



6/8/2026

Dear Willow Award Committee,

On behalf of our entire family, it is both an honor and a deeply emotional privilege to nominate Melissa Hight of Hight House for the Willow Award in recognition of the extraordinary care she provided to our beloved mother, Petra Valdez.

My mother was a resident at Height House for the final four months of her life after being diagnosed with dementia. During that time, Melissa did not simply care for her—she loved her, protected her, and walked alongside her through one of life’s most vulnerable journeys. What Melissa gave our mother—and our family—goes far beyond what words can fully express.

Melissa affectionately gave my mother the nickname “Pity Pat,” and through that simple gesture, she made her feel seen and cherished. Even on the hardest days, when dementia changed my mother’s behavior and made her feisty and unlike the woman we had always known, Melissa met her with patience, gentleness, and unwavering compassion.

Hight House is not just a place of care—it is Melissa’s home, and she welcomes each resident as if they are her own family. She cooked every meal from scratch, making sure each person’s dietary and medical needs were met. She monitored my mother’s health closely, including her blood sugar levels, and made sure she was always safe, comfortable, and treated with dignity.

But what touched us most was not just how she cared for our mother—it was how she cared for all of us. Melissa showed kindness in ways we will never forget. She even lowered the intake cost so that my mother could receive the care she so desperately needed. That act of generosity spoke volumes about her heart.

In my mother's final hours, Melissa stayed right by her side. She made sure she was not alone as she passed peacefully at 11:05 PM on a Friday night, into the early hours of Saturday morning. Knowing that someone who truly cared was there with her brought us a level of comfort that is impossible to put into words.

Choosing Hight House allowed our mother to spend her final days in peace, surrounded by warmth instead of a clinical setting. Many families make this choice, and now we understand why—because Melissa creates a space filled with dignity, love, and compassion.

My mother lived a strong and independent life. She raised two children as a single mother, gave selflessly to others, and expressed her love through generosity. She cooked for her community, volunteered, and would give anything she had to someone in need. Even though she wasn't always outwardly affectionate, her love was constant and giving. Melissa honored that life and that spirit in the way she cared for her until the very end.

If there is one thing I carry with me, it is this: my only regret is that we did not bring my mother to Melissa sooner.

Melissa did more than provide care—she gave our mother peace, comfort, and dignity in her final chapter. She gave our family reassurance, support, and compassion during one of the hardest times in our lives.

For all of these reasons and more, we believe with all our hearts that Melissa Hight truly embodies the spirit of the Willow Award.

With deepest gratitude and heartfelt appreciation,

Anna Clemmons

On behalf of the family of Petra Valdez