



Elena Burcet Sanchez Gilliam

May 3, 2025

Elena Burcet Sanchez Gilliam, beloved wife, mother, grandmother, and faithful servant of Christ, entered her eternal rest with the Lord on May 3, 2025, in McAllen, Texas, at the age of 86. Born on July 22, 1938, in Madrid, Spain, Elena's life was a testament to love, resilience, and unwavering faith.

At 19, Elena journeyed from Spain to the United States, where her heart found its home at a bowling alley, meeting the love of her life, Leslie P. Gilliam. On Christmas Eve, 1960, they united in marriage, building a life filled with devotion and joy. Together, they reared two children, Robert (Pam) and Marie, whose husband, Bobby, preceded Elena in death. Elena's legacy continues through her six cherished grandchildren—Rob (Emily), Kelly (Thomas), Savannah (Justin), Elizabeth, Houston, and Hope and four adored great-grandchildren—Liam, Grace, Robert III, and Mari.

Elena's professional life was marked by trailblazing achievements. She worked for Marie Foundations for 10 years, where she pioneered the company's first twin plant operations in Reynosa and McAllen. Later, she broke barriers as the first female plant manager at Levi Strauss, serving with distinction for 23 years. Her leadership and determination inspired countless others.

A woman of deep compassion, Elena poured her heart into her faith community at First Baptist Church in McAllen. For many years, she crafted and sent heartfelt birthday cards to the church's widows and widowers, offering comfort and love. Her joy was found in simple pleasures—basking in

the beauty of South Padre's beach at their condo and sharing moments with those she held dear.

Elena's life reflected the love of Christ, and her memory will forever be a blessing to all who knew her not only her family but also a community touched by her kindness.

A viewing will be held on May 16, 2025, from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. at Kreidler Funeral Home in McAllen. The funeral service, celebrating Elena's life and faith, will take place on May 17 at 10:00 a.m. at First Baptist Church, McAllen. A graveside burial will follow on May 20 at 10:00 a.m. at Ochiltree County, Texas Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, the family kindly requests donations to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital or Gideon's International, causes close to Elena's heart. May her soul rest in the eternal peace of her Savior, and may her light continue to shine through those she loved.

"Well done, good and faithful servant... enter into the joy of your Lord."
(Matthew 25:23)

Cemetery Details

Ochiltree County, Texas Cemetery

Ochiltree County, TX

Previous Events

Visitation

MAY **15**. 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM (CT)

Kreidler Funeral Home, Inc.
314 N 10th St.
McAllen, TX 78501
(956) 686-0234
kreidler@sbcglobal.net
<http://www.kreidlerfuneralhome.com/index.html>

Funeral Service

MAY **17**. 10:00 AM (CT)

First Baptist Church - McAllen
1200 Beech Ave.
McAllen, TX 78501

Graveside Service

MAY **20**. 10:00 AM.

Ochiltree County, Texas Cemetery
Ochiltree County, TX

Tribute Wall

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“ Our deepest condolences to you and your family. I know how hard it is to lose someone so close, and my thoughts are with you.



“The boundaries which divide life from death are at best shadowy and vague. Who shall say where the one ends, and where the other begins?”

—Edgar Allan Poe

Yasmina Miranda Nye - May 18, 2025 at 03:44 PM

EJ

“ Sorry for the loss of Elena to all the family, but I know she loves her heavenly home! Elena has been anxiously awaiting going to heaven for a long time. Prayers for the family. 🙏🙏🌹🕊️

Ernestine Jones - May 14, 2025 at 09:18 PM