

Diana Laura Riojas

Diana Laura Riojas—the woman who moved Mexicans through the courage and integrity she showed after the assassination of her husband, PRI presidential candidate Luis Donaldo Colosio—died in Mexico City on November 18. The cause of death was pancreatic cancer.

Colosio's widow fought against her illness since mid-1990. The seriousness of her condition had led to fears for her life on two occasions: the first when the disease was diagnosed and surgery was performed to remove a tumor; the second in late 1993 while her husband was contending to be named presidential candidate for the PRI. Yet Diana Laura recovered on both occasions, and stood out for the enthusiasm with which she supported her husband during his campaign appearances.

An economist by profession, she believed she was witnessing a historic moment in the life of the PRI. During a meeting with the wives of party officials, shortly before her husband's death, she stated: "Belonging to the Institutional Revolutionary Party involves a great commitment; it doesn't mean taking the easy route. It's a mistake to think that by joining the PRI you're going to have it made" (*Proceso*, November 21, 1994).

Public opinion recognized this young woman's courage and strength on March 25 when, in front of Luis Donaldo Colosio's coffin, she gave a speech upholding her husband's political ideals. After hearing her, the poet Jaime Sabines wrote a poem which ends with these words: "...Luis Donaldo, you had so many reasons to love her."

Admiration for Colosio's widow reached the point that many citizens voted for her in the elections held last August 21.

Diana Laura Riojas was born on March 9, 1958 in Nueva Rosita, Coahuila. She attended primary, secondary and preparatory school in Monterrey before moving to Mexico City, where she studied economics at the Anáhuac University. One of her teachers was the man who later became her husband.

She also received degrees in international trade and political analysis, in addition to taking refresher courses in various fields. She held several posts in the public and private sectors before getting a job at the Secretariat of Planning and the Budget, where she again met Luis

Donaldo Colosio, whom she married in 1984. The couple had two children, Luis Donaldo and Mariana, who were respectively 9 years and a year and nine months old when she died.

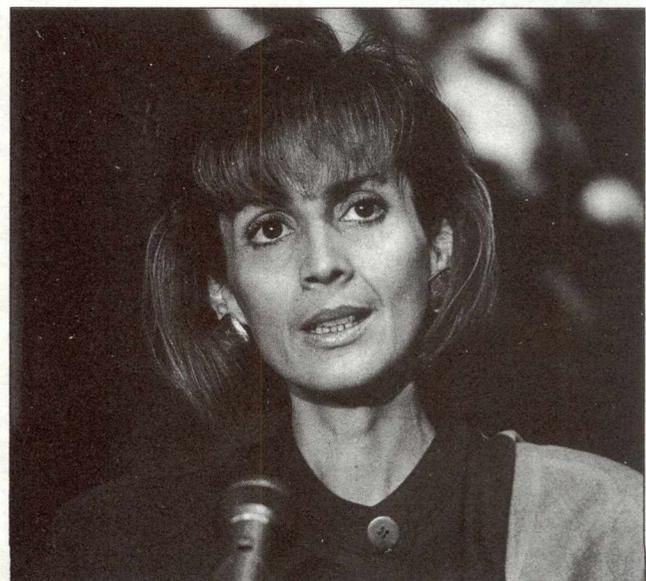
When her husband was killed, she expressed the wish not only to dedicate herself to their children but to give permanent form to his political ideas. As a result, she founded the Luis Donaldo Colosio Foundation as well as a scholarship in his name. Despite the intense activity she carried out during this period, she made few public appearances, among them some references to advances in the investigation of her husband's assassination. In June she commented that it was unlikely that the truth would soon be discovered.

In an interview with the weekly newsmagazine *Proceso*, she spoke of her feelings for Luis Donaldo: "Love doesn't go away; love remains and grows.... And I was unable to love him more because they didn't give me the time to do so...."

Her illness worsened in late September, with fatal consequences. Reporting the cause of her death, her doctor paid her this tribute: "Only death—which she confronted with determination and great dignity, without bitterness—was able to curb the desire to live, to serve and unite the Mexican people held by this great woman, who was frail in body but strong in spirit."

Diana Laura's remains lie together with those of Luis Donaldo in Magdalena de Kino, Sonora.

