



## Sally Lagra Espiritu Deakins

November 12, 1950 - February 6, 2025

Sally Lagra Espiritu Deakins, age 74, of Springdale, Ark., passed away in the early morning on Thursday, February 6, 2025. She was born on November 12, 1950, in Lumban, Laguna, Philippines, to Leonila and Nicholas Espiritu. Sally was a devoted wife to her husband of 49 years, Phillip, beloved mother to her daughter Laurelin and son-in-law Justin, and adored “Roro” to her grandsons, Harp and Bo.

Sally earned a Bachelor of Science in Nursing from The University of Santo Tomas, Manila, in 1972. Though the nursing profession was chosen by her father as her “ticket to America,” she embraced it wholeheartedly and loved her job. She retired after almost 50 years, and only after she became ill. But her real dream was to become an actress, and when she was little she would put on her finest clothes and sunglasses, act like she was boarding a plane, and then wave goodbye because she was off to Hollywood. She got close, arriving in Arkansas in 1973, assigned to Springdale Memorial Hospital during a nursing shortage. It was there she met fellow nurse and future husband Phillip, and they were married in the hospital chapel in 1976. She gave birth to their only child, daughter Laurelin, at that same hospital in 1979.

Sally joined the VA Hospital in Fayetteville in 1981, dedicating the next 36 years to passionately caring for veterans until her retirement in 2017. She was known for joyfully serenading her patients on their birthdays. Sally could not

stay retired for long, and she continued her career at Perimeter Health, a center for young girls impacted by trauma. The girls called her “Grandma Sally” and she would often be found cradling them in her arms, rocking them to sleep. Her final job was the weekend supervisor at Westwood Health and Rehab, and even as the boss she never stopped hands-on care, lovingly feeding the residents their favorite foods and dressing them in their coziest clothes.

To say Sally was sassy is an understatement. She was strong, independent, and practically fearless. She came to America with \$20 in her purse and built a life filled with friends and accomplishments. She encouraged others to pursue higher education and achieve their dreams, just as she had done. She loved to sing karaoke, dance, eat, and shop. Sally was known for her dazzling and vibrant style. In 2020, when she rang the bell at Mayo Clinic to celebrate completion of her radiation, she wore knee high red boots with rhinestones. She never forgot her lipstick, and in her later days kept it in the basket of her walker. She once asked Laurelin to bring gray root cover spray and a silk kimono to the ICU.

Her greatest joys were her two grandsons, Harp Phillip and Bo Espiritu. When they were born she once lamented, "No one looks like me!" And even though they both have blonde hair, they each have a perfect Filipino nose.

Sally endured countless hardships in the last 4.5 years, yet her optimism and faith were unwavering. While driving to one of her last medical appointments, even as her cancer continued to progress, she told Laurelin, "We are so blessed and God is so good." She was the toughest person we have ever known.

Sally is survived by her husband, Phil; daughter, Laurelin; son-in-law, Justin; and grandsons, Harp and Bo. She is also survived by sisters, Edna Ebarvia (Santos), Mennie Liverato (Juno), and Celia Dagdag (Carding); brother-in-law,

Alberto Mijares; sister-in-law, Teofila Espiritu; sister-in-law, Teodora Espiritu; and many cherished nieces and nephews.

The family is forever grateful to her oncology team at The Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Dr. James Salmon, and Dr. Sidney Vinson; their skill and compassion gave us more time with Sally than we ever thought possible. Thank you to her devoted friends and caregivers, Marta Ceballos and Jessie Cargill, who made sure she never missed a manicure or a trip to Sam's Club. A special thank you to The Meadows Assisted Living in Bentonville, where she lived the last six months of her life - they truly took care of her like family. And thank you to Circle of Life Hospice in Springdale, who provided care and comfort not only to Sally in her final days, but also to her friends and family.

A visitation will be held on Friday, February 21, 5-7 p.m., at Sisco Chapel, 705 West Meadow Avenue, Springdale. Her Celebration of Life will be held on Saturday, February 22, 10:30 a.m., at Central United Methodist Church, 2535 W. New Hope Road, Rogers.

Donations can be made in honor of Sally to The Meadows Staff Christmas Fund, 2300 SE 28th St, Bentonville, Ark, 72712. They served her faithfully to the end, even bringing her favorite strawberry cake to Circle of Life Hospice House.

In honor of Ms. Sally, who always looked fabulous, please wear your brightest colors to her Celebration of Life. Now is the time for your most vibrant reds, your shiniest bling, your jeweled headbands and leopard print. There would be no finer tribute to the girl from Lumban, who lived the American dream and brought joy and sparkle to all she met.

