



Mary Lou Salas-McClelland

October 17, 1949 - April 5, 2025

In Loving Memory of Mary Lou Salas-McClelland

October 17, 1949 – April 5, 2025

Our guiding light and source of endless love, Mary Lou McClelland, was called home on April 5, 2025, at the age of 75. She was surrounded by her loving husband, children and siblings. Mary Lou was a cherished wife, mother, grandma, great-grandma, sister, Tia, and friend whose love and warmth will be dearly missed by all who knew her.

Mary Lou McClelland was born on October 17, 1949, in Roswell, New Mexico, to Julio and Cecilia Salas of Dexter, NM. The eldest of four children, she grew up in the small, close-knit town of Dexter alongside her two brothers and sister.

Her childhood was filled with the warmth of family and the simpler living of small-town life. Just around the corner from her church, Mary Lou and her family would often walk together to worship—a routine that nurtured her early and lasting devotion to her Catholic faith. She fondly recalled watching the sisters tend to the church with care and reverence, and she once dreamed of becoming a nun.

Mary Lou also remembered the long days of cotton-picking in the fields with her family, though she much preferred staying behind to care for the home. Even as a young girl, she was a homemaker at heart—thoughtful, attentive, and happiest when creating comfort and care for others. These early experiences shaped the woman she would become: nurturing, faith-filled, and deeply committed to serving others with love.

Mary Lou's love for children extended beyond her own home and into her work. She served as a kindergarten teacher's assistant in the Dexter schools, where her warmth and gentle nature quickly earned the hearts of countless students. Her eldest daughter fondly remembers watching as children ran to greet her mother on the playground, calling out her name and wrapping their little arms around her. Mary Lou had a gift for making every child feel seen and loved—and they loved her in return.

Throughout her life, Mary Lou touched lives in every role she held. She worked at JCPenney, where she delighted in wrapping gifts with care, tying each one with beautiful ribbon and bows. She also worked at Levi Strauss, where her natural talent for sewing shone through—another reflection of her attention to detail and dedication to craftsmanship.

Mary Lou made her home in Roswell, New Mexico, where she would settle and raise her family. It was there that she poured her love into her children and her home—living a life marked by grace, humility, and quiet strength.

Mary Lou McClelland was the very definition of a devoted mother. She chose to stay home to raise her four children, giving them the gift of her time, love, and constant presence. Her nurturing spirit extended beyond her own family as she opened her heart and home through a daycare she ran for many years—lovingly caring for countless children as if they were her own.

During those early years, Mary Lou became an active member of the PTA, where her children attended school. She was a familiar and comforting presence at school events, always finding ways to be involved and supportive in her children's education and activities.

As her children grew older, Mary Lou began working at the Roswell Job Corps Center, where she served faithfully as an administrative assistant until her retirement. Even then, her role as "mom" never paused—her children often called her at work to "tell on each other," much to the amusement (and occasional exhaustion) of her coworkers. "Can I speak with Mary Lou?" became a familiar phrase at the front desk, a testament to how deeply her children relied on her wisdom and love—no matter the time or place.

Mary Lou formed many lasting friendships during her time at Job Corps, connections she deeply cherished. Her calm presence, big heart, and infectious smile left a lasting impression on all who worked alongside her.

Mary Lou was blessed with many talents, and she used them all to enrich the lives of those around her. A gifted homemaker in every sense, she loved to sew, cook, decorate, paint, and refurbish furniture—always finding beauty in the details and joy in the act of creating.

Her children fondly remember the magical birthday parties she threw—complete with handmade piñatas, homemade cakes, and decorations that reflected her creativity and love. She lovingly sewed elaborate costumes for her children, many of which won first-place prizes in contests. Easter dresses and handmade outfits were stitched with care, becoming treasured memories for her daughters.

