



## Marisol Elena Vargas

*May 17, 1968 - September 6, 2026*

Boise, Idaho

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Marisol Elena Vargas died in Boise on September 6, 2026. She was fifty-eight. Born there on May 17, 1968, she grew up knowing the foothills as a weekday place, not a postcard. Her father irrigated a small hay field; her mother kept the books for a parts store. Marisol learned radios before she learned a campus. A scanner, she said, was just another way a town talked to itself.

She spent twenty-four years as a dispatcher for the U.S. Forest Service, first on a night shift that smelled of burnt coffee, later as the calm voice that sent engines toward a ridge when the wind turned. She did not shout into a microphone. She repeated coordinates until the person on the other end had them, then she wrote the time in a log that she treated as a kind of prayer. Crews trusted her because she would tell them when she did not know, which is rarer than bravery. After a bad afternoon she sat in the parking lot with the windows down until her hands were quiet.

She married Luis Vargas in 1994. They raised a daughter and a son in a house with a view of the Bench and a freezer full of elk that friends had shared. Luis taught shop at the high school. Marisol packed lunches that could survive a fourteen-hour shift and still taste like home. She walked the Greenbelt before dawn because that was when the river looked like work instead of recreation.

Neighbors remember a woman who brought tamales to a firehouse without staying for thanks, who knew which intern needed a second explanation, and who could hear a weather radio without making it a personality. She loved a late-summer tomato, a clean map, and the particular silence after a fire is contained. She died in Boise, the high desert city that had always been enough map. The channel is still open. Someone else will say the coordinates. They will say them a little faster than she did.

## Services

A gathering in Boise at evening. Stories welcome; speeches optional. A gift to a wildland-crew fund or a river cleanup suits her.

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