

## **Connie Tooka Mirabal: My Hopi Culture—It's All Inside**



*In many ways, the Women's Voices Project also began with Connie Tooka Mirabal, who, along with her husband Ernest, sponsored one of the first Spiritual Unity of Tribes Gatherings at Nambe Pueblo, New Mexico. A Hopi, born in Arizona, Connie was one of the few women we knew we wanted to interview and purposely set out to find*

*on the journey. Her example of service at the Nambe Gathering was an inspiration not forgotten. While we found Ernest at their home in Nambe, Connie had suffered a serious stroke and was recovering with her daughter in Flagstaff, Arizona, where we caught up with her. Although her speech had been severely affected by the stroke and it was difficult for her to communicate, her spirit was as loving and bright as ever. Connie is the mother of eight children, three of whom died, 11 grandchildren and seven great grandchildren.*

Connie Tooka Mirabal was born in King, Arizona in 1928 to parents of Hopi and Tewa descent. She wasn't raised to know the ceremonies of her people. "I just know it in my heart, from my family, parents. My dad was Mexican, Tewa, Hopi, and Aguada. He was mixed of different tribes, but he's Hopi and my mother is Hopi too,

Connie said one of the most difficult experiences in her life was the death of her father, who was murdered. "Someone killed him and we didn't know who. He was 84. And my mother she died at 84 also. That was really difficult."

Connie found the strength to keep going through all of life's difficulties through her faith in the Creator. When asked what gives her strength, Connie pointed upward.

"I know He help me. And now He help me too, when I got sick. I know He is here. He helps me and He heals me. So that happened and now I know that He is my father and my God. I know when you pray and ask Him to help, He do it."

"Oh yes," she said. "Praise Him. He gives us a life. And now I am 82 and I get a lot of advice yet. Sometimes He takes us early, but not me. He is busy when He wants us to do for Him, to serve him."

Connie left home at the age of 17 to go to work, and never went back. She married young and as a young mother had to raise her children by herself. “I tell you we didn’t have a lot of money, but I get a new house for them. Somebody didn’t give me things. I worked hard and made a life for myself and my children. I do it for my children.”

Later, Connie met and married her second husband and her soul mate, Ernest, and moved away again, to her new husband’s home in Nambe Pueblo.

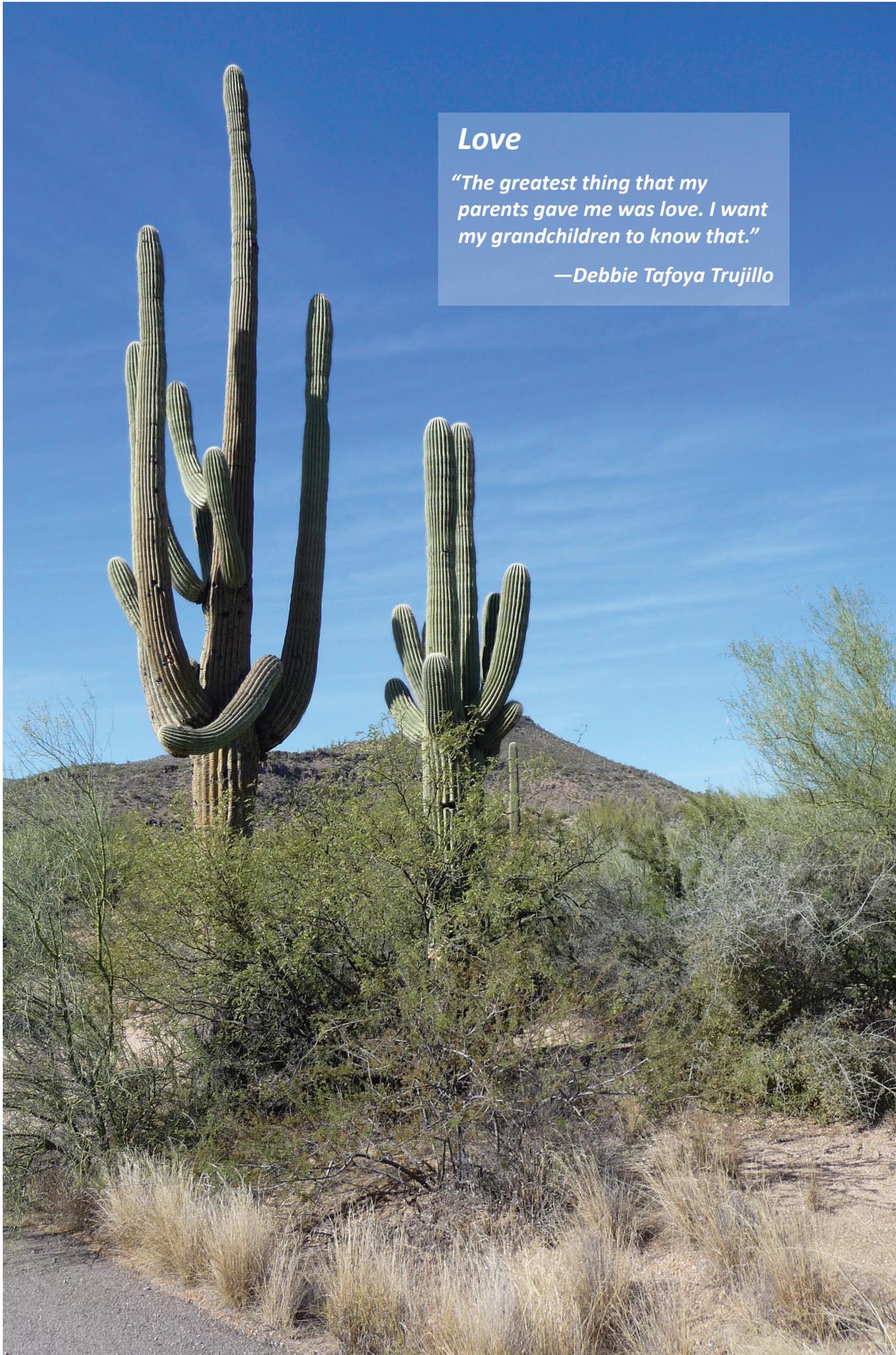
“It was hard. But the same thing that they do, we do too. We pray, make a smudge to all directions. I do here too.”

Now that she is a grandmother, Connie wants her grandchildren to learn the importance of honesty.

“Do the truth all the time. No lying. I say, God knows what you do. So do the truth all the time.”

“Have things for yourself. You have to be able to do what you want to do. Do things for yourself, for your tribe, for your family.”





## *Love*

*“The greatest thing that my  
parents gave me was love. I want  
my grandchildren to know that.”*

*—Debbie Tafoya Trujillo*