In Mary Lou's home, meals were more than just food—they were expressions

of love. It was rare to eat out, because nothing compared to her cooking. Her homemade buttered tortillas, stuffed sopapillas, red and green chili, and her special pea tacos were family favorites—flavors that still bring comfort and connection to her children’s hearts. Every stitch, every dish, every detail in her home was a reflection of her love, her care, and her endless devotion to her family.

Mary Lou had a zest for life and an eye for a good deal—traits she proudly inherited from her father. She loved browsing garage sales and thrift stores, always on the hunt for hidden treasures. Nothing thrilled her more than finding a bargain, especially when it meant she could bring something home for someone she loved.

She also loved hosting garage sales of her own, often with her best friend who lived just down the street. Her children fondly remember those special times—late nights spent pricing items, and early mornings hauling clothes and furniture out onto the car port. These moments, filled with laughter, teamwork and friendship, remain cherished memories.

Mary Lou had a way of connecting with people wherever she went. She couldn’t step foot into a store without running into someone she knew—and taking the time to stop, chat, and catch up. She shopped with others in mind, always bringing home something thoughtful for her children, grandchildren, friends, or someone in need.

She adored her grandchildren and great-grandson, delighting in every chance to spoil them. Summers were filled with days of swimming and simple joys. Her granddaughters will especially miss the sandwiches Grandma lovingly made—potted meat, chicken sandwiches with the crust carefully cut off, and those classic Vienna sausages. And no Easter was complete without the beloved chocolate bunny she gave each grandchild—and her children too.

Mary Lou was blessed to be the grandmother of 15 grandchildren and one great-grandchild—each one a source of immense pride and joy. Her love for them was woven into everything she did, from the smallest treats to the most thoughtful gestures.

Her home was a haven of love and fun for her grandchildren. She always kept a special drawer stocked with snacks and candy, knowing just what would bring smiles to their faces. One of their favorite traditions was “Grandma’s Store,” a little treasure trove tucked inside her closet. There, her grandchildren could “shop” for gifts to give their parents on birthdays and Christmas—an act that not only made them feel special, but also taught them the joy of giving, just as she always had. Mary Lou created a world where her grandchildren felt safe, loved, and endlessly cared for. Her presence in their lives was a gift they will carry with them always.

Mary Lou cherished the simple, quiet moments of life—especially movie nights at home with a bag of popcorn, a soda, and the company of her husband or children by her side. Whether it was a lighthearted comedy, a heartfelt chick flick, documentary or a good mystery, she found comfort in these shared moments of laughter and stillness.

Beside her, always, were her beloved dogs Ginger and Pepper—her “therapy dogs,” as she lovingly called them. They were more than pets; they were her companions, her babies. Mary Lou had a soft spot for the smallest and most overlooked, often choosing the runt of the litter and giving them a life full of love and care. She dressed them up, spoiled them endlessly, and gave them the same gentle, nurturing love she gave to everyone else in her life. And in return, they adored her. Mary Lou’s love, whether for family, friends, or her furry companions, was boundless and pure.

Mary Lou had a gift for capturing life’s special moments. She never turned

down a selfie with her loved ones—unless, of course, she didn't have on her signature red lipstick. Her camera roll was filled with memories, each one a reflection of the joy she found in simply being with her family.

Her children carry with them treasured memories—from childhood to adulthood—of a home filled with joy, music, and dancing. Mary Lou loved playing her favorite music throughout the house, from oldies to country to Spanish classics. Her music brought energy to every corner and made even ordinary days feel special.

During the holidays, she let her young children take the lead decorating their fresh-cut Christmas tree, proudly displaying every handmade school ornament. Home was never just a place—it was a feeling. A place of safety, of celebration, of unconditional love. Mary Lou created that for her family, and it lives on in every memory, every tradition, and every heart she touched.

On September 14, 1996, Mary Lou married Lyle McClelland—the man she lovingly called her Angel. Together, they shared nearly 29 beautiful years of love, partnership, and deep devotion. As a blended family with eight children, Mary Lou and Lyle built a life rooted in family and love.

