



# Santa Barbara County Genealogical Society and the Sahyun Genealogical Library

*Researching the World*

January 2026

Tree Tips Newsletter

Vol. 42, No. 1

## **"Utilizing Ancestry.com with Tips, Tricks & Tree Tactics"** **Saturday, January 17, 2026, 9:30 am - 12:00 pm**

**Location: Sahyun Genealogical Library, 316 Castillo, SB**



The Santa Barbara County Genealogical Society invites you to its free monthly meeting on Saturday, January 17, featuring long-time member and volunteer extraordinaire **Chris Klukkert**.

Chris has been using Ancestry.com as her main research platform since 2000, and now maintains more than 80 family trees. Along the way, she has developed her own practical — and sometimes unconventional — approaches to organizing research, tracking evidence, and capturing the stories and context that surround the records. In this session, **Utilizing Ancestry.com with Tips, Tricks, & Tree Tactics**, she'll share the methods she uses to keep her research organized, flexible, and meaningful.

Whether you're feeling confident on Ancestry.com or looking for fresh inspiration, this talk offers practical ideas you can use immediately. Join Chris to discover tips, tricks, and tree tactics that may change the way you think about your research.

### **About the Speaker:**

Chris Klukkert is a long-time member of the Society, having joined in the early 1990s. She currently serves as a volunteer librarian, Chair of the Library Book Acquisition Committee, a Board member, and most recently as Education Director.

Chris began seriously researching her family history in 1989, following the death of her father. His lifelong reluctance to share details about his own family background left many unanswered questions — particularly regarding her Klukkert heritage — and sparked her deep dive into genealogy. That journey eventually led her to DNA testing, which revealed an unexpected new biological paternal line and opened the door to genetic genealogy. This work required the intensive building and management of multiple Ancestry.com trees to identify relationships and coordinate research for her newly discovered biological siblings, fostering connection, shared research, and collaboration..

### **About the Event:**

Doors open at 9:30 a.m. for refreshments and informal discussions with the Special Interest Groups, covering a variety of topics from getting started in genealogy to writing family histories. A short business meeting begins at 10:30 a.m., followed by Chris' presentation at 11:00 a.m. which is in person at the Sahyun Genealogical Library and broadcast on Zoom.. The event is free and open to the public.

**Registration is required for ALL attendees, both in person and on Zoom.**

**Choose how you want to attend:**

**ZOOM**

[\*\*https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/nVOpMJwZRLqcaW9E28O4qA#/registration\*\*](https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/nVOpMJwZRLqcaW9E28O4qA#/registration)

**At the Sahyun Genealogical Library — limited to 60 people**

[\*\*https://sbgen.org/meetings-classes/calendar/#!event/register/2026/1/17/monthly-meeting\*\*](https://sbgen.org/meetings-classes/calendar/#!event/register/2026/1/17/monthly-meeting)

- Turn to Page 5 for new information about the January Drawing which will be held at our January meeting on the 17th. •  
Two amazing gift baskets will be on display for your consideration.

## President's Message

by Marie Sue Parsons



Happy New Year! Today reminds me of my Tree Tips comments when I was president back in 2016. Here's the write up from that year:

*Oh, my goodness, it's raining outside! As I sit here thinking about what I want to accomplish in 2016 I can hear the big drops*

*falling—I love the sound! And these are the days that I want to stay home by the fire and by my computer and do research—do you ever feel that way? 2015 brought lots of accomplishments to our society. We have grown in numbers, classes taught, new special interest groups, lots of new faces in the library scanning, assisting visitors, inventorying and re-shelving books and so much more. Managing and running an all-volunteer library the size and scale of ours takes lots of people contributing a small amount each, and some putting in tremendous numbers of hours all by themselves. Which one are you?*

*Each and every one is important to our success. I invite you to think about what part you can play—no matter how small—in our continuing efforts to provide members and others the opportunity to discover those wonderful people who came before us and made us who we are.*

*Your board continues to meet regularly on the Fridays before our general meeting — you are welcome to join us at 9 AM if you'd like to learn more about the inner workings of the organization. You would be proud of all your committees and their quiet accomplishments.*

I was surprised to realize that except for the dates this could have been written in 2026! All the comments (including the rain!) are still appropriate. Again each of your contributions to the society are essential—no matter how small. So, I again I thank you for all that you do. If you've been shy about jumping in, I encourage you to pick a committee that sounds interesting and give it a try. Or if you're curious about the board and how it works we again are meeting on the Friday morning the day before our General Meeting - only the time has change. Now we meet at 10:30 following the Officer Leadership Team meeting.

