



Raymond Bences Gonzales

August 12, 1927 - February 12, 2019

Raymond Bences Gonzales was born in Los Alamos, New Mexico to Ernestina Romero and Bences Gonzales. The eldest of 6 children, Ray spent his youth farming, rearing his siblings, and working with his father who was provisions manager for the Los Alamos Ranch School. The school paired strict academic studies with a rugged, outdoor lifestyle and attracted boys from prominent and wealthy families. Ray helped his father with the school store and with long campouts with the boys where he would help with the horses and with campfire cookouts. Ray was 15 years old when the government took over the town during World War II for the top-secret Manhattan Project, which created the first atomic bomb. Ray and his family were one of very few native families allowed to stay in the town. Ray worked in various jobs for the military base and was selected to be a bicycle courier to deliver top-secret messages between the scientists and generals. He was told, years after the war, that he was the courier selected by Oppenheimer to deliver an especially important message to one of the generals that the bomb was ready to test. Ray enlisted in the Navy when he turned 18 and served on LST 970 (a Landing Ship Tank). He was sent to Okinawa where he served until the war ended. Ray became an electrical technician and worked on various military and university-related projects after the war. During the government expansion of Los Alamos, Ray met and married his wife of 72 years, Jo Anne Griffin. Together they raised three children, Gary Lee, Michael Jay, and Rae Anne in Dallas, Texas. Ray spent most of his career in Dallas working for Eastman Kodak. Ray is the author of the book, "A Boy on the Hill," about his childhood in Los Alamos. He and his family are among the early settlers featured at the Los Alamos Historical Museum, and Ray and his father are part of an interactive scavenger hunt and a coloring book about the history of the town. Ray was an active member of the North Dallas Memorial Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Post 3530, AARP, and St. Paul's Catholic Church. Deeply caring and hardworking, Ray was a regular, monthly donor to over 25 national charities. He is survived by his wife, Jo Anne, and children Michael Jay Gonzales and his wife, Carol, and his daughter Rae Anne Hall and her husband, Don. He also leaves six grandchildren, Pauline and Jackie Gonzales, Jennifer Hall Gonzales, Jeremy Hall, Keith Hall, and Annie Hall Richardson, as well as 14 great grandchildren and 3 great, great grandchildren. Ray's surviving siblings are Severo E. Gonzales, Stephanie Cruz,

and Theresa McClendon. Siblings Victor and Lauren Gonzales preceded him in death. Ray will receive military funeral honors at the Dallas–Fort Worth National Cemetery. Memorial gifts in his honor may be made to The Los Alamos Historical Society. Services are private for the family only.