

PROVIDENCIA PAREDES, LONG TIME PERSONAL AIDE TO FIRST LADY JACQUELINE KENNEDY IS DEAD AT 90

Community 2015-03-24 11:04:19

Washington, DC — Providencia Ferrera Paredes, who was best known as a longstanding personal aide to First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy, died on Wednesday, March 18 at Sibley Memorial Hospital in Washington, DC, surrounded by family and friends. The cause of death was complications from congestive heart failure.

Born in San Pedro de Macoris in the Dominican Republic, Mrs. Paredes first arrived in the U.S. in 1948, accompanying the Dominican Ambassador to the United States, The Honorable Francisco Thomen.

By 1952, Mrs. Paredes would meet and begin to work for John F. Kennedy, the young congressman from Massachusetts, thus beginning a lifelong professional and personal relationship with the entire Kennedy clan. Upon Senator Kennedy's election as President, Mrs. Paredes became an American citizen and accompanied the First Family to the White House, employed as Mrs. Kennedy's personal assistant. Her role was noteworthy as she was one of the first White House staff members in history to be of Hispanic descent and the sole Hispanic in the inner circle of Camelot.

During the Kennedy White House years, Mrs. Paredes traveled widely with both the President and Mrs. Kennedy. She accompanied President Kennedy on official state visits to Colombia, France, Great Britain, Mexico, and Venezuela. She was a companion to the First Lady on her visits to India, Pakistan, Greece, Turkey, Cambodia, Thailand, Mexico and Switzerland. While many trips were official business, others were personal.

Following the assassination of President Kennedy, Mrs. Paredes, who wished to remain in Washington, DC to raise her young sons, Gustavo and Hector, went on to work for Senator Robert F. Kennedy. Traveling with the Senator and Mrs. Kennedy during his presidential bid in 1968, Mrs. Paredes was in Los Angeles at the Ambassador Hotel dressing for the victory party at the time of the Senator's untimely death. Later, Mrs. Paredes would work for Senator Edward M. Kennedy. By 1969, she assumed a position at the US Postal Service, in its Library Division from which she retired in 1992 after 31 years.

Mrs. Paredes was a friend and trusted confidant for two generations of Kennedys. Close to the former first lady throughout her life, for countless summers, Provi, as she was affectionately known among the Kennedy family, was a resident at the President's house in Hyannisport, Massachusetts. Following the death of Mrs. Onassis, John Kennedy, Jr. and his wife Carolyn celebrated Thanksgiving with Provi, Gustavo and Ariel, her granddaughter, every year until their fatal airplane crash.

"Provi was an amazing woman whose big heart, quick wit, thoughtful generosity and caring spirit will be dearly missed," said Ethel S. Kennedy.

As much a force of nature as she was kind, generous and wise, Mrs. Paredes was a woman of unflinching integrity and discretion who was intellectually sharp until the very end, fully recounting events and recalling names, dates, facts and associations from the full spectrum of her long interesting life.

Mrs. Paredes was first married in 1945 to Guillermo Corporan and gave birth to her first son Hector Corporan. That marriage ended in divorce. In 1953, she married Gustavo Paredes, Captain in the Merchant Marines, and had a second son, Gustavo A. Paredes, Jr. They were divorced in 1957. Mrs. Paredes is also survived by her three granddaughters: Margarita Corporan, Sofia Corporan, Ariel Paredes, one grandson, Guillermo Corporan and one great granddaughter, Allyssa Corporan. A memorial service will be held on Saturday, April 11, at 11:00 am at the Church of the Annunciation located at 3125 39th Street, N.W. in Washington, DC.

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