So, this is your society...come observe a board meeting, and maybe you'll think of participating as a member at large. We'd love to have you!

Again, Happy New Year! See you in the library!  
Marie Sue

### Land Acknowledgment Statement

"The land on which many of us live and where our library is located is part of the ancient homeland and traditional territory of the Chumash people. We recognize and respect the Chumash Peoples past, present, and future and their continuing presence in their homeland as we join in stewarding this land which we all cherish."

## New Genealogy Classes

by Robin McCarthy

Now is time to register for the three new classes that Robin McCarthy will be teaching during the month of January: ***Introduction to Airtable; The Genealogy Do-Over Workshop; and Research AI Workshop.*** All Robin's classes will be on Zoom, unless announced otherwise.

### January's Genealogy Tech Talk

**January 11th**

#### Introduction to Airtable.

Read more about Airtable and register here to attend:

<https://sbgen.org/meetings-classes/calendar/#!event/2026/1/11/genealogy-tech-talk-introduction-to-airtable>

### The Genealogy Do-Over Workshop

**Wednesday evening, January 14th.**

Thomas MacEntee has not released an updated version of his workbook for 2026. We will be using the 2025 edition.

Please read Step 1 (through page 22) in preparation for the first meeting. Register here to attend. <https://sbgen.org/meetings-classes/calendar/#!event/2026/1/14/the-genealogy-do-over-workshop>

### Research with AI Workshop begins on

**Thursday, January 22nd.**

The time will be decided by the session with the most registrations.

In the first session, Robin will be covering the general **Research Like a Pro** research process, the foundation of this AI workshop. This process is the method used for professional genealogy accreditation or certification. It is not proprietary to the authors of the workbook used for this workshop.

Society members registered for this workshop are eligible for a 50% reimbursement on their workbook purchase. Please email your receipt to Robin to receive payment. [rpubgen04@cox.net](mailto:rpubgen04@cox.net)

Register here to attend.

<https://sbgen.org/meetings-classes/calendar/#!event/2026/1/22/-afternoon-research-with-ai-workshop-kick-off>

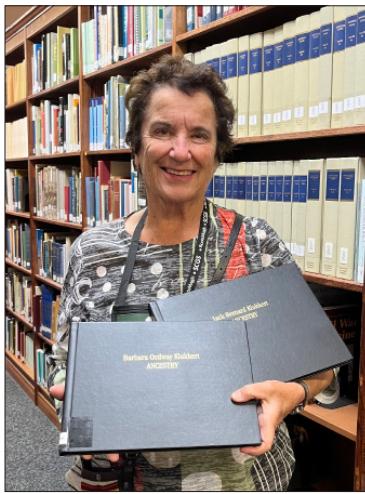
## SBCGS Leadership Board & Operations Updates

Your Society's leadership is committed to advancing our mission and serving our members. The Board of Directors provides strategic direction, while the Operations Leadership Team oversees programming, services, and daily operations.

To stay informed, visit the **Members Section** at [sbgen.org](https://sbgen.org). Once logged in, navigate to **Member Resources** to access the latest **Board Minutes and Operations Leadership Notes**.

## Books at the Sahyun

by Chris Klukkert, Book Chair



The week before we closed the Sahyun Library for the Christmas and New Year's holidays, Laurie Hannah, Kathie Morgan, and I were browsing the Reference Section in search of a particular genealogy book to confirm that we had the most up-to-date edition (we did!). As we stood there admiring the many wonderful reference works we have, Laurie made an important observation: these books aren't just for patrons — we librarians should

be using them too. They can be invaluable when we're helping someone research an area or topic that may be unfamiliar to us.

Of course, we have many of the foundational classics. Two that no genealogy reference shelf should be without are **The Handybook for Genealogists**, an essential guide to U.S. state and county records (with excellent maps), and **The Red Book: American State, County & Town Sources**, which points researchers to key records in every U.S. state.

But what if you're working in a new country or region of origin? I often help patrons exploring Mexican ancestry and regularly turn to **Finding Your Mexican Ancestors**, along with **Mexican Genealogy Research Online**, which provides guidance for discovering records and resources. Our "how-to" references span many regions and specialties — far too many to list — including more focused works such as **Researching Your Slovenian Ancestors** and **A Genealogist's Guide to Discovering Your African-American Ancestors**.

