

40th Anniversary, Los Vatos Traditional Memorial Run

Martina Mejia

There were less than a handful of Hispanic men riding Harley Davidson Motorcycles in Tucson in 1969; two of these men were brothers Marcos Antonio Diaz and George Diaz. George went off to fight the war and the brothers reunited again in 1972 when he returned from serving our country. By this time a total of six men were riding together, besides the two Diaz brothers. The group identified themselves as the Southside Guerillas, which stood for someone that comes in, then, disappears. In 1974 while the brothers were riding up Mount Lemmon a drunk driver struck Marco's motorcycle which left him paralyzed. He told his brother George that the accident would not stop him from riding a motorcycle, and built a three-wheeler Harley Davidson. The ridership group continued to grow. In May 1974 George Lopez was murdered and was the first member to die. Then, in November, two more Guerillas died. Marcos wanted a way to honor the fallen members and created the Memorial Run which took place the Saturday following Thanksgiving. In 2006 the Guerillas riders became an official motorcycle group called Los Vatos (the dudes) which had 40 members' patched by now, and the memorial run had been a tradition for 32 years. This 2014 photo commemorates the 40th anniversary of Los Vatos original memorial run, which started off at Los Vatos clubhouse with coffee, menudo, and mariachi music. The mother of the Diaz brothers is always there to enjoy the tradition. Los Vatos visit every member's grave that has fallen.