Lyle devoted himself wholeheartedly to Mary Lou, always cherishing her and making sure she was cared for. His adventurous spirit gently pulled her out of her comfort zone—encouraging her to explore new experiences, like riding beside him on the custom trike he built, or spending time together at the cabin he crafted by hand, deep in the wilderness, with the help of their children. Those memories, made in simplicity and love, became treasures for the whole family.

Mary Lou welcomed Lyle's four children with open arms, embracing them with

the same compassion and fierce love she gave her own. She had a natural mother's heart—nurturing and kind, yet firm when needed. Her children are forever grateful for the love Lyle gave to their mother, and for the home and family they built together.

Mary Lou lived a life devoted entirely to her family. She was the heart and soul of her home, always placing the needs of her family above her own. To know Mary Lou is to know a woman of God, with deep unwavering faith. Her love for God guided every aspect of her life, and her kindness extended to all, even to complete strangers—many of whom became cherished lifelong friends. She touched countless lives with her gentle spirit. Her kindness knew no bounds. Her home was filled with warmth, laughter, and meaningful conversations, not only for her children but for their friends and extended family, whom she welcomed without hesitation and treated as her own.

Through her quiet grace and devotion, Mary Lou taught her family the values of compassion, patience, love and faith. Mary Lou was her children's greatest strength, and she reminded them often that they were hers. She was their fiercest supporter throughout their life, encouraging them to pursue their dreams, and praying for them to find the perfect partner to share those dreams with. In moments of hardship, her presence brought comfort. She had a way of making everything feel right with just a touch, a prayer, or a few well-chosen words. Her favorite reminder, "Trust in God," became a guiding light to those she loved most.

Mary Lou McClelland was a woman of great spirit and quiet resilience. She faced many challenges with remarkable strength, leaning on her faith and love for her family to carry her through. No matter what came her way, she never lost the gentle smile and radiant glow that illuminated any room. Mary Lou's generosity, her joyful spirit, and the quiet ways she made life brighter for everyone around her are treasures that will live on in the hearts of those she

loved.

Much like her own mother, Mary Lou embodied the very best qualities. She will be remembered most for her generosity, nurturing love, thoughtful wisdom, boundless faith, and the way she made everyone feel seen and special. Her love was a gift to all.

Though her presence will be deeply missed, her spirit lives on in the hearts of those who were blessed to know her. She was, and always will be, the heart of her family.

Life—and holidays—will never be the same without her. But the love she poured into her family will continue to live on in each of her children. It is a legacy of strength, togetherness, and endless love that will carry them forward always.

Mary Lou McClelland is survived by her devoted husband, Lyle McClelland, and her eight beloved children:

Athena Cobos-Corcoran and husband Gavin,
Cecily Cobos-George and husband Kevin,
Arthur Cobos and wife Kellie,
Isaac Cobos and wife Geli,
Josh McClelland,
Angela McClelland,
Adam McClelland, and
Joni McClelland.

She was the proud grandma of:

Johnny Levario,
Melody Corcoran,
Kevin Jr., Kaidn, and Kaesn George,
Nicholas, Nayeli, Nalani, and Nadia Cobos,

Mila Cobos and Zarah and Catherine Woods,
Adam McClelland, Jr.,
Jackie McClelland-Montgomery and husband Cody
Phillip McClelland.
And proud great grandma of great-grandchild, Oakley Montgomery.

Mary Lou is survived by her siblings:

Ralph Salas and wife Cindy,
Nancy Salas and partner Ruben Reyes,
Julio Salas, Jr. (Sonny) and wife Amie.

She is also survived by her dear niece/goddaughter, Naomi Salas; her caregiver and dear friend, Erma Gonzalez, and a host of extended family and dear friends who were like family.

Mary Lou was preceded in death by her loving parents, Julio and Cecilia Salas, and by Johnny Levario, Sr., whose memory she held close to her heart.

