



Joe A. Ramirez

July 9, 1952 - April 16, 2026

Joe Ramirez was born July 9, 1952, to Manuel and Dominga (Valdez) Ramirez in La Mesa, TX. He was number 10 of 11 children and the youngest son. Joe's early years were in Texas before the family relocated to North Platte, NE where he attended elementary school. His first language was Spanish learning English when he started Kindergarten. Being raised by migrant workers had its share of trials and life lessons but he was always surrounded by love. He was a rambunctious but charming boy who loved history but didn't have time for reading or writing and preferred hands-on lessons to schoolbooks. At 13 when his mother passed away, he started living with his sisters and grew up around Central Nebraska.

He may have dropped out of school, but he was never without work. His first job was as a dishwasher and then a cook at North Platte Cafe as a teenager. He was always good with his hands and worked side-jobs with local farmers and friends of the family. Joe had a charisma about him that had others wanting to follow him. At age 17 he and a group of friends decided they were going to drive from Gibbon, NE to Woodstock for the music festival. They ran out of money and gas before getting out of the state and his friends' father had to go get them. That didn't stop his love of adventure. If anything, it encouraged him to work harder so he could go further. In fall of 1974 he met Katherine Albers who was having car trouble and her friend knew Joe would be able to help. The story goes when Kathy and her friend walked into the local bar, Joe caught another man looking at her and he knocked him off a bar

stool because of it. That sparked a romance that led to marriage on January 29, 1975. Joe and Kathy would go on to have two daughters, Billie Jo and Becky Jo.

The young family moved to Grand Island in 1981 and purchased their first home in 1985. Joe worked for the Nebraska Department of Roads, Knight Brothers Trucking, Platte River By-Products, and Hulcher's Professional Services throughout the 80s and into early 2000s. As a Manager at Hulcher's, he started divisions in California and Illinois and holds the company record for training the most amount of machine operators who became managers. He and Kathy started and ran Ramirez Bobcat and Ramirez Trucking/Construction. When Joe wasn't on the road working, he enjoyed spending time with friends and family and especially his grandchildren. The family enjoyed motorcycle riding, camping, and yearly summer vacations. Joe was known for his woodworking and being a jack of all trades. Once the girls were older, Joe and Kathy would take annual birthday and anniversary trips to casinos in South Dakota and Iowa. As well as several trips to Illinois to visit daughter, Billie, and granddaughters, Morganne, Jadyn, and Reagen. Sadly, on March 12, 2006, Kathy died in an automobile accident. Joe was lost without his beloved Kathy. Fortunately, he discovered the movie "Left Behind" and at the invitation of long-time friends, he started attending Evangelical Free Church in Grand Island. He became active as an usher and enjoyed the other fellowship groups.

Joe remained in Nebraska until December 2010 when he moved to Southern California to be closer to daughter, Becky, and grandson, Alexander. Now, semi-retired, Joe worked as a handyman at Wagner Mobile Home Park in Desert Hot Springs. Joe lost his vision and relocated to Galesburg, IL in March 2020. It was in Galesburg where he accepted a relationship with Jesus Christ and was baptized at Harmony Baptist Church. Joe spent the last years enjoying time spent with family and friends, talking on the phone regularly, and giving every medical professional he encountered a hard time. He was stubborn to the end and loved by everybody who met him.

He is survived by daughters Billie (Steve) Melleny and Becky Tarts;
Grandchildren: Morganne (Tyler) Gregory, Jacy (Ryan Lisenbee) Malesker,
Reagen Malesker, Alexia and Alexander Melleny; Great-Grandchildren:
Carter, Skyler, Emberlie, Asher, Micah, Clover, Hannah; sister Rosa Wing; and
a host of family and friends.

Joe was preceded in death by his parents; wife Kathy; son-in-law Willie
Tarts; grandson, Alexander; great-granddaughter, Ivy; most of his siblings; far
too many nieces and nephews; and so many others.

Upcoming Events

Memorial Service

MAY 15. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (CT)

All Faiths Funeral Home
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