

The Latin Beat

An article in the LA Times got me thinking about my sister Mary and her dancing days, or rather, her dancing nights. When asked, my cousin Patricio admitted that he and Mary enjoyed Perea Prado at the Palladium in Hollywood. The "mambo" was the 'in thing' and they wanted to satisfy their curiosity. Together, they actually danced at the Palladium, the nightclub mentioned in the newspaper.

However, the article did not mention "Virginia's." Mary told me that John Boy from the 'Waltons' often attended. Yes, Richard Thomas enjoyed the Latin music and was a good dancer. This nightclub was in the downtown area off of Alvarado.

The majority of the dancing was done in the East Side. Sometimes it also included a mid-week "night out." The Paramount and Lalo's were located off of Brooklyn, now Cesar Chavez Boulevard. Mary never missed work because of her dancing activities. However, it drove my mother frantic because of her trying too get ready for work on Mondays or a Thursday, but that's what kept their circulation going.

Mary danced at the Million Dollar Theatre on stage, she was chosen at 'random;' she had her family there who were clapping loudly which brought other enthusiastic attendees to join in! Mary and her partner took a bow, and you could tell that all were happy at this 'random dancing.'

Mary had other interests as well. She would ride on the Northeast Democratic float at the local Christmas parade. She was always working at the headquarters and buying her political pins. She worked the polls on election day. I would change my schedule to accommodate hers. Donuts and coffee in mid-morning, lunch, and then back to the polls when a phone call came to go get her for a ride home.

Mary was the neighborhood funeral-general. She would go door-to-door letting them know when the services would take place, while taking up a collection for flowers. She always got a good response, probably because it was done willingly and from the heart.

Mary loved her relatives and they in turn loved her. Through her final illness they came to visit, be it from Barstow or New Mexico. Both her rosary and funeral were well attended, with relatives, friends and neighbors. Now that her comadre has joined her I'm sure they never miss a chance to join-in when there's a 'latin-beat.'

A toast and a cheer for this classy lady!

~Teri Chavez, August 2017

Salsa Sunday

Picture this! A line-up of divas waiting for *comadre* Helen! Cecilia Cruz is singing her 'azucar' salsa with the band and balloons are floating down. My sister Mary is so happy as she embraces her life-long friend and comadre. Both of these ladies were prone to temper flare-up, yet somehow, over time they would reconcile their differences, and the friendship continued.

Manuelita was my mother's live-in caregiver during the final years of her life. Helen would stop by the house and help with giving mom a bathtub bath. Manuelita had glided into heaven shortly before Helen reached those pearly gate, where I imagine Helen had to do some pretty fancy talking to verify her presence.

Heaven will never be the same. Dancing and night clubbing? Why not? It is a dancer's paradise, where these divas can be all dressed up in the latest fashions and dance their hearts' out!

Now it is time to say a few prayers for all the diva dancers. Like it is stated, Sunday is salsa time up in heaven.

~Teri Chavez
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