Among our newer and highly recommended titles are **Evidence Explained: Citing History Sources for Family History** — a must-have for anyone writing or documenting their research — and Thomas Jones' **Mastering Genealogical Proof** (fun fact: he's a DNA cousin of mine).

Working with records in another language? We've got you covered there too. We have several excellent language dictionaries, including the German/English Genealogical Dictionary. Many of our Swedish genealogy books — such as **Your Swedish Roots** — even include helpful word guides in the back. And yes, we also have a full Swedish-English dictionary on the shelf.

Is DNA your thing? It's hard to keep up with how quickly that field evolves, but we carry trusted resources like **The Family Tree Guide to DNA Testing** and **Genetic Genealogy**. One DNA title that is especially meaningful to me is **The Adoptee's Guide to DNA Testing**, which focuses on using genetic genealogy to discover biological family.

There is so much more waiting for you in our Reference Section — resources to help you, and to help you help others. So please,

dig in, explore the shelves, and see what treasures you might discover.

Due to the holiday closure and a particularly busy season behind the scenes, I don't have a finalized list for our usual New Books in the Library column this month. The good news? There are newly cataloged and recently added titles waiting on the shelves. Once we reopen, I invite you to stop by the Sahyun Library and enjoy discovering what's new for yourself.

We want to thank the following generous donors:

**Dorothy Oksner** **John DuBois** **Cheryl & Gary Jensen**  
**Karen Harris** **Nancy Ward Snyder**

### From the Shelves of the Sahyun

Book Review by Pat Caird

In his book **Immigrant Voices, New Lives in America, 1773 – 1986**, Thomas Dublin, calling himself an editor, begins by explaining his detailed Editorial Method and the structure of this book.

Next, his Introduction is a detailed yet very readable and informative history of emigration from the Shetland Islands, England, Germany, Italy, Russia, Korea, Mexico, Japan, Puerto Rico, and Vietnam.

He investigates the many (more than I thought) different reasons people left their native lands.

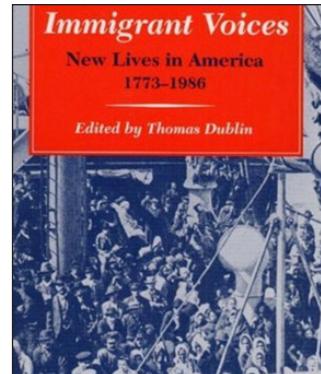
Following the introduction are 10 chapters of immigrant first-person accounts from each of the countries mentioned above. Each chapter begins with a short history of, among other things, the individual, the country, and their personal reasons for heading to America. This is followed by their first-person account. These stories come from diaries, letters, oral histories, and at least one published book.

Dublin uses numerous detailed footnotes giving the reader a thorough explanation of language usages, translations, cultural clarity, and more. He acknowledges those who have aided him and he has listed the Permission to Reprint articles.

He ends with an extensive Selected Bibliography of First-Person Immigrant Accounts. Dublin makes "a conscious effort to include accounts from all groups of immigrants, and a relative equal number of men and women."

In conclusion, I feel Dublin has done an incredibly thorough job of bringing to life the numerous reasons why and how people came to America and the myriad challenges they experienced and how they made the best of them.

Many genealogists may not have first-person stories of their ancestors, but if they came from any of the countries mentioned in this book, I highly recommend they read **Immigrant Voices, New Lives in America, 1773 – 1986**. You will have a good idea of what their journeys and lives were like.



## Thoughts & Opinions

(Submitted by Kristin Ingalls)

Just one year ago, Kate Lima asked me to do a piece on why I volunteer at the library--a happy task!

But this past year has been a difficult year for many. As genealogists we know that our ancestors went through harrowing and uncertain times too; wars, famines, death, all the things we read in the stories our members share in Ancestors West or at our general meetings. Does knowing this help I wonder?

Today, more than ever, I am grateful for the people I have come to know and cherish in our very special society. This past year we have lost members, friends, life partners, family members. Many of us have had illnesses, and, gosh – a lot of broken bones. It is at these times I see the love and support we give to and receive from each other. Offerings of sympathy, rides to appointments, food dropped off, errands run, kind and listening ears just to hear what is in our hearts.

