



## Yolanda Pantoja Pickett

May 18, 1954 - January 4, 2022

Yolanda, lovingly known as Yoli, was born and raised in Reedley, California on May 18, 1954. She was the first daughter of Rosario and Margret Pantoja. As a baby, and as a sign of her love, Margaret used to dress her up in beautiful dresses when they left the house. As a child, Yoli attended St. LaSalle School where she spoke of the Franciscan nuns fostering her Catholic faith. Her sisters and brothers knew her as a second mother, always teaching with fun and creativity. Later, Yoli went on to attend Reedley High School, and Fresno State. She often told her daughters about how she loved being part of the Fresno State Folklorico Dance Team, and how she sewed costumes for their performances. She completed her Bachelor's Degree and teaching credential at CSU Bakersfield.

After getting married, she and Raul lived in Sacramento before moving to Porterville, California. They spent 33 years in Porterville, where they raised their four daughters. As a mom, she is known for building loving confidence in her daughters, as they knew they were loved unconditionally and beyond measure. Her generous love was humble, funny and kind. But her greatest source of joy were her grandchildren, which is why she never missed a chance to cheer at their events or to talk to them about life's lessons in a way only she could. After her retirement in 2015, Yoli and Raul moved to Visalia. Yoli and Raul were married for 45 years and stayed by each other's side until the end.

If you knew Yoli, you knew creativity was her way of life. She did everything her own way. Everything she touched was a work of art, from her home, to her classroom, to her family. She never wasted a chance to create, making beauty out of every scrap of wood, piece of paper, piece of fabric. This exceptional creativity was reflected in her career as a teacher and her commitment to her community. Yoli was a loving teacher for twenty-five years. Known by her students as Mrs. Pantoja, she spent the majority of her career at Olive Street School in Porterville, working as a bilingual education teacher in the 4th and 2nd grades. Yoli had a gentle way of reaching children and making them feel as if they were the most special person in the room. This truly brought her joy. With her students, and with anyone she encountered, she would see the image of God. She is revered by many as the teacher who made all the difference. Beyond teaching, she was part of every community she was in, whether building floats for parades, attending daily mass, or decorating for school events (like the Dia Del Nino festival at Olive Street School and her daughter's proms). Giving of herself and her talents was what she did naturally.

Yolanda lived as she died, with sights on heaven. Yolanda exhibited her Catholic faith in more than just words. Even as a child she had a strong Faith. She saw every single person as a child of God, and that was exhibited in the way she made everyone feel unique and loved. She also had a distinctive way of seeing all sides of an issue, and having compassion for those who were suffering most. As she was in public, she was more so in private. Yoli was a very reflective person and spent much time contemplating the love of God and life's beauty. She passed on this wisdom to her daughters, siblings, and grandchildren.

Yolanda Pantoja Pickett passed away on Tuesday, January 4, 2022 surrounded by her family's love. The lessons of self-sacrifice and

perseverance exhibited throughout her life shined in abundance. Yoli will forever be remembered for her humble love, her exceptional creativity, and her loving wisdom. Her husband and daughters felt her love deeply, and can't help but to pass that on to their children to honor a life well lived.

Mama, Nana, Sister, Baby, Mija... you are now in the arms of Jesus. You are no longer suffering. We love you and miss you dearly.

She is preceded in death by her father, Rosario Pantoja, and is survived by her husband of 45 years, Raul Pickett; her daughters Margarita (Robert) Perez, Leticia (Daniel) Oberreuter, Adelina (Brandon) Carter, and Yesenia (Carlos) Lemus; her grandchildren Miliana, Italia, Isaac, Ximena, Paulo, Valentino, Luke, Rosario, Diego, Alina, and Emilio; her mother Margret Sanchez, and her siblings Irma Faria, Marco Pantoja, Anita Smith, and Ross Pantoja.

Visitation will be held 5-7pm Thursday, February 3, 2022 at Salser & Dillard Funeral Chapel, 127 E Caldwell Ave., Visalia, with the Rosary to be prayed at 6pm.

Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated 10am Friday, February 4, 2022 at St. Anthony of Padua South, 1060 F Street, Reedley. The family has opted for a Celebration of Life sometime in the future to accommodate those who cannot travel at this time. Thus, no reception will be held.

Services have been entrusted to Salser & Dillard Funeral Chapel. Memorial Tributes and condolences may be offered by logging onto [www.salseranddillard.com](http://www.salseranddillard.com).

