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Elsa Stella Pena.

Marty Michelle and kids - March 01, 2025 at 09:08 PM

MK

“ Marty Michelle and kids purchased the Heavenly Heights Bouquet for the family of Elsa Stella Pena.



Marty Michelle and kids - March 01, 2025 at 09:08 PM

KG

“ It's so hard to think of my Tia Stella not being there to pick up the phone to answer my calls. We would usually speak to each other about once or twice a week. Catching up on her doctor appointments and the trips to the stores. I would love to hear her talk about the memories she had about my Dad and Uncles. She always asked about my kids and she told me how much she loved them. They loved her too. How could they not? She was so generous and loving to them. I will miss her terribly for the rest of my life. Rest in peace Tia Stella. I'll have a "Lite" for you ❤️🕊️

Karrie Gonzales - March 01, 2025 at 05:16 PM