

Crash kills EP lawyer

Wife, ex-KTSM anchor, injured

By Daniel Borunda and Michael D. Hernandez

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EL PASO — Miguel "Mickey" Solis, who rose from a South Side housing project to become a lawyer, a pharmacist and an El Paso County commissioner, was killed and his wife, Felipa Solis, was seriously injured in a traffic accident Sunday in Colorado, family and friends said.

The prominent couple was in a head-on collision Sunday morning as they were traveling to the Denver airport to return to El Paso after at-

tending a wedding near Grand Junction, Colo., relatives said.

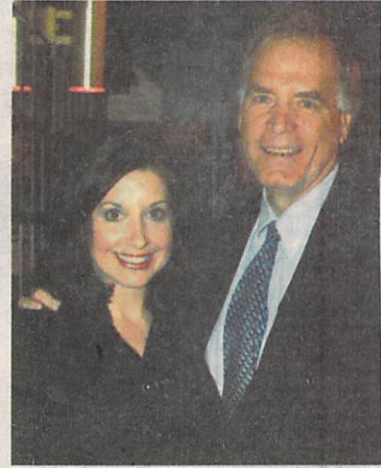
Felipa Solis, a former news anchor at Channel 9-KTSM (cable Channel 10) and a contributing writer and columnist for the El Paso Times, had surgery Sunday evening at St. Mary's Hospital & Medical Center in Grand Junction, her mother said.

"They were just a good couple together," said Mark Ross, who has known Felipa Solis since 1998 when they both worked for Channel 9. "He was the light of her life."

The couple was in Colorado attending a family event.

The collision occurred about 9:45 a.m. when the driver of a recreational vehicle, Ray Stout, 79, of Montrose, Colo., lost control on a curve, crossed the center line and hit a 2009 Nissan Altima driven by Miguel Solis on U.S. 50, said Sgt. John Hahn of the Colorado State Patrol. Both Stout and Miguel Solis died at the scene. Felipa Solis was flown to a hospital in Grand Junction.

Kathrin Berg Pettit, executive director of El Paso Pro Musica, talked



Felipa and Miguel Solis

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to Felipa Solis right before her close friend had surgery at 3:27 p.m. Sunday. Solis was reportedly out of surgery late Sunday and was recovering.

"She sounded like she was in shock," Pettit said. "I just told her, 'I love you. Hang in there.'"

Miguel and Felipa Solis were married in 1989. Their son, Gabriel, 18, will be a sophomore in college this fall. Gabriel was not with his parents at the time of the collision. Miguel Solis also had three children, Miguel Jr., Renee and Javier, from a previous marriage.

"We were saddened by the tragic news of Miguel Solis' death on Sunday, and it was a shock to all of us," El Paso Times Publisher Ray Stafford said. "Our hopes and prayers go with Felipa as she recovers from this accident and this tragedy. Felipa has been a key contributor to the El Paso Times, and we look forward to her speedy recovery."

"Felipa is part of our family, and our heart goes out to her

and her family," El Paso Times Editor Chris Lopez said. "This is a difficult loss for her. The two of them were a perfect complement to each other."

Miguel Solis, 68, grew up in the Sherman housing projects before gaining prominence in local politics in the late 1970s. He graduated from Jefferson High School in 1958 and was named the school's outstanding ex for 1982.

He worked his way through college and received degrees from the University of Texas at El Paso, the University of Texas College of Pharmacy in Austin and from the University of Texas School of Law in Austin in 1972. He was also involved in numerous civic organizations.

In 1978, Solis was elected to the first of two terms as county commissioner involving bruising political campaigns, including wins against political veteran Richard Telles Sr. and Orlando Fonseca, who would defeat Solis in 1986.

El Paso Times archives detailed acrimonious electoral battles, including verbal jabs, legal complaints and even a claim by Telles in 1982 that a teen gang named Los Blue Diamonds was hired to destroy

his political signs.

After leaving office and a divorce, Miguel Solis worked as a lawyer in the Dallas-Fort Worth area in the late 1980s, citing personal reasons for leaving El Paso. By 1993, he returned to his hometown and opened a law office.

Rita Triana, mother-in-law of Miguel Solis, described him as a brilliant, intelligent man, who worked his way up from the projects to become a respected lawyer.

"We admired him for the struggle he had and the person he had become," Triana said.

In addition to being a lawyer, Miguel Solis was a pharmacist and recently worked at the pharmacy at the Albertsons store on Yarbrough Drive.

"I am committed to my community," Solis told the Times during a failed bid in 1994 for the judgeship of the 8th Court of Appeals. "I have given myself to the community to make El Paso a better place to live."

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