Most recently, your contributions to our last-minute food collection was an outpouring of love and caring for people we do not know, but who need our help. There were three large boxes of foods, and \$350 in cash. For every dollar in cash we can donate, the Food Bank of Santa Barbara can purchase \$5 in food! I was so moved by the response to our collection. But, really, what else should I have expected from our generous, kind and loving members?

In gratitude...Kristin

P.S. Member Chris Gallery suggested all of us who have had broken bones start a band called The Fallen Women! Let her know if you'd like to join!!



### Trip to Salt Lake City

Our society will once again visit the **FamilySearch Library in Salt Lake City**. We'll head over for the week of May 3-10, 2026.

We will be staying at the Radisson since the Plaza Hotel has been demolished. I hope you can join us for the entire week or for a shorter time if necessary.

Here is the URL for the Radisson's reservation site:  
<https://book.passkey.com/event/51120049/owner/1440/home>, or call the Radisson directly (801-531-7500) and let them know you're booking with the Santa Barbara Genealogy Society. The discount price is \$149 per night.

Don't forget to email me at [limakate1@gmail.com](mailto:limakate1@gmail.com) so I can put you on our list. I hope you can join us!

## Ancestors West

Charmien Carrier, Editor

### Ancestors West

Suggested theme for

February 1, 2026  
Turning Points

*Key moments that changed the course of your family's history.*



AI image by Word/Copilot



### Writers' Group Discussion

Wednesday, April 21, 2026, 10:00 am

**Moderator: Sharon Summer**

**ZOOM ONLY**

Get a boost for your family history writing by learning ways to make your work fascinating to read, especially for non-genealogists. Come ask your questions, share a bit of your writing for feedback, and be inspired!

## Membership Spotlight

Kathryn Field, Membership Chair

As the new year opens, let's step into our family stories with fresh eyes. May this year bring joyful surprises and steady progress

### NEW MEMBERS in December:

Anthony & Sabrina Papa  
Arlene Klobucher  
Russell Glenn Bates  
Barbara Driscoll  
Carol Newton

Member orientation is coming soon, tentatively on a Sunday in February. More details will be released when available.

**NEW MEMBER PACKETS** can be found under the **Members' Area of our SBCGS website**. After signing in, find the Membership Packet on the Member Resources page. Also, there are packets at the library; stop by and pick one up.

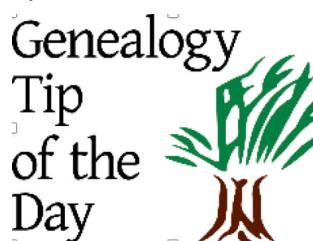
### COACHES

Kathy Cremeen continues to refine our list of those who can assist in many areas of genealogical research - whether it is translation or research assistance or simply as another pair of eyes! Please contact Kathy at [kajcreemeen@gmail.com](mailto:kajcreemeen@gmail.com) if you need a coach OR wish to become a coach.

The list is accessible from our website, sbgen.org. Log in and look for "Find a Genealogy Coach" on the list to the left.

### GENEALOGY TIP OF THE MONTH

*From genealogytipoftheday.com by Michael John Neill on January 31, 2016*



"Digitizing color photographs should be high on your preservation list, even if you don't know who all the people are in the picture. Color inks fade more quickly than inks used for black and white photographs. Seize the moment and preserve those color pictures."

**Reminder: the Sahyun Library has a number of scanners for digitizing photos**

**Santa Barbara Community Archives Project Film Drop-Off**  
**Tuesday, January 13, 2026, 10:00 - 1:00 pm**

**This is a follow-up to the November Monthly Meeting presentation by Laura Jean Treat Liebhaber.**

The UCSB Library's Santa Barbara Community Archives Project is partnering with the Santa Barbara County Genealogical Society to promote the value of preserving home movie collections and to provide free digitization services for Santa Barbara County community members. Society members and the public are invited to bring their own family films (8mm, Super 8, 16mm) to the Sahyun Genealogical Library from 10 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. to add them to the Santa Barbara Community Archives Project's digital collections.

## Two Gift Baskets on the 17th

Organized by Kathryn Field, Membership Chair

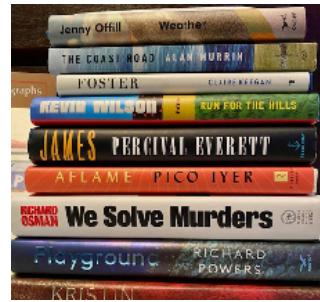
Congratulations to **Heather McDaniel Mc Devitt** and **Kathie Morgan** for winning the drawings at December's general meeting.