# Previous Events

## Visitation

FEB 3. 5:00 PM - 6:00 PM (PT)

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

## Rosary

FEB 3. 6:00 PM - 7:00 PM (PT)

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

## Mass of Christian Burial

FEB 4. 10:00 AM (PT)

St. Anthony of Padua South  
1060 F Street  
Reedley, CA

# Tribute Wall



“ *Salser & Dillard Funeral Chapel created a Webcast in memory of Yolanda Pantoja Pickett*



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**Salser & Dillard Funeral Chapel** - February 02, 2022 at 01:16 PM



“ *Salser & Dillard Funeral Chapel created a Tribute Video in memory of Yolanda Pantoja Pickett*



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**Salser & Dillard Funeral Chapel** - February 01, 2022 at 06:22 PM

MP

“ Girls as I couldn't make it to the funeral because I was exposed to covid and had to isolate. I asked your dad to send this to you but I know he is going through alot of pain right now. I do want to offer you my heartfelt condolences. Yoli has been an incredible mother/grandmother/friend whose glow not only shines through all of us who have known her but embraces you as her daughters and her grandchildren. Her happiness was seeded in your happiness, And she, along with your dad, dedicated their lives to your development, success, and especially your commitment to God. This has been a true act of unbelievable love...you have been their journey in life. At my dad's birthday party, I witnessed how her grandchildren flocked to her and filled the space around her with so much carino and warmness, never having to say anything but smile the way we all remember. You were all her breath of life and her difficult survival as unbearable as it was, was an unselfish act to spend as much time with all of you as possible. What a blessing. My heart goes out to all of you. Tio Manuel

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**Manuel Pickett** - February 03, 2022 at 10:42 PM

LA

“ Love your cousins Gilbert & Liz Andazola purchased the Heavenly Grace Spray for the family of Yolanda Pantoja Pickett.



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**Love your cousins Gilbert & Liz Andazola** - February 02, 2022 at 02:48 PM



“ *Divine Peace Bouquet was purchased for the family of Yolanda Pantoja Pickett.*



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February 01, 2022 at 10:13 PM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Yolanda Pantoja Pickett.*



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January 31, 2022 at 10:27 PM



“ *Albert & Anna Castro purchased the Serenity Wreath for the family of Yolanda Pantoja Pickett.*



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**Albert & Anna Castro** - January 31, 2022 at 09:21 PM



“ *I'm so sorry for your loss Mr. Pickett. You always spoke so highly of your wife and family at work. My thoughts and prayers are with you and your family at this very difficult time.*

*Karen Warren  
(former co-worker at PDC)*

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**Karen (Warren) Rippee** - January 28, 2022 at 04:39 PM



“ I am so sorry to hear to about Yolanda. She was the sweetest person and a good friend. I met her when I was first employed as a migrant tutor, aide and then teacher at Belleview School. She was fun to work with. Prayers to her family.



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**Teresa Harbin** - January 28, 2022 at 02:10 PM



“ [Memorial Trees](https://www.salseranddillardvisalia.com/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was purchased for the family of Yolanda Pantoja Pickett.

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January 21, 2022 at 04:02 PM



“ To my sister Yolanda. To the most giving selfless person I've ever known. You never complained about anything or anyone.....ever. Not even when you were sick. Always grateful, thankful and faithful. Even in your sickness..... you thanked God you were the one suffering and your girls and family were not the ones that were sick. Always helping everyone and expecting nothing in return. You were truly our angel on earth. Words can not express how much we will all miss you. No doubt you are in heaven looking over us and continuing to be our angel. Sending you all my love sister. I won't say goodbye.... but see you again on the other side.



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**Anita** - January 14, 2022 at 06:05 PM

JR

“ *The sun shined whenever Yolanda was around, Yolanda, always had a way of making you feel special. I always admired how she excepted everyone for who they were and let them just be themselves without judgement. RIP Yolanda you will be missed by many. Thank you for everything.*

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**Jenny Rodriguez** - January 13, 2022 at 10:36 PM

NA

*Yolanda was a very humble God fearing woman that made an impact in many lives. I know she did in my life! She was willing to help anyone. She did not care where you came from. She always had a smile and a way to make you feel welcome! She will be missed but she will be in our hearts forever.*

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**Naty Faria Avellar** - January 14, 2022 at 10:27 PM