

The Bandera PROPHEET

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Growing Up In Bandera

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The Bandera Prophet

I recently had to take a timeout from my regular Saturday morning routine of yard sales so I could attend a funeral service. As I have gotten older, I prefer to avoid such gatherings but sometimes a final "hasta luego" is required. Such was the case for my friend and beloved Bandera retired teacher, Ruth Hay.

How I gained such a special friend is still a mystery to me. Talk about an unlikely pairing. It might have had something to do with her love of history. Local Bandera history especially. She explained to me how I was creating my own history records. Heck, I thought I was simply telling about the shenanigans youngsters used to be involved in back in the day.

It wasn't long after I started sharing my stories in The Bandera Bulletin about being raised here in Bandera that she started reaching out to me to share some of her long life experiences. I was well aware of some of the events highlighted in her obituary and more because I had previously been treated to firsthand tales about a young girl being raised in Dilley to start her life's journey and then ending up here in our town. How lucky and privileged we were to have her in our lives.

I would stop writing sometimes as I struggled to find a subject to write about and she would always encourage me and assured me that it would come around again. And it did. Often my stories were inspired by something we had discussed in one of our phone conversations.

At times we had differing opinions on things, especially politics. For the most part we left that out of our conversations.

I have heard the many praises heaped upon her about her math teaching skills by some of her former students. I never had the experience of being in her classroom but I often felt her enthusiasm of sharing knowledge in our many phone conversations. She never failed to mention the respect she had for my sister Mary, who followed in her footsteps as a math teacher in Bandera's school system.

My wife always knew who I was talking to as she listened to my side of the phone conversations. If there happened to be a hot issue going on in the community she would always ask me, "What did Ruth have to say about it?"

Some of the events in our childhood stories we shared over the phone would probably leave modern kids mortified. For us it was simply a good laugh out loud and an unseen shared head nodding in agreement. If you lived it there was no shame in not having the best things the world had to offer.

Here in my advanced stages of Growing Up In Bandera, the loss of an older friend always hits hard. There is something special and lasting about having a conversation with someone who understands your story because they lived it too. People like that can't be replaced. I loved her and will miss the inspiration she always provided. Until we meet again.....

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