The December drawing was so popular - \$149 was raised - that we'll be doing another at the January 17th general meeting. The proceeds from the drawing will benefit the Society.

Tickets will be \$1 each or 6 for \$5. Please bring cash and small bills!

### The Winter Reading Book Bag

(Bundled in a Sturdy SBCGS Book Bag)



- Eight recently acclaimed books
- Dating Old Photographs chart
- 10-generation Ancestry Circle chart
- Use the **Literary Listography** journal to keep track of what you've read.

**Fiction Books:** Weather (Of-  
fill); The Coast Road (Murrin); Foster (Keegan); Run for  
the Hills (Wilson); James (Everett); The Women (Hannah);  
We Solve Murders (Osman), signed by author; Playground  
(Powers) signed by author.

**Nonfiction Book:** Aflame (Iyer).

### The Feeling Cozy Kit



**Light the White Barn "Falling Flurries" candle** and curl up in the **plush Ultimate Throw**. Write in **your cool journal** from Portugal while enjoying **Starbucks hot cocoa**. When it's time to get up, grab the **zippered SBCGS shopping bag**, and head to **Macy's** to use the **\$35 gift card**.

A second opportunity to meet with the project curator, Laura Jean Treat Liebhaber, and drop off your films for digitization will be available at the Sahyun Genealogical Library on January 18th.

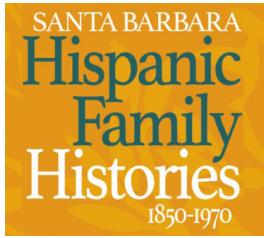
Need more information? Feel free to contact the Project Curator, **Laura Jean Treat Liebhaber**.  
**Email:** [ljtreat@ucsb.edu](mailto:ljtreat@ucsb.edu)

## Outreach

by Holly Snyder, Chair

Happy New Year! This year we will be focusing on producing another **Picnic in the Cemetery** this fall, continue programming around our Santa Barbara Hispanic Families exhibit and seeking ways to share the exhibit in the community, participating in community events, and continuing seeking and strengthening our community partnerships. If you'd like to help Outreach in any way, please let us know by emailing [Outreach@sbgen.org](mailto:Outreach@sbgen.org).

### Santa Barbara Hispanic Family Histories, 1850-1970 Exhibit



View our exhibit at Sahyun and online! This exhibit highlights the lives and contributions of Santa Barbara's Hispanic families from 1850 to 1970s through photographs and personal stories. There are also histories on Hispanic businesses and organizations, military service and neighborhood histories.

Our Santa Barbara Hispanic Family Histories exhibit is now also online! On [SBGen.org](https://sbgen.org), go to In the Community -> View a Society Exhibit or click here: <https://sbgen.org/santa-barbara-hispanic-family-history-exhibit/>

Also featured in this TreeTips is an article from our exhibit English-Spanish translator, Margarita Martin del Campo on her family and her journey to becoming a professional translator and teacher at Santa Barbara City College.

\*\*If you visit the exhibit, please be sure to fill out our survey located on our front desk. This is a requirement for our California Humanities grant and it provides us with great feedback for future exhibits.\*\*

*This project is made possible with support from the Santa Barbara Foundation and California Humanities, a non-profit partner of the National Endowment for the Humanities. Visit [www.calhum.org](http://www.calhum.org).*



### Speaking Engagements in the Community



**Upcoming talks:** Two PEOs in January

**Outside groups can request a talk and/or tour here:**

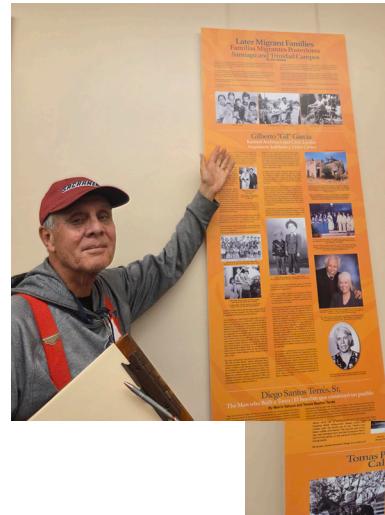
<https://sbgen.org/in-the-community/reservation-request/>

Please share the link with any groups who may be interested! If you'd like to bring in a group of friends and get a tour, please request one ahead of time so we can ensure they have the best experience.

Has your group already had a talk with us, but would be interested in a follow-up talk or a workshop style activity? We can do that too!