# Previous Events

## Visitation

FEB **21**. 5:00 PM - 7:00 PM (CT)

Sisco Funeral Chapel  
705 West Meadow  
Springdale, AR 72764  
(479) 751-4577  
siscofuneralchapel@gmail.com  
<https://www.siscofuneral.com>

## Celebration of Life

FEB **22**. 10:30 AM (CT)

Central United Methodist Church  
2535 W New Hope Rd  
Rogers, AR 72758

# Tribute Wall

LL

“ *Sally never met a stranger! I became fast friends with her at the VA! She was an amazing person. She brightened every room she entered. I am happy to have known her.*

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**LaTonya Lee** - February 26, 2025 at 11:01 AM

AN

“ *Anonymous purchased the Arrive in Style for the family of Sally Lagra Espiritu Deakins.*



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**Anonymous** - February 21, 2025 at 01:22 AM

AN

“ *Anonymous planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Sally Lagra Espiritu Deakins.*

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**Anonymous** - February 21, 2025 at 01:22 AM

ES

“ *Ed, Angie, Conner & Allyson Smith purchased the Strength & Solace Spray for the family of Sally Lagra Espiritu Deakins.*



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**Ed, Angie, Conner & Allyson Smith** - February 20, 2025 at 07:55 PM

BO

“ It was such an honor to work with Sally at the VA. She was the kindest and most loving person. She never had a bad thing to say about anyone. Everyone was her friend. On my worst days at the VA I would cross paths with Sally and we would just stand and laugh about nothing most of the time. She knew how to cheer you up. GOD has chosen a great angel. So sorry Phil and Laurelin for your loss. 🙏🙏🙏🙏

Becky O'Connell - February 20, 2025 at 02:07 PM



“ Full Of Love Bouquet was purchased for the family of Sally Lagra Espiritu Deakins.



February 20, 2025 at 04:19 AM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Sally Lagra Espiritu Deakins.

February 20, 2025 at 04:19 AM

JC

“ Jessie cargill purchased the Divine Peace Bouquet for the family of Sally Lagra Espiritu Deakins.



Jessie cargill - February 19, 2025 at 05:23 PM

JC

“ *Jessie cargill planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Sally Lagra Espiritu Deakins.*

Jessie cargill - February 19, 2025 at 05:23 PM

CM

“ *Sally always had a smile for anyone around her. Many blessings to you and your family at this time. Cheryl McNeil*

Cheryl McNeil - February 19, 2025 at 04:08 PM

MR

*My dear aunt Sally you will forever be missed. May you rest in peace and enjoy the reunion with other family members who have passed. @ Laurelin and uncle Phil may the sorrow you feel in your heart is lightened by the love that surrounds you.*

Madellaine Robert - February 19, 2025 at 07:45 PM

DN

“ *I first met sally in January 1978 when she was one of the nurses who took great care of me after getting shot. She was always so compassionate and professional. Neither she allow me the privilege of being her insurance agent. I will forever be grateful to her and Philip for that.. This world needs a lot more Sally's. Praying for Phillip Laurelin and family.*

Danny Norris - February 18, 2025 at 06:50 PM

EL

“ Elizabeth purchased the Divine Peace Bouquet for the family of Sally Lagra Espiritu Deakins.



Elizabeth - February 18, 2025 at 05:12 PM

SW

“ Sally was a great nurse & friend she'll be missed by all! Sandy & Bob Wilkins

sandy Wilkins - February 18, 2025 at 04:59 PM



“ Days of Sunshine Bouquet was purchased for the family of Sally Lagra Espiritu Deakins.



February 18, 2025 at 09:33 AM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Sally Lagra Espiritu Deakins.

February 18, 2025 at 09:33 AM



“ Heavenly Heights Bouquet was purchased for the family of Sally Lagra Espiritu Deakins.



February 16, 2025 at 12:48 PM

JE

“ Sharing pics of Aunt Sally with her sisters. Thanks for the wonderful memories with Aunt Sally at Lumban, Laguna ( aunt Sally's birthplace) , Manila 2009 and San Francisco 2018.



Jonathan Ebarvia - February 16, 2025 at 03:43 AM

JE

“ Offered daily mass intentions for the eternal repose of Aunt Sally Deakins, we love you!



Jonathan Ebarvia - February 16, 2025 at 02:29 AM

LL

“ Sally Deakins was a caring, compassionate nurse and an absolute hoot! I loved seeing her at work (VA). She could light up anyone's day. What a honey. She will be missed.

Leslie G Landrum - February 15, 2025 at 11:32 PM

DW

“ Sally was a wonderful nurse, coworker, and friend who gave her best every day to our Veterans and her coworkers. She was always so positive, smiling all the time, and full of that energy and great spirit. I will dearly miss her and will be praying for her family. God speed and rest in eternal peace, my friend.

