

By Jeanette Martinez

If GSHA had a mother, that person would be Donie Nelson. As a founding member of GSHA in 1989, Donie has given freely of her time, knowledge, and expertise to make GSHA and her home chapter, GSHA-Southern California the great organizations they are today.

In the mid-90s, GSHA-SC had its membership meetings and book collection at the main library in Santa Fe Springs, California, but received notice they could no longer host us. I'll always remember one day when Donie, Patsy Vasquez and I got together to tour several potential new locations in southern California. Fun and laughter surrounded us as we searched for a new home. Soon after, our efforts resulted in GSHA-SC becoming tenants at the Southern California Genealogical Society, our current home base in Burbank, California.

Fear isn't a part of Donie. She's always ready to stand up for what she believes in, a trait she may have inherited as a descendant of a Mountain Man. Although she doesn't speak Spanish, she takes great pride in her Hispanic heritage.

Because of her career and being in and around Hollywood, Donie often shared stories with me of times she went out partying with movie stars and some of the crazy, fun times she had in her younger years. Over the years we visited Olvera Street in downtown Los Angeles, met in Trinidad for dinner with the late Dr. Eugene Torres, and often got together for dinner, movies, and other entertainment.

Donie has been a friend, mentor, and teacher to many members. While we haven't always agreed, we put GSHA first. Please join me in congratulating Donie on a job well done.