



Esperanza Luz Valenzuela

July 3, 1954 - September 7, 2026

Yuma, Arizona

Esperanza Luz Valenzuela died in Yuma on September 7, 2026. She was seventy-two. She was born there on July 3, 1954, in a house that smelled of dust and coffee, and she learned the highway to the fields as a weekday neighbor long before it became a postcard. Her mother packed lunches for a crew that started before daylight. Esperanza learned that a clean sink is a kind of welcome that does not require a speech.

She spent twenty-one years in a packing shed off the river road, first sorting, later keeping the night desk for people who arrived late from the desert with a child asleep in the back seat. She kept extra water without putting a note on the counter about generosity. When a dust storm closed the pass she made coffee until the urn complained. Later she sold sandwiches at a concession and treated a long line as weather you could live with if you kept moving.

She married Ruben Valenzuela in 1975. They raised a daughter in a bungalow that needed a new swamp cooler more often than the budget admitted. Ruben worked the canal. Esperanza packed lunches that could survive a climb in heat. After he died in 2017 she kept his chair for a year and then gave it to a nephew who needed a place to do homework.

Neighbors remember a woman who would jump a battery in the shed lot at dusk, who knew which intern needed a second explanation of the scale, and who could hear a rice pot without looking. She loved the first cool night after a hundred-degree week, a green-chile burrito on a Saturday, and the particular quiet after the last crate was stacked. She died in Yuma, in heat she had always preferred to a heavy humidity. The desk is someone else's now. The patience she practiced there is harder to replace than a vacancy sign.

Services

A rosary and a simple service in Yuma. The family welcomes a favorite hymn and a gift to a farmworkers' fund.

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