

A Woman of Strength and Grace

By Madison Lewis



Ramona Flores

Ramona Flores has seen adversity in her life, but that never stopped her from becoming great, whether it be in her career or personal life. Ramona was born on February 8th, 1934, to Juanita Martinez Flores, who was widowed at a young age. Ramona was born in Rock Springs, Texas, a small community in Mills County that is no longer on the map. She has nine siblings, eight of whom are girls. Ramona described her family as 'poor, but happy'.

Ramona's family was largely agriculturally based. She said, "We lived on various farms and ranches in the Rock Springs community and worked in the fields and dairies performing the tasks involved in agricultural, farm and ranch living." Ramona is very thankful for her mother, as she in Ramona's words, "instilled into us high moral values, honesty, and integrity and to respect authorities, and definitely our elders."

Ramona attended the Big Valley two-room school from first to fourth grade until the school was consolidated into Goldthwaite ISD. Ramona graduated from Goldthwaite High School in May of 1951.

According to Ramona, "Upon my graduation from GHS, a very dear friend of my sister Elisa, Jean Smith, whose husband, Dr. Charles Smith, who had a medical practice here in Goldthwaite in 1948 – 1950, offered me the opportunity to go live with them in Dallas, Texas when Dr. Smith was recalled to active military duty during the Korean War."

Ramona went to Dallas and attended Draughon's Business College to pursue Secretarial-Bookkeeping. Mr. Hollis Blackwell, the owner at the time of Blackwell Wool and Mohair, and a very generous man according to Ramona, 'floated' her a loan of \$350 to pay the tuition at Draughon's. Ramona said Mr. Blackwell helped "qualify (me) to get employment with the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service, the INS, now ICE."

Ramona worked with the INS for 43 years, having many opportunities open to her due to being bilingual in English and Spanish. Ramona worked in the Dallas office from April of 1952 to January of 1965. She then transferred to the position of Executive Secretary to the U.S. Immigration Attaché at the American Embassy, Mexico, DF, Mexico. Ramona said, "I remained at the office until July 1975, when I returned stateside for the position of Immigration Inspector at the INS office in Houston, TX. Then, in April 1977, I transferred to the Federal Law Enforcement Training Facility, Glynco (Brunswick), GA as the Administrative Officer for INS."

She moved around Texas during her years with the INS, and even went to other states including Oklahoma. "In August 1988, I was assigned at Immigration Officer (Assistant Attaché) at the INS office at the American Consulate General, Monterrey, NL, Mexico," Ramona said. "I remained there until I was assigned as Officer in Charge (Assistant Attaché) of the INS office at the American Consulate General, Ciudad Juarez, Chih., Mexico. I remained there until my retirement on June 24, 1995, when I returned to reside in Goldthwaite," she said.

During her time with the INS, Ramona visited over 10 countries and “was privileged to interact with people of various cultures and to spend time in many foreign countries.”

Since returning to Goldthwaite, Ramona has served on several boards. Ramona is passionate about past history, especially in Mills County. She believes it is important to honor those who have created our history because “they are who have made Mills Co. into the great community we live in.”

Ramona was asked to give advice to the younger generations. She said, “Always keep an open mind, listen and be willing to learn from others’ experiences and advice; be respectful to everyone and always do the very best you can. When you commit to do something, give it the very best you are capable of. When opportunity knocks, capitalize on it. Put your trust in our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Ramona Flores has had a long time career dedicated to helping others. She has been nothing but dedicated and has lived a majority of her life in Mills County. Ramona is not only an inspiration to me but to others and there is no doubt that she will inspire future generations as well.