



The photograph of my Grandma Luisa Sazueta, who left our lives a few years ago, sits on my dresser. Her pensive, resolute, and serious gaze implores me to remember my promises to her that I would become everything that she could not be and that I would take on the responsibility of her ideals: the sacredness of family unity, the maintenance of our language and culture, the primary priority of education, the centrality of a political consciousness and the willingness to commit to social action, the belief in positive thinking and hard work as springboards to success, and the dedication to the equality of women.

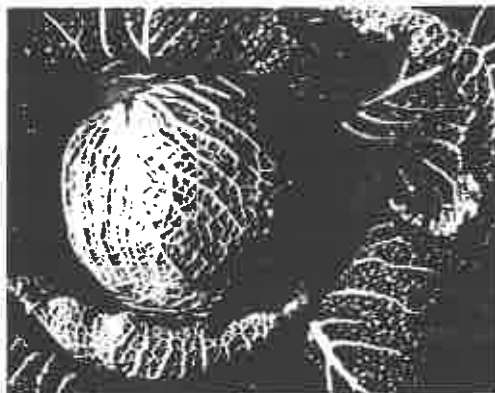
All of that and more is my grandmother's legacy to me. She was the matriarch of our extended family and the center of my life as I was growing up. Grandma was a curious blend of the most modern ideas and the most timeless understandings of life and its meanings. As I study Grandma's photo, I am struck by her natural beauty, her sophistication and carriage, by her self confidence, well-put-together visage, and obvious good taste. She was the provocative blend of the sweet *café con leche* that she drank and the pungent, brilliant-red *chile* that she prepared. She was warm and loving, yet decisive and commanding when the time called for it. She embraced new ideas as passionately as she cherished the old, simple folk ways she grew up with on a small ranch in Sonora, Mexico. She selected from the old and the new those ideas that seemed worthwhile, never forgetting or putting aside old values because they were old, and never fearing new ideas because of their unfamiliarity. This is a woman of remarkable courage, stamina, and native intelligence, a real feminist in the true sense of the word, and a pillar of strength, integrity, and compassion—the architect of my life.

—Marisa Camille Gonzalez '03
Tucson, Arizona

When I open the front door, the surprising aroma of crushed chili peppers, garlic, onions, and cabbage greets me. Normally, I would go to the kitchen to find out what my mom is cooking. Instead, I go to the garage. That combination of smells can only mean one thing: My mom is making kimchi. As I get closer to the garage, I hear the laughter of the women from my church; they must be getting ready for a women's-association bazaar. I open the door to be met by the glare of hundreds of empty jars waiting to be filled to the brim with kimchi.

With a kiss on the cheek, my mom hands me a knife, a peeler, and a checkal (a device that chops vegetables into julienne pieces), and points to a pile of turnips and carrots. Since I was five, my job has been to peel the carrots and turnips and julienne them. Now that I'm seventeen, nothing has changed.

Most young boys spend quality time with their fathers cheering at baseball games or learning how to play football. I, however, spend time in the kitchen with my mom. I have learned how to make everything from kimchi to rice cakes to marinated beef to traditional dumplings. Of course, I started out peeling vegetables—mostly garlic—when I was younger. Then as I got older, my mom let me stir food that was cooking on the stove. Now, I make whole dishes myself. (There is a running joke among the church women that I will have a hard time finding a wife because she will be frustrated when I do the traditional: "womanly" things better than she does.) While we cooked together, my mom would talk to me about everything you could possibly imagine, ranging from funny childhood



laughter and said, "Mom, that could get kind of expensive." That one little mispronunciation made everything less awkward. Soon we had developed a lasting bond.

I would never have known what an extraordinary woman my mother is if we had not started to cook together. She tells me that I'm the only one of her children to learn the family recipes and the stories of her life. While I will not have all the same ingredients when I am away at college, the recipes will remain a part of me always.

—Edward Nam '04
Columbia, South Carolina

events to heart-aching stories. The kitchen with its familiar fragrances of steaming rice, garlic, hot peppers, and simmering soup provides a warm environment that facilitates conversations between mother and son.

I cherish these talks so much because living in a Korean family does not allow such talks very often. The Korean culture encompasses hidden love and secret

sacrifices. With my mom in the kitchen, it is different. She lets go of her inhibition and, through the years, has revealed her life to me. Because my mom openly spoke to me, I began to open up also. I started to let her know how I felt about school and all the things that plague adolescents, namely girls. The discussions on dating, marriage, girls, and sex were never uncomfortable because my mom always found a way to make me laugh about them. Once my mom said to me in a thick Korean accent, "Every time you have sex, I want you to make sure and use a 'condo.'" I instantly burst into