### Una Tardeada

We had an appreciation event for our exhibit participants and volunteers who helped with the exhibit last month. **Yolanda Perez, Mary Hancock, and Holly Snyder** presented on the making of the exhibit and asked for feedback from the participants. Guests also enjoyed local yummy treats, hot chocolate, and conversation with other participants. Here are some pictures of some of the participants with their family exhibit panel:



Jim Campos



Roseann Leyva King

Alberto Leon and Leon family



Robert Gonzalez (on the right) and Dominguez & Ayala family

# From Revolution to Reconciliation: A Goleta Circle Completed

By Margarita Martin del Campo

*My story is one of two countries, two families,  
and a journey that inevitably led back to the shores of Santa Barbara.  
It begins in the turmoil of the Mexican Revolution and finds its resolution  
in the lemon groves of Goleta.*

My maternal grandparents, **Ignacio and Petra Gutiérrez**, established our first roots here. My grandfather, a pacifist, crossed the border to escape forced conscription by the revolutionary army. He came to the US with Pancho Villa's army, seeking peace. My grandmother, orphaned during the Revolution's chaos, arrived seeking work and safety. They met and married in Goleta, where they raised their five children. They lived a humble but connected life, surrounded by the lemon trees where my grandfather worked, raising my mother alongside the eight children of the neighboring García family. However, the world encroached on their sanctuary. In 1942, when Japanese submarines shelled the Ellwood oil fields, my grandfather, fearful for his children, decided to return to Mexico.



## Margarita's mother's family:

Top left to right: Ignacio Gutiérrez Gutiérrez, Petra Gutiérrez Gutiérrez, Margarita Gutiérrez Gutiérrez (Margarita's mother), María de Jesús Gutiérrez Gutiérrez and Felipe Gutiérrez

Bottom left to right: Petra Gutiérrez Mendoza (Margarita's maternal grandmother), Amparo Gutiérrez Gutiérrez Gutiérrez, Ignacio Gutiérrez Carrillo (Margarita's maternal grandfather)

I was born in México, the product of a family that valued education above all else. My parents, despite scarce resources, made a pact: they would only have as many children as they could afford to send to university. True to their word, my four siblings and I all graduated. This commitment was deeply personal. On my father's side, my paternal grandfather was listed as "Indio" on his certificate, but my determined grandmother, struggling with poverty, fiercely ensured her children attended public schools to receive an education—the ultimate path to freedom.

Destiny, however, led me back. At twenty-eight, I made a pilgrimage to Santa Barbara to visit my aunt and uncle, **Benny and Carmen García**. I found myself falling in love—first with the landscape, then with my cousins' kindness, and finally with the man who became my husband. I returned to Mexico briefly, only to come back, bringing my mother with me to reclaim the home she had left during the war. This return was affirmed on 9/11 when, watching the news of the attacks, I decided: "This was the land of my mother, the land of my daughter, and my land of choice. I was willing to fight for it and for my daughter to have the opportunity to live in her country."

I didn't speak English when I came to the U.S. and went to Santa Barbara City College to study English as a Second Language (ESL). It was there that I began writing about the immigrant experience, realizing that while immigrants and native-born citizens were legally equal, our customs and ways of thinking were not the same.

*Continued on Next Page*

This insight led me to pursue higher education; I understood that education was the best way to be free. I continued at UC Santa Barbara, graduating Phi Beta Kappa, and immediately entered the Master's in Spanish program. I began working as a Spanish teacher, quickly transitioning to a part-time Instructor at SBCC, where I taught for 25 years. My work as a teacher and translator was profoundly informed by my experience bridging those two worlds—helping students and readers navigate the cultural and linguistic differences I had lived.

Goleta and Santa Barbara have given me so much: my family, a solid education, work, and a wonderful, peaceful place to live. Even through personal losses and challenges—like the passing of my sister during the pandemic, or helping students in crisis, which got me two more daughters—the strength inherited from my family endured. The full circle, from my pacifist young grandfather fleeing the Revolution to my daughter living and working as an immigration lawyer here in Santa Barbara, is now complete. I am whole.



**Margarita's father's family:**

*Top left to right: María Guadalupe González Godínez, Ramón González Godínez, Agustín González Godínez (Margarita's father), and Irene González Godínez.*

*Bottom, left to right: Margarita Godínez Castellanos (Margarita's paternal grandmother) and J Merced González Hernández (Margarita's paternal grandfather)*