A memorial service to celebrate Mary Lou McClelland's life will be held on Saturday, April 26, 2025, at Immaculate Conception Catholic Church, 400 6th St, Dexter, NM. A Rosary will be held at 9:30 a.m., followed by a Mass, and a gathering for family and friends to honor the remarkable woman she was.

Flowers can be sent to Anderson-Bethany Funeral Home in Mary Lou's memory, 2609 S. Main, Roswell, NM, 88203.

Though our hearts are heavy with grief, we take comfort in knowing that Mary Lou's love will remain with us—guiding us, comforting us, and living on in every life she touched. Mary Lou will be forever loved and never forgotten. Her beautiful spirit will live on.

God blessed us with the best. Rest in the arms of Jesus.

We love you, Momma.

Previous Events

Rosary and Mass

APR **26**. 9:30 AM (MT)

Immaculate Conception Catholic Church
400 W 6th St
Dexter, NM 88230
(575) 734-5478

Tribute Wall

JG

“ My condolences to Mary Lou's family. We both attended Dexter High School . She was a very cheerful friend and nice to everyone. May she rest in peace.

Jessie Galindo - April 26, 2025 at 04:24 PM

GM

“ Gil and Renee Mireles purchased the Strength & Solace Spray for the family of Mary Lou Salas-McClelland.



Gil and Renee Mireles - April 24, 2025 at 05:33 PM

RH

“ To Mary Lou Family and Friends,
The life she lived and the lives she touched will never be forgotten. I was glad to have been in that number. Always the same with her kindness and consideration was Mary Lou's life toward others. Being one of her Co-Workers and neighbors when she worked at Job Corps, we also shared relatives a Nephew, Jason and Cynthia. May all that knew her be comforted by GOD who knows what she meant to each and everyone of us! Because JESUS lives we can face tomorrow!

Rudy Hunter - April 24, 2025 at 10:05 AM

BB

“ Our thoughts and prayers are with you and your family. Bonnie Bizzell-Keller



Bonnie Bizzell-Keller - April 22, 2025 at 05:53 PM

BG

“ I open up her obituary page every day so I can see her sweet, sweet smile one more time. Love you Cousin, Betty Jane



Betty Jane Lucero Garcia - April 22, 2025 at 02:20 PM

MR

“ I can't even describe how much MaryLou meant to meant to when I first met Cis back in the early 90's. She was one hell of a momma that took care of her children as a single mom back then. She always said I was her other daughter as Cis, Athena, and I became bestie's. Then sweet Lyle came into the picture and he just a sweet man that took over MaryLou and the family as his own, and so did MaryLou took over his children as her own. I will never forget the post-it love you notes all over the kitchen cabinets when I'd go over to visit. I was privileged to know and love this beautiful family that made two families become one. May you rest in peace and I know you're dancing in heaven with your family. Love you always Momma MaryLou💔💔💔. Praying for my McLeland and Cobos family . I love you all. 🙏🙏🙏🙏🙏

Melissa Rue - April 22, 2025 at 02:41 AM

MR

“ *Melissa Rue lit a candle in memory of Mary Salas-McClelland*



Melissa Rue - April 22, 2025 at 02:23 AM

JM

“ *Jessica McGeorge lit a candle in memory of Mary Salas-McClelland*



Jessica McGeorge - April 17, 2025 at 07:09 PM

JM

“ I feel so deeply blessed to have known Marylou. Her beautiful smile could light up any room, and her presence was always filled with warmth, kindness, and grace. She had a way of making everyone feel welcome...as if you have known her your whole life.

Marylou carried a gentle spirit that reflected the love of God in everything she did. I will always remember her as a woman of peace, strength, and endless compassion.

I pray her spirit continues to comfort and guide all of her children and grandkids who loved her so dearly.

I want to give special thanks to Cecily and Athena for introducing me to your mother, Marylou. Because of you ladies, I had the joy and honor of knowing such a truly remarkable woman. May God give you strength during this difficult time.