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Admiration for Colosio's widow made many citizens vote for her to be President of Mexico.

Farewell to Colosio

The bullets of hatred, resentment and cowardice interrupted Luis Donaldo's life; they cut short his existence, but not the ideas for which he fought.

The fatherland benefitted from this great Mexican's devotion, dedication and effort. He had a deep-going humanistic vocation. He would say that at the center of all our aspirations and efforts is man, his well-being and his freedoms.

Luis Donaldo defined himself as a Mexican of humble origins. A man of great sensibility and great nobility, he always felt enormously proud to have inherited a culture of effort rather than privilege. He was always impassioned by living together with the people, which allowed him to remain true to his origins and be authentic. He was an upright man, rigorous with himself and demanding with his friends, but always giving the greatest loyalty. He was convinced that actions speak louder than words. That was Luis Donaldo, the man.

His life was also generous in proposals, commitments and the example of consistency he passed on to us.

The nation and freedom were his great passions. Luis Donaldo said: "The nation is the highest value for society and freedom is man's most precious possession."

His great aspiration was to contribute to the nation's strength, and he always thought that democracy and justice were the paths for defending our sovereignty.

He wanted every Mexican to be able to enjoy the broadest freedoms. He believed that without freedom there is no dignity, and that freedoms fully express themselves only when man can decide between different options, can choose his own path.

He wanted a more just Mexico. He was offended and hurt by poverty. He believed that the chasms of inequality divide the nation. He believed that he had the answers for this nation which hungers and thirsts for justice. That is why he wanted to be President of Mexico.

He wanted change for Mexico, but a change with responsibility and a path forward; that we not throw overboard what we have achieved with so much sacrifice; that there be a clear future of less inequality and more opportunities.

Luis Donaldo wanted a future of peace and concord; he wanted a single Mexico, without divisions, without violence, without bitterness between brothers.

He was a man who thought about the great reforms our country demands at this, the century's end. The reform of government in order to broaden citizens' rights, so we may all live under the protection of the law. This is the certitude of which Luis Donaldo spoke.

He said it many times: he wanted to be president. But he wanted to achieve that through the vote of Mexicans who were convinced this was best, through exemplary elections which our children could be proud of. That was his democratic commitment, and he practiced what he preached.

He loved all of Mexico. He wanted people to live better in every corner and every community of our country. That is why he offered development to each of our regions. That is why he said the time had come for all of our communities.

Luis Donaldo believed that only through education could we achieve progress. He was concerned about the education that Mexico's children receive. He wanted them to receive a nationalist, quality education which would prepare them for life, for making our country greater, for competing in the world.

Luis Donaldo was a man of responsibilities. He thought that what has been achieved should be consolidated, but that at the same time, the economy had to move forward in order to generate better conditions of well-being for every family. He used to say: "We must go from sound national finances to sound family finances." He always thought that the best means to achieve this was generating more jobs.

He would say that "a person who has a job raises his self-esteem vis à vis his own family and community, is able to feed his family and look after its health, educate his children and have fun in a healthy way." In brief, he said, "a job is income, and income is the ability to do right by your family, society and Mexico."

These are Luis Donaldo's ideas, but I—who had the good fortune to be his companion and to build a family with him—can also say that he was a wonderful father and an exemplary husband. He was outstanding in his generosity and honesty, his great ability to awaken people's sympathy and appreciation.

He was a man hewn of a single piece. He followed his parents' advice to the end: to be honest and keep to the straight and narrow.

He was one of those men who act in the present while thinking always of the future. Luis Donaldo used to say: "The world was passed on to us by our parents; it has been lent to us by our children." That was Luis Donaldo, his attitude, his commitment.

Today Luis Donaldo is gone, but he has left us his example, the feeling of his affection, his ideas and, above all, he has left his family and friends the responsibility to honor his legacy. We all have a commitment to Luis Donaldo. We all have a job to do in order to keep his memory alive.

Today, here, in Magdalena de Kino, land of missionaries, we say goodbye to a man whose footsteps showed a path for others. In the name of all the family, in the name of my children Luis Donaldo and Mariana, in my own name, but above all in the name of my husband Luis Donaldo, I thank you for accompanying me today. ❧

Diana Laura Riojas

Remarks at the funeral of Luis Donaldo Colosio.