

María Emilia Martin, May her memory be eternal

By Imane Saliba, Radio Esperanza

Being an NPR listener and a fan of Latino USA since the early 2000's I always knew that it was radio journalist María Martin who founded the show. So imagine my delight when I learned that we, at Esperanza, were hosting her for a plática and book signing for her book **Crossing Borders, Building Bridges. A Journalist's heart in Latin America**. The event was in September of last year, it was beautiful and successful, and I got to meet the great María Martin.

After the event it was decided that María would offer radio training classes to our community to help us steer Radio Esperanza in the direction we all wanted for our community radio station. Needless to say I was thrilled! To have the renowned journalist María Martin coach us, teach us and endow us some of her knowledge, skills and tips was a privilege and an opportunity not many people get.

And so I started meeting with María on a weekly basis over Zoom at the beginning of this year to plan out the classes, recruitment and other matters. And through those meetings and the first training class I was part of, I got to know María a little bit on a personal level. She was the kind of person who truly cared, who always had that beautiful smile on her shining face. She would ask about my ailing mother and my sister who underwent an operation. She gave me tips on relaxation and breathing methods to help with my stress and anxiety and give me a boost of energy. It amazed me how excited she was about helping Esperanza accomplish our vision for Radio Esperanza which became her vision. She recently went to a community radio conference

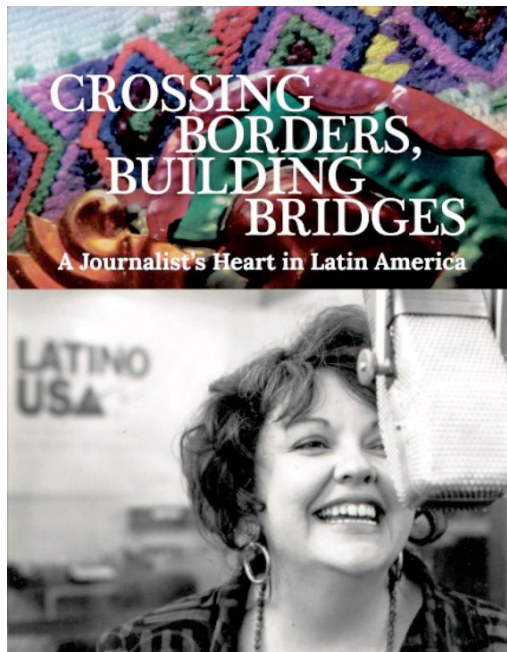
and came back full of plans and hope for the future of our station. She told me how much she enjoyed being at the conference and how all this reminded her of her beginnings in radio. I am full of regret and extreme sadness that she left us so soon and so suddenly! I won't be seeing her and working with her, I won't be learning about her wonderful stories, her reports on Guatemalan elections and the politics and happenings in Latin American countries. This person who knew so many people all over the US and probably the world, gave to me from her beautiful spirit. She had friends in every city she visited. Of course she did! Who wouldn't want to be friends with María, this intelligent, capable, knowledgeable, kind, caring, modest, spiritual, and willful woman?

Losing María, is so heartbreaking to her family, her many many friends, her mentees and to the world of journalism. I will always remember her. As I'm writing this, tears are streaming down my face and her image is in my head sitting at her desk in her home in Guatemala with that Christmas tree in

the background way after Christmas was over. I hope she knew how much she meant to me and how much her loss is felt in my heart. I didn't have enough time with her, neither on a personal level nor on a professional level. I am so blessed to have known her even for such a short period of time.

One thing that gives me some solace is that her dear friend Elaine was reading messages to María from all those who love her. In the midst of my grief it consoles me that she knew how loved she is by so many ... old friends and new.

María Emilia Martin Presente!
May her memory be eternal!



MARIA E. MARTIN

A limited number of María's book are still available at the Esperanza's Tiendita.