

Juanita R. Delgado August 21, 1915 – August 30, 2019



Juanita R. Delgado has left her earthly home into at the tender age of 104. She celebrated her birthday on August 21st surrounded by familia and mariachis at Mi Tierra. Born in Gonzales Co. in 1915, she was born into a family of farmers who settled in Flatonia, TX where she met her husband,

Pedro Delgado. They married in 1935 and came to San Antonio. As a newlywed, Juanita worked at the Elizondo Flower Shop owned by her husband's family. She later worked as a sewing machine operator for several factories, including Jay-N that was located in the historic Basila Frocks Building. Juanita and Pedro raised 4 children, Marta, Mary Jane, Rachel and Ruben in the house they built themselves— now landmarked as a visible reminder of the culture of a community. Pedro and Juanita were founding members of St. Augusta Catholic Church now St. Jude's. Juanita was one of the original Guadalupanas at St. Jude and remained active there. She loved working in her yard and knew a lot about plants and herbs that she shared with her neighbors. Juanita

was known as the Church Lady and the Plant Lady. A great hostess, she entertained visitors up to the last days of her life offering them a drink. She loved outings to have Lockhart BBQ. The Esperanza staff, board and Buena Gente share in the family and community's sentiments at this time. Our heartfelt condolences especially to Rachel Delgado who has shared her mother's memories of cultura and comunidad with the Westside Preservation Alliance, Fotohistorias

Project and the Corazones de Esperanza meetings on Second Saturdays at the Casa de Cuentos. The Esperanza's Museo del Westside hopes to honor the stories of community members such as Juanita. *Doña Juanita, presente!*



Often complicit in this process, whether intentionally or not, is San Antonio's Office of Code Compliance, whose officers respond to reports of code violations and patrol neighborhoods, issuing citations for violations such as refuse in front yards, or (commonly) overgrown vegetation. The *Current* quotes a city official: "before 2012, about 80% percent of code enforcement cases were from people who reported violations, with the other 20% percent of cases from officers finding violations while on patrol. Those percentages are now reversed." This suggests that as developers have been buying up property on the Westside, Code Compliance has become drastically more aggressive in issuing citations, often to residents that are already in precarious financial positions.

The Westside as a target of real estate speculation is not mere coincidence. With gentrification processes already well underway in San Antonio's East Side and Southtown neighborhoods, the Westside constitutes the next most-downtown-adjacent residential area, and a logically desirable place to live for the next wave of transplants, techie and otherwise, seeking an "urban experience" in San Antonio. And it is already becoming visible: Like a military outpost, tech workspace Geekdom has taken over a rehabilitated warehouse just down the road from Lanier, the Westside's long underserved high school. But easily the biggest force of imminent change on the horizon is the planned expansion of UTSA's downtown campus, into the Westside, which will present yet more challenges to these already vulnerable residents and the

culture they have kept alive.

Under the auspices of President Taylor Eighmy, UTSA intends to quadruple the size of its downtown campus, extending it into the Westside. This expansion reflects the university's general demographic growth and specifically the rising profile of its School of Business, which includes the Cyber Security degree program. Setting aside the question of academic complicity with a high-tech "arms race" mentality, UTSA's expansion threatens to extend the university's historic shortcomings in serving and empowering San Antonio's Latinx young people from less privileged backgrounds. As UTSA professor Enrique Alemán Jr. wrote, in a letter to the editor recently appearing in the *San Antonio Express-News*, "Students and families in San Antonio deserve a public university that is engaged authentically and reciprocally with its neighbors, one that invests and works side by side with communities that have been left out of the educational pipeline for generations." Without concerted effort on the part of UTSA decision-makers, communities like those on the Westside will continue to be left - or worse, pushed - out.

BIO: Sam Stoeltje was born in San Antonio and is currently a graduate student in the department of English Literature at Rice University in Houston. Part of their academic and research focus is the intersection of activism and alternative spiritualities or metaphysics.

NOTE: Look for Part 2 of this article in the November *La Voz*.