Debe Wright - February 15, 2025 at 06:52 PM

RF

“ Rancourt Family purchased the Enchanted Cottage for the family of Sally Lagra Espiritu Deakins.



Rancourt Family - February 15, 2025 at 06:30 PM

RF

“ Rancourt Family planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Sally Lagra Espiritu Deakins.

Rancourt Family - February 15, 2025 at 06:30 PM

CM

“ Christy McQuesten purchased the Country Basket Blooms for the family of Sally Lagra Espiritu Deakins.



Christy McQuesten - February 15, 2025 at 05:17 PM

CM

“ Christy McQuesten planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Sally Lagra Espiritu Deakins.

Christy McQuesten - February 15, 2025 at 05:17 PM

BC

“ Bill, Louetta Sumerwell & Cheli Clark purchased the Fiery Lily and Rose for the family of Sally Lagra Espiritu Deakins.



Bill, Louetta Sumerwell & Cheli Clark - February 15, 2025 at 03:12 PM

BC

“ Bill, Louetta Sumerwell & Cheli Clark planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Sally Lagra Espiritu Deakins.

Bill, Louetta Sumerwell & Cheli Clark - February 15, 2025 at 03:12 PM

TL

“ Todd Loge lit a candle in memory of Sally Lagra Espiritu Deakins



Todd Loge - February 15, 2025 at 02:49 PM

MC

“ I am glad i knew her what a great person she was and nurse rip fly high

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**Mary Childress** - February 15, 2025 at 12:40 PM

LH

“ Larry and Jane Helmich purchased the Lavender Reflections Spray for the family of Sally Lagra Espiritu Deakins.



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**Larry and Jane Helmich** - February 15, 2025 at 11:37 AM

DB

“ I worked with Sally at the VA. Being a fairly new nurse, she was a nurse I wanted to be. She was always there to teach and give advice. If I ever wanted to know anything I could go to Sally. She was an amazing soul.

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**Donna Barron** - February 15, 2025 at 10:35 AM

JE

“ Eternal rest grant unto the soul of my dearest Aunt Sally Deakins, prayers said and offered mass intentions. Condolence Uncle Phil, cousin Laurelin and Justin together with Harp and Bo. Rest in peace Tita Sally as you join your sister Pacita with only 20 days apart. You will always be remembered.

*Condolence from the Ebarvia's here in Manila.*

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**Jonathan Ebarvia** - February 15, 2025 at 07:55 AM

TF

“ *The Mijares and Ward Family purchased the Strength & Solace Spray for the family of Sally Lagra Espiritu Deakins.*



**The Mijares and Ward Family** - February 15, 2025 at 02:17 AM



“ *Country Basket Blooms was purchased for the family of Sally Lagra Espiritu Deakins.*



February 14, 2025 at 11:30 PM



“ *A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Sally Lagra Espiritu Deakins.*

February 14, 2025 at 11:30 PM

JP

“ *Jing & Jake Piehnik purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Sally Lagra Espiritu Deakins.*



**Jing & Jake Piehnik** - February 14, 2025 at 11:13 PM

JP

“ *Jing & Jake Piehnik planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Sally Lagra Espiritu Deakins.*

Jing & Jake Piehnik - February 14, 2025 at 11:13 PM

ML

“ *Mennie & Juno Liverato purchased the Treasured Lilies Spray for the family of Sally Lagra Espiritu Deakins.*



Mennie & Juno Liverato - February 14, 2025 at 11:00 PM

RW

“ *Some really great/fun memories of working with Sally at the V.A.*

Robin Watts - February 14, 2025 at 10:16 PM

MC

“ *Had the honor of working with Sally at the VA hospital! She was a wonderful woman and nurse. RIP Sally.*

Myrna Coyle - February 14, 2025 at 09:05 PM

SF

“ *Stephanie Gibson VA Nurse/ friend purchased the Serene Retreat for the family of Sally Lagra Espiritu Deakins.*



Stephanie Gibson VA Nurse/ friend - February 14, 2025 at 08:42 PM

SF

“ Stephanie Gibson VA Nurse/ friend planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Sally Lagra Espiritu Deakins.

Stephanie Gibson VA Nurse/ friend - February 14, 2025 at 08:42 PM

LB

“ I met Sally at Springdale Memorial Hospital where I worked as a CNA through nursing school and several years afterwards. Sally always had the brightest smile and spunk. Thank you God for Sally. Her memory will live on in many hearts forever as she truly touched so many people.

