



Irene Garza Shively, age 93, passed away peacefully with her loving children by her side, Dec. 16, 2017, at the Methodist Stone Oak Hospital in San Antonio, Texas. Irene will be remembered as a loving wife and mother, who cared deeply for her family. Her lively and humorous gifts of chatting and sharing with everyone she met endeared her to friends and strangers alike.

Born August 22, 1924, in Riviera, Texas, to Lillian Rose and Faustino Gonzales Garza, Irene spent her earliest years in Chicago, Illinois, while her parents sought work during the Great Depression. At age 6, her mother brought Irene and her older brother Manuel back to San Antonio, Texas, to live with their grandparents.

After graduating from George W. Brackenridge High School in 1942, Irene entered training at Robert B. Green Memorial Hospital School of Nursing and the San Antonio College of Nursing, graduated and was licensed as an RN in 1945. As a nurse, Irene and her "gang" of fellow nurses served in hospitals in San Antonio, Palo Alto, California, and Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

Irene's service in uniform began in high school as a Cadet Sponsor to the Brackenridge High School ROTC where she marched in military parades and attended socials throughout San Antonio. During training she joined the Cadet Nurse Corps.

On a dare in Oklahoma City, she went to the U.S. Air Force recruiting office where her gang was supposed to meet her, but never showed. The recruiter asked her to sign a document attesting to his time talking with her, which she did. A couple of months later, to her surprise, Irene received a commission as a 1st Lieutenant (Surgical Nurse, Operating Room) in the Air Force and orders to active duty.

While on active duty, Irene met Air Force 1st Lieutenant Thomas P. Shively, a pilot, at Lake Charles, Louisiana and married him two weeks later. As a "wedding present," Irene's head nurse handed her orders to Clark Field in the Philippines. On her return stateside nearly two years later, the couple met and honeymooned in Oahu and the Big Island, Hawaii. Irene was honorably discharged in 1954 and ceased working as a nurse in 1955 when she became pregnant with her first child. She was blessed with two children, Leslie Ann and Tom Jr.

The family traveled extensively during two decades of military assignments, living in Wiesbaden, Germany, Tehran, Iran; and in California, Colorado and Virginia. Thomas P. retired from the Air Force while at the Pentagon, Washington D.C.

The family moved to East Lansing in 1972, where Thomas P. was hired by the state of Michigan and Irene continued to be a stay-at-home mom. After their children left, Irene volunteered regularly with the St. Vincent De Paul Society assisting needy with rent, utilities, furniture, food, clothing and other essentials. She was also a member of the Legion of Mary, meeting and praying regularly for the intentions of Mary, Mother of God.

Irene also volunteered with the Gov. Bill Milliken and Sen. Spencer Abraham election campaigns. The couple retired to Palm Coast, Florida, in 1989, and then moved to San Antonio, Texas, in 2001, so they could be close to her relatives. Irene continued serving the Catholic community with her husband as Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion at Brooke Army Medical Center.

Irene was preceded in death by her parents, brother and husband. She is survived by daughter Leslie Ann, son Tom Jr., sister Diana Zavala and numerous nieces and nephews. Services were held at Holy Trinity Catholic Church, San Antonio. She was interred next to her husband, Thomas P. with military honors at Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery.

