Grand Marshal and Silver Queen 2017, 107th Annual Trinidad Round-up Association Labor Day Rodeo and Festivities.

Gene and Thelma Lujan were married 52 years ago on August 14th, 1965, in Holy Trinity Catholic Church. They met at C&H Grocery where Gene worked and Thelma’s family were customers. They have 2 daughters and 1 son. Gina and Francisco Garcia of Trinidad, Dina Lujan of Trinidad and David and Robin Lujan of LaVernia, TX. They have 11 grandchildren, Roger Esquibel, Marissa Esquibel, Xander Garcia, Zedriel Garcia, Reyna Lujan Darian Lujan, Natalie Lujan, Gabriel Avila, Antonio Lujan, David Lujan, Meliki Lujan and 1 great grandchild, Eli Lujan.

Gene D. Lujan was born April 19, 1940 at home in Valdez, CO. to Roger and Ermalinda Vigil-Lujan. Gene’s siblings include 2 brothers; Leslie Lujan and Roger J. Lujan and one sister, Jeanette Lujan-Holling. Gene lived in Valdez for just a short time and then moved to the family ranch in Madrid, Co. for 6 years. At six years old, his Dad purchased a home in Trinidad so that Gene could attend school. Gene’s dad, Roger, was a coal miner and Ermalinda was a grade school teacher at Mt. Carmel Catholic School. Gene graduated from Trinidad High School in 1959. He attended Trinidad State Junior College for 2 years studying Pre-Engineering. He had to quit college and move to the ranch and care for it because his Dad had to move to Denver due to the mine shutting down in Trinidad.

Starting his career in service, he was a Boy Scout starting at the age of 9. Gene joined the Army Reserves and went to basic training in Fort Leonard Wood, MO and worked as the 122nd Medical Company Clerk. The Army Reserves disbanded within 6 months of entering and was switched over to the National Guard, where Gene spent 8 years.

Along with being self-employed and the operator/manager of the original family homestead in Madrid, Gene worked at C&H grocery, starting at the age of 13, thru college and spent 24 years there. In 1968 Gene and Thelma bought the El Rancho, the Western Night Club. They owned and operated the El Rancho for 32 years and left the business in 2000, leaving the business to their daughter Gina.

Gene was a L.A.C. Commissioner from 1980-1984 and then again from 1988-1996 totaling 12 years of service. During that time he was Chairman of the Board, the last six years of his 2nd and 3rd terms. Gene was on several committees and boards during his terms as commissioner which included the Las Animas County Social Services Department, Advisory Board to Pioneer Natural Resources, Southern Colorado Disability Rehabilitation Center and the Hospital Board.

He also trained thoroughbred race horses for several years at La Mesa Park, Farmington and Albuquerque and continues to run horses in races in New Mexico. Gene and Thelma, along with members of the Southwestern Equine Association were instrumental in bringing live horse racing to Trinidad for several years. He was a member of the Elks, NM Horseman’s Association, NM Horse Trainer’s Association, LAC Democratic Party member, Central Democratic Party, Trinidad Riding Club for 3 years, Little Britches Assoc. and Southwestern Equine Association.

Thelma Martinez –Lujan was born in Raton, New Mexico on October 16, 1944 to Epifanio (Pefie) and Mable Vigil-Martinez. She and her family lived in Koehler, NM, a mining camp between Raton and Maxwell, for 6 years until they moved to Trinidad so that her Dad could continue mining at the Allen Mine. Her father was a coal miner for 42 years and her Mom was a housewife. Thelma’s siblings include Frances Romero, Dec., Joseph Martinez, Richard (Lefty) Martinez, Dec., and Louise Gonzales.

Thelma attended Trinidad Schools and graduated from Trinidad High School in 1962. She participated in Student Council, Future Homemakers of America (FHA), holding District and State Offices and also attended National Convention in St. Louis, Missouri during her Senior Year. She also received the D.A.R. Good Citizen Award and was Homecoming Attendant as a Senior.

Thelma worked for Dr. Stanley H. Biber for 2 years as a Receptionist and then moved to Falls Church, VA and worked in Washington, D.C for nine months, working for GBL Services, INC., doing accounting for the Military as they moved across the country. Upon coming back to Colorado, Thelma married Gene and continued to work. She worked for the Trinidad Industrial Bank a short time and then began to work for Carmel A. Garlutzo, Attorney at Law for 8 years. She stayed at home a couple of years to care for her children and then went to work for Adams and Sayre, Attorneys at Law for 4 years. She again quit to stay home and raise her family but eventually went back to work for Carmel A. Garlutzo until 1997. Thelma began working for Purgatoire River Water Conservancy District in 1997 and is still employed there. She has also been on several committees and organizations including P.E.O., Chapter DE and Chapter J since 1996, Little Britches as a timer, LAC Democratic Party and also Central Democratic Party. She organized the Folklorico Dance Group, called “Colores del Tiempo” and proudly worked with this group from 1998 to 2012.

Gene’s hobbies include, working the ranch, training horses, traveling to watch his horses run and is a die-hard Dallas Cowboy Fan, he also enjoyed hunting and fishing when his Father was alive and now goes fishing with his Grandchildren.

Thelma’s hobbies include Quilting, Sewing and Reading. Gene says Thelma has every color of yarn, scraps of material and sewing machines to make blankets for every occasion and in any color!

They both enjoy having their family come for breakfast every Sunday after Mass. Their fondest memories of Labor Day Weekend for them is attending and participating in the parades where they themselves have entered many floats for the various groups, businesses and committees that they have served on. They also remember attending the 4-H Sales and purchasing the Grand Champion Steer one year.

They have both led productive and active lives in the Las Animas County Community and have enjoyed watching their children and grandchildren grow. They are looking forward to reigning over the Parade as Grand Marshal and Silver Queen for the 2017 Trinidad Round Up Labor Day Festivities.