



Manuel I. Lopez II JD

July 27, 1940 - November 3, 2022

Manuel I. Lopez, II, JD, 79, of Alamosa, Colorado, passed away after losing his battle with Alzheimer's and Cancer at home surrounded by family.

Manuel, also known as Mitri, was born to parents Manuel I. Lopez I and Betty Pacheco in Florida as his father was a photographer stationed there during WWII. Sadly his birth mother passed away when he was a young child. He was very blessed to have had two mothers, and was raised by Thelma Lopez, his second mother in a large family with eleven siblings he made twelve. He graduated from Aurora Central High School, he received an undergraduate degree from University of Colorado Denver, and received his Juris Doctorate University of Colorado Boulder Law School. Manuel did not just donate to causes, he dedicated his life to fighting for social justice through political activism and was an Attorney at Law dedicated to ensuring fairness as applied to our legal system. In 1969 he was a founding member of United Mexican American Students (UMAS), later the President of this student group. He demonstrated, participated in sit-ins, and took possession of the University's Administrative Offices demanding an increased enrollment for the Raza, culturally relevant curriculum, and community outreach programs. Within five years, UMAS had increased enrollment of Chicano and Chicana students by 137 people, an increase of 650% at that time. Since that time there have been thousands of Raza graduates, he was a trailblazer and stood by his principles. Never did he waiver from the belief that no matter your race, socio-economic background, whatever your circumstances everyone deserves an opportunity to be educated and have equal representation of the law.

In 1974 Manuel successfully graduated Law School and passed the bar on his first try, for those that do not know passing the bar is the exam needed to practice law and is one of the toughest, and most feared exams out there. Manuel took a position with Colorado Rural Legal Services (CRLS) providing free legal advice, clinics, and representation to low income Coloradans. After CRLS he went into private practice with O. John Kuenhold, Edwin J. Lobato, and Martin Gonzales. These men were not only colleagues but cherished friends of Manuel's. Both John and Martin went on to become judges and at

one point in 1987 Lopez served as City Prosecutor for Alamosa. He found his place as a public defender and that is where he finished his career. During his career Lopez argued hundreds of cases and served in a number of capacities in career-related organizations. He served as President of the SLV Bar Association, he was elected by SLV bar as representative on the Colorado Bar Association Executive Committee and served on the 12th Judicial District Judicial Nominating Committee. He graded exams for Carlos Lucero, who went on to become a judge on the 10th US Court of Appeals, when he was on the board of Law Examiners. He also served on the University of Colorado School of Law Alumni Board. Lopez also served on the Board of San Luis Valley Mental Health (Behavioral Health) Board for 32 years. Lopez absolutely loved serving on this board as mental health issues were near and dear to his heart. A wonderful story Arnold Salazar shared when calling the family to give his condolences was that he and Manuel would meet up everyday for breakfast where they processed, strategized, supported one another, brainstormed ideas and put into action solutions to help make The Valley the best place it could be. Manuel loved the Valley and his dear friend Arnold.

Manuel put family first, he always took calls from his kids no matter what he was doing; Manuel I. Lopez, III, Maria Lopez, EMBA, Brian Lopez, JD, and Adam Lopez. His four grandchildren were his pride and joy and when he was healthy he never missed a chance to be with them; Faith Lopez, Lorraine Owlchild, Joaquin Lopez, and Isabella Lopez. Manuel would drive six hours to watch his kids compete in sports and turn around the same night to make it back to work. He was an "AVID" fan and often got too passionate crossing the line more than once when a ref made a bad call. He supported sports even after all his kids graduated and moved on, he believed in community and the lessons being an athlete teaches kids. Manuel thought the world of the coaches and folks who dedicated their lives to enriching children through physical activity and hard work. He was a runner, bicyclists, and never missed a workout. He was always there if one of the kids or family needed his legal help. He was loyal, hardworking and did the best that he could to ensure we were all taken care of and safe. He was a great man, he was one of a kind, and they do not make them like him anymore. His passing leaves a huge hole in the hearts and souls of his family. Please join us to celebrate his life on Saturday November 19th from 11am-2pm at The Barn at Manzilla Farm in Alamosa.

Lastly, the Family of Manuel would like to thank his ex-wife Sandy Lopez. When Manuel was diagnosed with Alzheimer's we knew the road would not be easy, we just did not know how difficult it would get. She stepped up when she did not have to, and provided care, companionship, love, and a lot of hard work to keep him at home. There are no words that can adequately share our gratitude and love for this huge act of kindness. Thank you Sandy. To leave online condolences please visit romerofuneralhomes.com.

Romero Funeral Home in Alamosa is in care of the arrangements.

Tribute Wall



“ *Manuel I. Lopez II JD*

January 29, 2023 at 07:44 AM



“ *I remember when Manuel worked at the Public Defenders Office in Alamosa. I have worked at the Saguache County Sheriff's Office since 1979. He always did a wonderful job representing the clients he represented in our Jail. Ever treating the inmates with dignity and respect.*

Sending prayers for the family,

Lyn Pacheco-Miles

Saguache, CO

Lyn Miles - November 15, 2022 at 05:52 PM



“ *"To the family of Manuel Lopez, I would like to express my condolences. I have fond memories of Manuel from Law School in Boulder up until the time he retired. He represented clients while I was Judge in Rio Grande County for many years. He was always well prepared and represented his clients zealously. He was always fighting for the underdog. I will miss my friend and colleague."*

Michael H. Trujillo

Michael H. Trujillo - November 12, 2022 at 12:50 PM



“ *Manuel was ever the valiant champion for those in need. He knew what it meant engage in the good struggle. Know that I will always remember him with great warmth and love. I will miss him so much.*

Judge Martín

judge Martín - November 09, 2022 at 07:56 PM



*¡Qué en Paz Descanse nuestro amigo Manuel López!
DUrioste*

Donaldo Urioste - November 11, 2022 at 05:18 PM

CR

To Manuel's family:

Manuel was a friend of mine for over 40 years. I met him through my work with the Alamosa Courts. He would tease me but always respected my opinions. He was a very hard worker and represented his clients well. He was certainly a person who retained his 60s values and that was such a special quality! When he was thinking about retiring, he asked me if I would organize his retirement party which I gladly did - it was such an honor. Manuel will be missed. Sincerely, Carol (Ortiz) Redding

Carol Redding - November 16, 2022 at 06:50 PM