



Anita Lopez Soleno

January 24, 1920 - February 9, 2026

Anita Cuevas Lopez was born on January 24, 1920, in Hanford, California, to Jose Lopez and Margaret Martinez. She was the fifth child in a family that resided in the agricultural migrant fields of central and coastal California, constantly on the move to harvest the next crop. Because her family moved frequently with the seasons, her education was often short-lived, lasting as long as the harvest allowed. Over the years, she attended more than thirty schools across the San Joaquin Valley, Salinas, Hollister, San Jose, Gilroy, and the Coachella Valley, learning to adapt and persevere where she went.

In 1937, at the age of 17, Anita began a new chapter of her life when she married Ramiro Vasquez. They had their first child, Elydia, and soon thereafter, they moved to Sonora, Mexico, where she resided for several years. She lost her daughter Elydia, due to an unknown illness but from that union she also gave births to daughters, Anna Amelia and Martha. The family eventually relocated to Calexico where she gave birth to son Jesse. Following the tragic loss of Ramiro, and with the aid of her father, Anita returned to California to begin anew. In 1944, while harvesting tomatoes in Yetttem, CA., she met Tiburcio (Butch) Soleno. They married in 1945 and eventually established a home at a labor camp known as Redbanks, several miles west of Woodlake, CA., where they raised a family built on the foundations of faith, hard work, and endurance. She later became employed at Sunkist Fruit Growers and worked there for 30 years until retirement at the age of 79.

Butch and Anita had five children: Daniel, Louis, Mary Elvira, Delia, and Rudy. She also lovingly raised her granddaughter, Margaret Kinoshita, guiding and nurturing her through her formative years. Her children were raised in Redbanks, and all attended and graduated from Woodlake Elementary and Union High School. She instilled in her children her values and religious principles, ultimately equipping them with essential life skills such as endurance, fortitude, and selflessness.

During the upbringing of her children in Woodlake, Anita dedicated her time to volunteering as a room mother and actively participating in the PTA and as a 4H leader. For numerous years, she served as the president of the tenant association for the Tulare County Housing Authority. During this tenure, she screened scholarship applications for college-bound County students who encountered financial difficulties, which ultimately resulted in the establishment of an additional scholarship in her honor which was named the "Anita/Tiburcio Soleno" scholarship.

Anita was widowed again in 1976. She learned to drive for the first time at the age of 57 and became adventurous and independent. She traveled the U.S. with her son, Louis, and grandchildren from California, visiting the Grand Canyon, New Mexico, New York (including the Statue of Liberty), Niagara Falls, the White House, Cape Canaveral, Mount Rushmore, Montana, Hawaii, various regions of Mexico, and the Great Wall of China.

On her 100th birthday, the Woodlake City Council honored her by declaring January 13, 2020, as "Anita Soleno Day," celebrating her unwavering spirit and lifelong selflessness.

She was the recipient of a Catholic Papal Certificate from Pope Francis and for her 103rd birthday, was sent a letter from President Joe Biden

commending her as a remarkable American centenarian. In 2022, she was recognized by the Woodlake Lions Club as an Honorable Community Member and honored at the annual Woodlake Pa-rade. She recently celebrated her 106th birthday, making her one of Woodlake's and Tulare County's oldest residents. She was celebrated and received certificates from the Woodlake City Council and the Tulare County Board of Supervisors.

Anita sought no personal recognition and exhibited profound humility. In her later years, she lived a quiet and simple life, surrounded by the loving care of her personal provid-ers, Debbie Coleman, her daughters, Mary and Delia, granddaughter Margaret, and compassionate hospice caregivers.

She is preceded in death by her husbands, Ramiro Vasquez, Tiburcio (Butch) Soleno, and her daughters, Elydia, Anna Amelia, and Martha Vasquez. She is survived by three sisters, Adela Munoz, Elisa Mahurin, and Leonor Bertram, her children, Jesse Alcala, Daniel (Frida), Louis, Mary Elvira (Alfonso) Delia, and Rudy (Rosandra) Soleno nineteen grandchildren, thirty-three great-grandchildren, and thirteen great-great-grandchildren.

Visitation will be held at Salser & Dillard Funeral Chapel in Visalia on Wednesday, February 18th, from 4:00-6:00 PM, followed by a Rosary from 6:00-7:00 PM. Mass will be held on Thursday, February 19th, at 10:00 AM at Saint Francis Cabrini Church in Woodlake, followed by a Graveside service at Woodlake Public Cemetery. A reception will follow at the Woodlake Memorial Hall from 12:30 PM to 4:00 PM.

Services have been entrusted to Salser & Dillard Funeral Chapel. Memorial Tributes and condolences may be offered by logging onto www.salseranddillard.com.

Previous Events

Visitation

FEB 18. 4:00 PM - 6:00 PM (PT)

Salser & Dillard Funeral Chapel
127 E. Caldwell Ave.
Visalia, CA 93277

Rosary

FEB 18. 6:00 PM - 7:00 PM (PT)

Salser & Dillard Funeral Chapel
127 E. Caldwell Ave.
Visalia, CA 93277

Mass of Christian Burial

FEB 19. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (PT)

St. Frances Cabrini
199 N Pepper St
Woodlake, CA 93286

Graveside

FEB 19. 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM (PT)

Woodlake Public Cemetery
165 N. Cypress St.
Woodlake, CA 93286

Tribute Wall



“ *Salser & Dillard Funeral Chapel created a Tribute Video in memory of Anita Lopez Soleno*



Salser & Dillard Funeral Chapel - February 18 at 04:14 PM



“ *Salser & Dillard Funeral Chapel created a Webcast in memory of Anita Lopez Soleno*



Salser & Dillard Funeral Chapel - February 18 at 10:17 AM

JM

“ *My condolences to the family of Anita Soleno. Although not seeing Anita in her latter years, her kindness through out the living times in Redbanks was so much appreciated. Rest in Peace Anita.*

Joe Mesa

Joe Mesa - February 17 at 01:29 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Anita Lopez Soleno.

February 17 at 01:11 PM



“ Rose Garden Heart was purchased for the family of Anita Lopez Soleno.



February 17 at 01:11 PM



“ Delfs-Martinson-Kalmanowitz purchased the Heavenly Grace Spray for the family of Anita Lopez Soleno.



Delfs-Martinson-Kalmanowitz - February 16 at 05:53 PM



“ LOVED this beautiful human being...Jess took me to meet his mama years ago.. she was kind, gentle loving.... Offered me coffee... She offered to make us dinner .. etc. I offered to help her... she was a good cook too.. made a great hot salsa. Tasty... she made me feel right at home. Her back was hunched.. nothing stopped her from being gracious and loving. I love you dear Anita. Lupe Sanoja 😊



lupe sanoja - February 13 at 11:20 PM