

Ex-police chief for Ascarate dies at 85

By David Crowder

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C. Johnny Ybarra, who served in law enforcement for more than 40 years as a deputy constable, constable and as the only police chief of the short-lived Ascarate Township, died Thursday. He was 85.

"He was a very honest man, an honest constable, trustworthy and very patriotic," his



daughter, Ybarra

Velia Molina, said. "He was working as a security officer until last year. He didn't want to stop."

During World War II, Ybarra was a military police officer until 1943. He returned to El Paso and started El Paso Patrol Service.

When the Ascarate area incorporated in 1947 to avoid annexation by the city of El Paso, the town's mayor appointed Ybarra as police chief.

The 2,700-person township, which occupied a one-square-mile area of homes and farms, lasted until 1948, when residents elected to disincorporate and accept annexation.

Ybarra was elected constable in 1950 and went on to win elections in three different precincts until the early 1980s.

In 1980, Ybarra was one of four plaintiffs in a federal lawsuit in which Federal District Judge Harry Lee Hudspeth

ruled that a Texas law requiring certain elected officials to resign before seeking higher office was unconstitutional.

The state appealed the case all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court, which upheld the state law in a 5-4 decision.

Ybarra is survived by his wife, Luisa G. Ybarra; one son, C. Johnny Ybarra Jr. of El Paso; and four daughters, Maria Elena Latscha of Los Angeles and El Pasoans Anita Martinez, Delia Lopez and Velia Molina.

Visitation will be 4 to 9 p.m. Monday at Perches Funeral Home, 7580 Alameda, with a rosary at 6 p.m. A funeral Mass will be at 9:45 a.m. Tuesday at Corpus Christi Catholic Church, 9205 North Loop. Burial will follow at Fort Bliss National Cemetery.

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