

# Mesa Street Grill owner dies

By Chris Roberts

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EL PASO — Annette Means, owner and operator of the Mesa Street Grill, died Friday night of a stroke at the age of 57.

"It was not expected," said her eldest son, Ryan Means. "It was shocking to everyone."

Annette Means, who led the El Paso City Plan Commission in the 1990s and taught criminal justice at El Paso Community College for more than 20 years, always was looking for new challenges and opportunities, according to people who knew her. She and her husband, Francis William "Bill" Means, operated the restaurant for the past 10 years.

"None of us know all the things she was involved in," Ryan Means said. "Every time we talked to her, she was involved in something new."

When Annette Means

asked her son whether he knew anything about computers, he found out she had become a partner in a communications company that provides pagers for factories in Mexico. She also was a partner in a security company that provides alarm systems for residences and businesses.

Annette Means was born and raised in El Paso. She attended St. Pius Elementary. In 1970, she graduated from Loretto Academy, where she studied drama and debate. She received a bachelor's degree in criminal justice from the University of Texas at El Paso.

"She was a great mentor and a great teacher to those who are in law enforcement today," said Maureen Henry, a longtime friend who still teaches at EPCC.

Annette Means was president of the Center Against Family Violence and was recognized in 1997 with the Conquistador Award, considered the city's highest



Means

honor.

But it was the restaurant that became a labor of love.

Henry said she has been enjoying Sunday night dinner with the couple for many years. "I called it treat night," she said. "They have a love of good food and incredible wine."

After a few rough years, Annette Means' epicurean passion paid off as the restaurant became a destination for El Paso diners, Ryan Means said.

Henry said Annette Means' main love in life was her children — Ryan, Amanda, Aaron, Billy, Kyle and Marc — whom she spoke to nearly every day.

"She was a confidante for all of us," said Ryan Means, who lives in Dallas. "She never passed judgment and was always willing to help and do whatever she could."

On Saturday, friends and family struggled to deal with the sudden hole in their lives.

Henry said that when she saw Annette Means at dinner last Sunday, her friend showed no signs of illness.

"It's been awful," Henry said. "It's so hard to even fathom, to even get your head around."