Love, Jessica

Jessica McGeorge - April 17, 2025 at 03:24 PM

JM

“ Jessica McGeorge lit a candle in memory of Mary Salas-McClelland



Jessica McGeorge - April 17, 2025 at 03:11 PM

SS

“ Lived one block over from MaryLou and she never missed a yard sale. I always enjoyed our conversations & catching up with her. When my mom passed away, she shared many memories they had as kids together with all the cousins. Prayers for her family during this time.

Sara Sanchez - April 16, 2025 at 11:14 PM

AR

“ My sincerest condolences to Lyle, the Cobos family and the Salas family, (Ralph, Nancy and Sonny). Mary Lou was so sweet. I never saw her without a smile. May she rest in peace and May God bless you all during this time. All my love to you all. Anita Salas Rabb



Anita Salas Rabb - April 15, 2025 at 04:46 PM

EB

“ Ericka Brady lit a candle in memory of Mary Salas-McClelland



Ericka Brady - April 13, 2025 at 09:14 AM

BF

“ Berry Family lit a candle in memory of Mary Salas-McClelland



Berry Family - April 11, 2025 at 04:00 PM

EB

“ *Ericka Brady lit a candle in memory of Mary Salas-McClelland*



Ericka Brady - April 11, 2025 at 07:51 AM

EB

What a beautiful tribute ❤️

Ericka Brady - April 23, 2025 at 09:37 AM

AT

“ *My sincerest condolences to the Family , may she Rest in Peace -- From the Torrez family--- And the Graduating class of 1968 - Dexter High*

Antonio Torrez - April 10, 2025 at 07:56 PM

FS

“ *Taken away to soon, Mary is part of our Salazar family we mourn her passing but we are happy for her ascension into heaven with our lord, she married our dearest friend Lyle, I was their best man and me and Josie took her in as our family we will always remember her*



FRANK SALAZAR - April 10, 2025 at 07:41 PM

RB

“ Oh my sweet friend Marylou...I will forever cherish the beautiful memories of laughter, kindness, tears and love you shared with me.

My sincere condolences and prayers to her loving family. You were blessed with the best wife, mother, grandmother and sister. May her spirit live in each of you forever.

Eternal rest grant unto Mary Lou, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon her. May her soul and all the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.

Regina Bejarano - April 10, 2025 at 03:38 PM

GE

“ Marylou was a beautiful soul. God bless her children, grandkids, family in this time of grief.

Gloria Espinoza - April 10, 2025 at 01:00 PM

GE

“ Gloria Espinoza lit a candle in memory of Mary Salas-McClelland



Gloria Espinoza - April 10, 2025 at 12:57 PM

CC

“ Condolences to the family, RIP Mary Lou 🙏



Cecilia Chavez - April 10, 2025 at 11:42 AM

MG

“ *My sincere condolences to the family of Mary , may God give you strength and comfort
Mary Lou and I were students at Dexter High School
She was always so sweet and kind to everyone, never had a bad thing to say, Mary is with Lord and is at peace 🙏*

Mary Galindo - April 10, 2025 at 09:55 AM

VG

“ *Vangie Garcia lit a candle in memory of Mary Salas-McClelland*



Vangie Garcia - April 09, 2025 at 08:35 PM

AS

“ *Anisa Schomburg lit a candle in memory of Mary Salas-McClelland*



Anisa Schomburg - April 09, 2025 at 11:27 AM

AS

“ *My sincere condolences to Mary Lou' s family. I loved working with her at Job Corps. She was a wonderful lady and fun to talk to! May she RIP.*

Anisa Schomburg - April 09, 2025 at 11:27 AM

MP

Our deepest condolences to the family of Mary Lou. You had an infectious smile and treated everyone with love. You are now in the hands of our Lord Jesus Christ. R.I.P.

Merlinda Padilla - April 23, 2025 at 01:47 PM