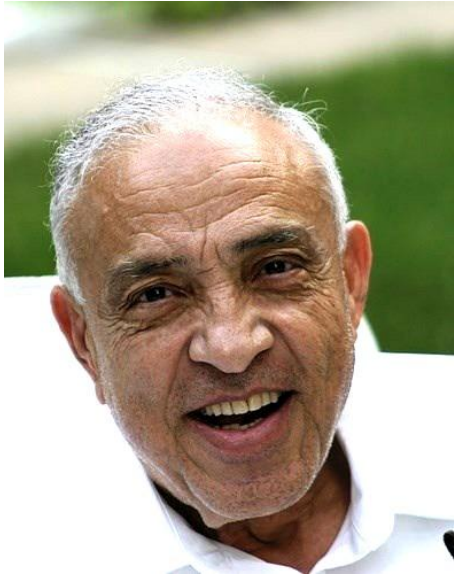


Leveo Victor Sanchez Obituary

September 8, 1930 – August 11, 2026



Leveo V. Sanchez II, devoted husband, father, grandfather, and great-grandfather, passed away peacefully on August 11, 2026, at his home in Santa Fe, New Mexico. He was 95 years old.

Leveo was born on September 8, 1930, in Lamy, New Mexico, the son of Leveo M. Sanchez and Victoria D. de Sanchez. His father died before he was born. His mother, Victoria, went on to become one of New Mexico Highlands University's first Hispanic professors and a pioneer in teacher education throughout the Americas; Highlands University's School of Education building is named in her honor. Victoria was her son's greatest mentor and one of the most influential figures in

shaping his character, values, and outlook on life.

Leveo spent most of his childhood in northern New Mexico before his mother's teaching career took the family to Guatemala when he was sixteen. They spent a year there, and it was during this time that Leveo fell in love with the country and with Latin America more broadly. His experience there had a profound impact on him, inspiring a deep interest in diplomacy that would stay with him throughout his career and life. He returned to New Mexico to attend Las Vegas High School for his senior year. He earned his bachelor's degree in economics from New Mexico Highlands University and graduated from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Officer Candidate School at Fort Belvoir, Virginia. He then went on to serve in the U.S. Army as an officer stationed in France during the Korean war as a part of the 94th Engineer Construction Battalion. Upon returning from his tour of duty in Europe, he earned his master's degree in foreign affairs, with a major in Latin American studies, from the George Washington University School of Government in Washington, D.C.

It was at George Washington, in the fall of 1955, that Leveo met Patricia Ellan Marshall. Their courtship carried them between Washington and Long Island, and on September 8, 1956, which was also his twenty-sixth birthday, they married in a small Catholic church in North Port, Long Island, with the reception held at the Marshall family home. Their marriage lasted sixty-six and a half years, until Patricia's death on March 16, 2023.

Leveo's early career took the young couple abroad. In 1959, he joined the Agency for International Development (AID), working first on the Peru–Ecuador desk in Washington

before transferring to Lima, Peru, where he served as Assistant Program Officer until 1962. While in Lima, he was appointed by the American Ambassador as liaison to the newly established Peace Corps, work that soon led the Peace Corps to bring him on as an evaluator of its Latin American and Caribbean programs. He went on to serve as deputy director of the Peace Corps' Latin American Region, director of the U.S. Office of Economic Opportunity's Mid-Atlantic Region, and director of the U.S. Office of Institutional Development in AID's Latin American Bureau.

Beginning in the late 1960s, Leveo built a career as an entrepreneur. In 1969, he founded and chaired Development Associates, an international consulting firm specializing in social and economic development, which grew under his leadership into one of the largest minority-owned and operated consulting firms in the country, with offices in eight U.S. cities and projects in more than 100 countries. He sold the firm in 2005. In 1974, he was a founding partner and the first chairman of Hemisphere National Bank in Washington, D.C., later serving as its president from 1979 to 1981, when the bank was sold. Over the course of his career, he also built businesses in real estate development and investment, property management, and export trading.

It was Patricia who first proposed their final move: after more than fifty years on the East Coast and abroad, she told Leveo it was time he returned to his home state. They arrived in Santa Fe, New Mexico, on June 30, 2006. There, Leveo remained deeply engaged in community and civic life. In 2007, he founded the Santa Fe Hispanic Chamber of Commerce. In 2008, Governor Bill Richardson appointed him to the New Mexico Highlands University Board of Regents, where he later served as chair; Governor Susana Martinez reappointed him to a second term, and his tenure concluded in March 2019. In recognition of his service, the New Mexico Senate adopted Senate Memorial 129, honoring his "significant and valuable contributions" to Highlands University. His ties to the university ran deep and long: he was active in its Washington, D.C. alumni association for nearly thirty years and served twenty-one years on the Highlands Foundation Board, including as its president. In the 1980s, he established two endowed scholarships at Highlands, the Victoria D. de Sanchez Scholarship, named for his mother, and the Leveo V. Sanchez Scholarship.

Leveo's civic and philanthropic leadership extended well beyond Highlands. Throughout various parts of his life, he served as president of the Pan American Development Foundation, board chairman of the Latino Economic Development Corporation, and as a board member of the Greater Washington Business Center, the U.S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, and as a national board member of the Smithsonian Institution. He was also a director of the National Hispanic Cultural Center Foundation and the Las Vegas San Miguel

Economic Development Corporation. Beyond the leadership roles he held across many civic causes, Leveo was also a devoted philanthropist, supporting numerous organizations over the course of many decades. His charitable giving reflected the breadth of his interests and convictions, including long-standing support for animal welfare, Alzheimer's research and care, Native American communities, and a wide range of educational, cultural, and humanitarian causes.

Together, Leveo and Patricia traveled widely, sharing a particular love of Spain, which they visited and drove across at least three times, and a memorable 1970s journey aboard the Orient Express with fellow George Washington University alumni through Britain, France, Italy, Germany, Switzerland, and Austria. Closer to home, they made frequent trips throughout the Americas to visit Leveo's mother, as well as to New Mexico, New York, California, and Florida.

Leveo will be remembered by his family and friends not only for his many accomplishments, but as a man shaped by his love of travel, his devotion to New Mexico and his desire to see and experience the world. A lifelong student of history and politics, he was fascinated by the people, events, and ideas that shaped cultures. He was an avid follower of college basketball, particularly the New Mexico Lobos, and had a lifelong interest in real estate. Known for his remarkable recall, he loved long conversations about history and politics and could speak at length on both, drawing on a lifetime spent in public service and international affairs. Above all, he will be remembered for his intellect, curiosity, work ethic and the many meaningful connections with family and friends across the globe that he cultivated throughout his life.

Leveo was predeceased by his wife, Patricia Ellan Sanchez, and his son, Leveo V. Sanchez III. He is survived by his daughters, Lia Sanchez and Victoria Sanchez (Mitchell Gabor); Lia's children, Ryan Stites, Melissa Miller (Matthew), Kimberly Stites (Daniel Hartigan), and Morgan Stites; and Victoria's children, Austin Griggs and Marselina Griggs. He is also survived by his great-grandchildren, Juliet Miller, Alice Miller, and Cary Hartigan.

A private burial for Leveo and Patricia will be held at St. Mary's Cemetery in Alexandria, Virginia. A celebration of life reception for Leveo and Patricia will be held at Cedar Knoll restaurant, located at 9030 Lucia Lane, Fort Hunt, Virginia on Friday August 21, 2026, from 5:30-7:30 pm. In lieu of flowers, the family welcomes memorial donations to the Santa Fe Animal Welfare League. To plant trees in memory, please visit the Sympathy Store.

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