

Velma Arellano, M.A.

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This caring was not limited to Gloria and the other residents at Sierra Vista. You and Ruth and Lucy and Lizabeth took good care of her family – us – as well. You kept us informed of every change in her condition and worked with us to respond appropriately. You shared your experience and insight about the disease and helped us to cope with the changes as they occurred. You were always available to us and, if we did not ask for help, you reminded us that it was there when we needed it.

Again, for ourselves and our children, and for Peter and Allyson in Denver and their son, thanks to everyone at Sierra Vista for taking care of our mother and grandmother.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tony Adams". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sarah Sawtell". The signature is written in a cursive style.

**W. ANTHONY and SARAH ASHBY SAWTELL
7411-B OLD Santa Fe Trail
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87505**

Velma Arellano, M.A.
Executive Director
Sierra Vista Retirement Community
402 E. Rodeo Road
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87505

Dear Velma,

We extend our sincere thanks to you, Ruth, Lucy and Lizabeth, and the entire staff at Sierra Vista, for the care and caring you provided to Gloria. We considered all the alternatives available and are so glad we chose Sierra Vista and that there was a room for her when she needed it.

As Gloria's condition progressed toward the time when she could no longer live at home, we had many conversations with her about moving to a place where there would always be someone there to care for her. She even initiated many of those discussions. Of course, she had no recollection of those conversations when the day arrived and we brought her to Sierra Vista. We left her in your care and did not visit for several days, as instructed, to give her a chance to adjust to living in a new place after forty years in the same house. We admit that we approached that first visit with considerable anxiety, expecting her to be angry with us for having "abandoned" her and to demand that we take her back to her own home. Instead, we were greeted with a smile and the statement, "I have nothing but nice things to say about this place," including the company, the caretakers, the food and the surrounding.

For some time, things went pleasantly enough, but as the dementia inevitably progressed she became more and more disoriented and anxious and angry and even belligerent. You and Lizabeth worked with her doctor to find the medication that calmed her and brought the smile back to her face.

But while the disease can be slowed and its symptoms sometimes ameliorated, it does not let up, and Gloria's mental and physical condition continued to decline. The time came when she decided that enough was enough and stopped taking food and liquids. The Sierra Vista staff adjusted smoothly to this development and continued to provide the care she needed. She was comfortable and knew that she was in the care of good people until the very end.

It takes people with unusual generosity, empathy, and patience to care for those who face the last stage of their lives with diminished and decreasing mental capacity. Everyone at Sierra Vista demonstrated these qualities every time we were there.

**W. ANTHONY and SARAH ASHBY SAWTELL
7411-B OLD Santa Fe Trail
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87505**

Dear Velma, Ruth, Lucy and Lizabeth,

Enclosed is a letter of thanks to each of you and the entire staff at Sierra Vista. Please feel free to make copies of this letter and share it with those who are looking for the right place for a loved one with dementia.

Also, we thought Sierra Vista should have a copy of the tempera painting of aspens that Gloria did in January, with the help of the "visiting artist." I hope you can find a place for it.

Thank you again for everything.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Tony".A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Sarah Sawtell".