Lynette (Paasch) Bennett - February 14, 2025 at 07:12 PM

JP

“ My Dearest Ninang Sally,  
I love you so much. You are the reason why I met (my husband) Jake. You visited us in California and I was living at home with my parents at the time. You pushed me to move out so I would be able to meet someone. So I moved, and a month later I met Jake and I've never been happier. Thank you for everything. Thank you for all the memories. You will always be my fun and bling-blingy Auntie :). I love you!  
-Jing

Janel (Liverato) Piehnik - February 14, 2025 at 05:33 PM

AC

“ Every time I saw Sally she was always Smiling! She definitely was a dedicated Nurse! Worked with her at the VA, Fly High Sally

aftin contreras - February 14, 2025 at 05:22 PM

MM

“ Sally was an incredible Nurse, mother and all around amazing person and im so lucky to have known her. She was a shining example to many and will forever be in my heart.

Michael and Marsha McBride - February 14, 2025 at 05:12 PM

JH

“ So glad I had the privilege of knowing Sally, FLY HIGH!

Jerry Hollis - February 14, 2025 at 04:35 PM

DJ

“ I had the great privilege to work with Sally at the VA. She was amazing. She was always energetic, positive and never without a smile. It will be my great honor to serve as one of her Nursing Honor Guards at her Memorial service.

Dorcas Johnson

Dorcas Johnson - February 14, 2025 at 04:04 PM



“ Forever Our Angel Bouquet was purchased for the family of Sally Lagra Espiritu Deakins.



February 14, 2025 at 03:51 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Sally Lagra Espiritu Deakins.

February 14, 2025 at 03:51 PM

EH

“ To a dear and incredible friend who was very supportive of me. Our friendship started immediately when I became an employee at the VA Hospital. She was my number one supporter. She often commented on our relationship and how special she thought I was and my response mirrored hers. We joined together and became lasting friends. We called each other on every birthday and until our health did not permit us to celebrate by having lunch at my favorite restaurant or her decision which was very acceptable to me. We would call each other on our birthdays which occurred until the last. Our conversation would end with, “Ms. Edith( Buddy) pray for me Buddy I love you” and my response “ always everyday my Buddy and you the same for me my dear Buddy and friend I love you too.” Sally Deakins my heart is heavy but I know you are resting in the arms of our dear Savior Jesus Christ as you were one who recognized who He was in all of interactions as she would meet people with an open heart and mind wishing them the best and giving her best, a loving and caring heart.

Edith Hawkins - February 14, 2025 at 03:11 PM

TW

I have so many stories of sally she was a fabulous mentor for me at the VA. Briefly here are two stories that I guess are my favorites she saw a walk-in for me and he always wore these very dark sunglasses and she told him to take those sunglasses off and let me see your eyes. It was more of how she said it as opposed to what she said the other one was she saw a patient for me that was a walk-in that told her and the whole waiting room that no one liked me. Sally bold fully yelled out seriously there's not one patient that likes Tonoa all of a sudden one of my other patients that was sitting in the waiting room, stood up with his hand in the air and said we love her. Let's just say that patient got birthday cards Christmas presents Thanksgiving, Presidents' Day you name it I always pick them a little something up and gave them to him for any holiday that they were gonna be up there for ha ha.

Tonoa whisel - February 14, 2025 at 04:20 PM

SG

*Sally always made me feel good when she was around. When we worked together at the VA she always made the shift better with her smiles and comments on the day. When I retired she gave me a watch saying "everyone gets a watch for retirement" She was an exceptional person and I am so thankful for her influence in my life.*

stephanie gibson - February 14, 2025 at 08:18 PM

PO

*Sally could always be counted on for words of encouragement, an uplift in spirit.*

Pat Owens - February 14, 2025 at 11:21 PM

ED

*Our loss is heaven's gain. Sally had such a joy for life and a love of all that she came in contact with. I was so blessed to work with her and Phil for a number of years at the VA. Love and prayers to Phil and all her extended family.*

Elizabeth "Libby" Dillingham - February 15, 2025 at 10:04 AM

DH

*I would occasionally see Sally as I was walking around the primary care area searching for "lost" medical records; she would always smile and greet me with "Hi Lola!" I never knew that her childhood dream was to be an actress, but I can't stop smiling today, knowing that she is finally "among the stars". You will be greatly missed, Sally, but your rest is well deserved.*

deb hurd - February 18, 2025 at 11:52 AM



“ *Forever Our Angel Bouquet was purchased for the family of Sally Lagra Espiritu Deakins.*



February 14, 2025 at 02:35 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Sally Lagra Espiritu Deakins.

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February 14, 2025 at 02:35 PM