School Worker Safety Fatality File



Husband of teacher killed in Texas school shooting dies of heart attack.

The death toll from the Uvalde school shooting that killed 19 students and two teachers reached the campus' extended family Thursday, when the husband of one of the slain teachers died of a heart attack.

Guadalupe "Joe" Garcia — the husband of 46-year-old Irma Garcia, who was shot and killed while sheltering children in her classroom — died two days after the mass killing that shattered his family, a cousin of his wife confirmed on a verified GoFundMe page.

The Garcias had been together for more than 30 years. They were high school sweethearts before marrying and having four children, the cousin, Debra Austin, wrote.

Shortly before his fatal heart attack, journalists recorded Joe Garcia placing flowers underneath a cross which had his wife's name written on it, Houston news station KHOU-TV reported.

"I truly believe Joe died of a broken heart and losing the love of his life … was too much to bear," Austin wrote.

The Garcias' nephew, John Martinez, said via Twitter that the couple's children — ages 13, 15, 19 and 23 — had now lost both parents.

Irma Garcia taught fourth-grade students at Robb elementary, in a mostly Hispanic community about 85 miles west of San Antonio, where she had worked for 23 years.

On her profile on the school's website, she wrote that she and Joe, 48, enjoyed barbecuing, listening to music, and vacationing at the nearby community of Concan, which sits along Texas' Frio River.

The couple's first child — one of two boys — was completing boot camp with the Marines, and their second, another son, was attending Texas State University, according to the profile. The two youngest children, both daughters, are a high school sophomore and a seventh grader.

While complete details about Joe Garcia's death weren't immediately available Thursday, research has shown that the death of a spouse is one of the most stressful

things a person can endure, and grief can take a deadly toll on one’s body in what is termed broken heart syndrome.

Martinez asked the public to consider donating to the GoFundMe campaign set up to help the Garcias cover various expenses.