

LA SIESTA COURT

(Original location 502 W. 2nd Street)

In July 1941 Walter and Sunshine Garrett, an Arizona native, began construction of the La Siesta Court which opened in February 1942. Sunshine was an active member in five civic clubs. She and Walter were charter members of the Bow and Swing Square Dance Club and the First Presbyterian Church.

The motel was a family run business. The Garrett family lived at the motel. It was a 24/7 day a week job. The entire family had duties. Dorothy Jean, Barbara and Bill helped clean, answer the phone, assist guests, mow and trim the lawn and any other jobs that needed to be done to keep the motel clean and running efficiently.

Reasonable rates ranged from \$3.50 to \$9.00 per night. There was a night bell for late arriving guests, which meant someone had to get up several times a night to register and show people to their room. Most of the guests were people travelling through with the exception of a few that stayed for several weeks.

There were palms at the entrance and a mature carob tree by the pool. The motel was identified with a popular neon sign, which included a man taking a siesta at the base of a large saguaro. La Siesta was sold in 1959 to the Fielder's.

In 1969 Vern Walton and former Mayor Chuck Walton, Sr. purchased the 15 unit La Siesta Court and the adjacent lot which had been a prime location for their existing car lot. The Walton's agreed with the Garrett's that running a motel is all work, little play and a 24/7 job. When the maid didn't show, guess who had to clean rooms? Right about the time you got settled in for the evening or were watching something good on TV there went the bell for a motel guest just arriving. By then the motel rates were a little higher. If a room hadn't rented by 10:00PM and someone came in it could go for \$8.00.

The Walton's owned the La Siesta for 16 years and in 1985 the entire area was declared as blight for the purpose of redevelopment. The motel was demolished to make room for the Holiday Inn at 777 N. Pinal Ave. which opened in 1987.

Updated by Marge Jantz from October 2013 version

Sources: Bill Garrett, Chuck Walton, Sr., Casa Grande Valley Newspaper