



Benny M. Lopez

December 24, 1923 - February 3, 2021

Our family mourns with tremendous sadness the passing of Ventura Morales López known affectionately to most as Benny Lopez. Husband, father, grandfather, and great grandfather, Benny passed away peacefully at his home in Santa Barbara on the morning of February 3rd, 2021 into the arms of our Lord and Savior. Benny was born on December 24, 1923 in Longmont, Colorado. He was the 6th child of 8 children born to Ventura López Solorio and Angela Fernanda Morales. Benny was the last surviving sibling of his family and lived an abundant life of 97 years.

Benny is survived by his wife, Carmen Victoria López. They were married for 70 years. He is also survived by 3 children, 6 grandchildren, 6 great grandchildren, and his half-siblings, Raul López, Elizabeth López, Francisco López, Elisa López, and Arturo López of Mexico City, Mexico. Benny and Carmen's 3 children and immediate offspring include:

~ Son Oswaldo D. López and wife Angela Carroll of Honolulu, HI.

~ Daughter Cynthia Marie Castañeda and husband Richard Castañeda of Santa Barbara, CA and their 3 children Christina Castañeda Cañon and husband Andrés Cañon, Selina Castañeda Wimmel and husband Nicholas Wimmel, and Stephen Castañeda and Sydney Casler.

~ Son Dr. Paul López and spouse Tracy Flores of Novato, CA and Paul's 3 children James López and their 3 children, Sandra López and husband Carlos Hernández Sr. and their 5 children, and AnnaAlicia Chief and husband

Wakinyan “Luke” Chief.

At the age of 10, Benny moved from Longmont, CO to Mexico with his father, mother and siblings due to conditions related to the Repatriation Act of 1938 and the Great Depression. At 17 years of age, Benny was recruited into Mexican military service because of his ability to speak fluently in English and Spanish. Benny was also accepted to the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, but the notification of his acceptance came one day after his induction into military service. After exceling at the West Point equivalent of military training in Mexico, Benny rose to become a special assistant to 3 military generals. In 1948, at the end of World War II, at the age of 22, Benny chose family pursuits over a military career, and returned to Santa Barbara, California to be with his mother, sister, and brother who had re-settled in Santa Barbara, CA during the war.

In 1951, he married Carmen Victoria Moreno and moved to Dos Pueblos Ranch in the Santa Barbara region where he worked for 10 years. During his time on the ranch, he suffered a serious back injury while fighting a large fire on the ranch property. Benny and Carmen moved to Santa Barbara to recuperate and after his recovery, Benny was hired by the City of Santa Barbara in the Streets/Public Works Department. He then rose to a position in the Facilities Maintenance Department where he became a fixture at City Hall. Benny befriended many of Santa Barbara’s mayors, city council members, and civic leaders. Benny was ultimately promoted to the head position at the Santa Barbara Airport, where he met numerous celebrities such as John Travolta and political figures such as President Ronald Reagan. Benny retired in 1986.

Benny relished mentoring and entertaining his grandchildren who he loved with all his heart. Benny’s devotion to his grandchildren was summed up by his often-repeated quote: “My grandchildren will always be heaven on earth to

me”.

During his free time, Benny was a passionate gardener, often seen working in his yard. He was honored by the Rose Society of America for discovering a species of rose native to Santa Barbara, which was aptly named after him, the “Benny Rose.” This rose continues Benny’s legacy and is often exchanged as a gift among those special and fortunate people who came to enjoy his magnetic personality.

At his passing, he was surrounded by his wife, children, and grandchildren who will forever remember their grandfather with love and devotion. He will be dearly missed for his devotion to his family, sense of humor, and strong work ethic. May his life be remembered by all who knew him, and may he rest in peace for all eternity.

Funeral Services will be at Welch-Ryce-Haider at 15 E. Sola Street in Santa Barbara from 5pm to 8 pm on Friday, February 12, 2021.

A funeral Mass and Burial service will be held on Tuesday, February 16th, 2021 at 10:00 am at San Roque Catholic Parish Church with burial service at Calvary Catholic Cemetery following the Mass. COVID Guidelines shall be observed at both services.

Cemetery Details

Calvary Cemetery

199 North Hope Ave
Santa Barbara, CA 93110
(805) 687-8811
http://www.archdiocese.la/directories/cemeteries/info.php?cemetery_id=3

Previous Events

Visitation

FEB **12**. 5:00 PM - 8:00 PM (PT)

Welch-Ryce-Haider - Downtown
15 E. Sola St.
Santa Barbara, CA 93101
(805) 965-5145
info@wrhsb.com
<https://www.wrhsb.com>

Funeral Mass

FEB **16**. 10:00 AM (PT)

San Roque Catholic Church
325 Argonne Circle
Santa Barbara, CA 93105
(805) 687-5215