

## FIRST DRAFT

Margarita Macias Salomon

I met with the most charming Margarita Salomon in her home on 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue. With an inviting, wide flagstone walkway leading up to the door, it is a lovely, comfortable home filled with the happy chaos of grandchildren and puppies. Margarita's husband Manuel raises canaries in a special room at the back of the house.

Margarita Macias Salomon's Story:

As told to Oli Olivas Duncan January 12, 2009

I grew up in Juarez, Mexico. It was common to cross back and forth across the border, so I went to school in El Paso. In 1978 I married my husband Manuel and came here to Longmont. I really fell in love with Longmont. Growing up in a big city like Juarez, it was my dream to live in a small community where everybody knew each other. I've enjoyed watching Longmont grow over the years, and there are a lot of very honest families. You can leave your house open and not have to worry.

I know that some people tend to feel discriminated against, but I never felt that way. I learned to deal with other people in the border towns, so I guess that was good training for when I came here. I've always gotten along well with others.

When my husband's family first came here, they didn't know anybody. When Manuel and I came, his family was working at the Tanaka farms. I loved being on the farm.

Manuel and I have three boys, who are all married, and we have eight grandchildren plus six more from Manuel's two other children, so we have fourteen grandchildren. My oldest son, Juan Manuel, is thirty-one. He attended CSU and is a fireman with the Longmont Fire Department. David is twenty-seven and Luis Estefan is twenty-four. They are both truck drivers and heavy equipment operators. They work all over.

The boys were always together and grew up working with their dad. Manuel was a foreman for Dick Tanaka. The boys went to school and they worked with their father. At one time I felt sorry for my sons' having to work in the fields, but then I realized that it was good for them. They learned how to work; they learned how to make themselves do whatever needed doing.

My father-in-law taught me how to make tortillas. I used to make burritos and sell some to the men who were working in the fields. I would drive into the fields to deliver burritos and drinks to them. They were always very respectful to me. As I became acquainted with these men, they began to ask me for favors, like buying money orders to send to Mexico, taking letters to the Post Office, or sometimes translating for them to the doctor. Doing things like that, you meet a lot of people. I enjoyed helping them. It was fun. I like working with people.

In 1984 I helped start the Spanish ministry at the Trinity Baptist Church on Longs Peak. (Elaborate?)

In 1986, when the Amnesty became law, my husband and I talked with Dick Tanaka and started taking groups of men to Denver to apply for citizenship. Charlotte Tanaka and I helped them get their applications completed. We helped about two hundred people through the process. We started by helping them get all their information together and assigned them

to groups so we could take them for their applications. Dick Tanaka gave them the time off so they could go. There were some people trying to take advantage of them by charging money for these services. I told Dick Tanaka about this and how I didn't want anyone to take advantage of our guys. I had to learn everything I could about the entire process so I could help them. It was an important time, and it was an important service that I could help to provide.

Then they started asking me if I knew how to do income taxes. I didn't, so I sent them to H&R Block. Then I thought I'd better go and learn. So I took classes and worked with H&R Block for two or three years. Then I became an income tax preparer on my own. My clients come to me. They learn about me by word of mouth from other clients. I update my training every year.

I started working with the migrant school in 1989 when Estefan was five and in kindergarten. My sons really liked the migrant school. I helped start the reading program, *Niños del Sol*. When I first started working in the school, some of the men I knew brought their families to the United States. I helped to enroll their children in school and to familiarize them with the neighborhood.

I worked with the migrant program for the school district. Part of my job there was as a parent recruiter. It was a volunteer service because I was part of the PTA for the migrant program. We worked with several schools. I got to meet a lot of people from other schools, not only the ones where I used to go when I was on the farm. I started to meet more of the community at large.

I work full-time as an attendance clerk for Sanborn Elementary School (?). I work with the parents when they register their children, do the class lists, translate (?) for teachers and help with testing.

In 1997 my mom, Elia Macias, and I opened a little business called Elia's Burritos. My mom always liked to cook, and she had had a restaurant in Juarez. Unfortunately, she passed away just six months after we opened the business. My sister, Miritzi Lugo, was helping, so I sold my part of the business to her in 1999.

Besides income taxes, I do business consulting. My daughter-in-law, Yesenia Salomon, helps me. She does marketing and she is also an insurance agent. My other daughters-in-law help sometimes, too. We all work well together. The name of my business is Salomon Professional Services. I advise on accounting and immigration, and I do translations, mostly written communications.

My husband Manuel worked for the Tanakas until they sold out, then he was forced to get another job. In 1992 he went to work for Organic Products Distribution. When they were old enough, my sons worked with him in the warehouse.

My grandmother (name?) is still alive, so we have five generations in my family. I'm a grandmother and I still have my grandmother. My grandmother lives with my husband and me. She just turned eighty-nine years old. She likes it a lot here, and she tries to help out around the house. My father and the rest of her kids live in Juarez and El Paso. She likes to visit back and forth. She has a big house in Mexico. When she's down there, she stays in her own home with her daughter and son-in-law. I have two sisters who live in El Paso, and a brother, Luis Macias, who attended Las Cruces University and is an immigrations officer for

the Department of Agriculture. He handles inspections at the border in El Paso. I have a brother (name?) and my sister Miritzi who live here.

We all get together for holidays and birthdays. We make tamales at Christmastime. For birthdays, we like to make chile mole and poblano (sp?) with pork.

I'm very proud of my family. I'm proud that my family has been successful.

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