



# Steve Tuzon Cortez

JAN 31, 1908 - SEP 25, 2013



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## **Steve Tuzon Cortez**

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**T**HE LIFE JOURNEY OF ESTEBAN TUZON CORTEZ Esteban was born on a Friday, January 31, 1908 in Cagayan, Illocos Norte, Philippines Islands. He was one of nine children born to Esparanza and Jose Cortez. At the age of 18, in 1926, he began his journey on a two week boat trip to the United States. Arriving in Vancouver, British Columbia. He landed his first job at the Edgewater Hotel in Chicago, Illinois where he worked there for one year. After a year, he accompanied other relatives in Hollywood, California. At the beginning of the depression, he took on numerous jobs to make ends meet. In Hollywood he developed a fascination for movie stars, and even had a small role in the movie, “The King and I” with Yule Brenner. It was also during this time he developed a passion for oil painting and took adult education classes at night at Hollywood High School. This led to a life-long love of painting still-life and portraits. Family members and people he admired were his favorite subjects. Portraits of Jesus in the garden Gethsemane, Martin Luther King and President John Kennedy still hang in his bedroom. Many of his portraits hang in his bed room today and will be preserved in his memory. In 1942 he was inducted into the Army at Camp Cook in California. During World War II, he was stationed at New Guinea. From 1943 to 1944 he worked in the gunnery. By 1948 he was transferred to the Philippines. It was there where he was wounded during a confrontation with the Japanese. He suffered a wound in his right leg and was awarded the Purple Heart in 1945. After his honorable discharge from the Army, he stayed in the Philippines for several additional months to visit family in his home province of Cagayan. From there he travelled back to the United States and joined his cousin Pat Cortez in Hemet, California. Steve worked as a potato farmer in Hemet. In 1950 he met his young, beautiful wife Juana. Living in Hemet, California for several years, they decided to move to Northern California, Pescadero. There they farmed together near the Pacific Ocean and reared their first three children,



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Felisa, Steve and Rita. After several years the moved the family to Watsonville, California. There he leased a farm and grew strawberries. A fourth child was born, Anthony, in Santa Cruz, California. In 1959, Steve and Juana moved to the mid-peninsula and had seven more sons and daughters. As the family began to grow he decided to get a more secure job to provide for his family. For the next 30 years he worked at William Wallace Sheet Metal Company in Belmont, CA. The family finally settled down in East Palo Alto. Steve wanted to raise his family with strong education and religious values. It was with this in mind that led him to select a home strategically located across the street from an elementary school and one block away from church. As the children grew, Steve developed his skills and talents in property management and maintenance. But more important than acquiring property, Steve was most proud of his children, grandchildren, and great gran children. Steve and Juana have always instilled in their family the love of God and the value of hard work and perseverance. Although he was not formally educated, he always instilled the value of higher education and the benefit of humility. His love and dedication to his family will carry on in our hearts. And we all know that his wish for his children is to love one another, the way that he loved us unconditionally. As patriarch Tata's primary goal was to protect his family in spite of anything that came his way. It was basic, instinctive, it was love in its most primal way. Tata loved each one of us in his own individual way. He did not mince words when he stated " its not what you have, it is how you take care of it". Steve is survived by his wife, eleven child



## Tribute Wall

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BD

**Bill Dean** posted:

Hi Ventura, I know you cared very deeply for your father and I am very sorry to hear of his passing. I would like to express my sympathies for you and your family and wish you the best

October 1 at 12:33 PM

ST

**Sheila Tengson** posted:

My dearest friend, Ventura, I'm praying you'll take comfort in knowing that God is your Fortress, surrounding you with His care, in whom you can take refuge. Your father was an incredible human being, who inspired and touched many lives with his loving, caring and generous spirit. He leaves the most precious legacy in you: Love. -Sheila Tengson

October 1 at 3:36 AM

MB

**Mieke Bryant** posted:

Ventura, in reading about your father's rich life, it is so understandable how you turned out to be such a loving, genuine, compassionate individual. Many prayers to you and yours during this time.

September 30 at 3:52 PM

AR

**Adreanna Riley** posted:

Dear Ventura and family, I remember the respect and care with which you talked about your father, and am glad you got to be with him as he passed. My thoughts are with you, Adreanna

September 30 at 3:04 PM

MY

**Mary Madriaga Young** posted:

Cortez Family, Tata was very dear to us, Our thoughts and prayers go out to the family

September 30 at 1:10 PM

MY

**Mary Madriaga Young** posted:

Our deepest condolence to the family, Tata was very dear to us, we will miss him so

September 30 at 1:08 PM



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**Renee Luque** posted:

Dear Ventura, your father sounded like a wonderfully strong man. Keeping you and your loved ones close at heart during your time of loss. – Renee Luque

September 30 at 12:39 PM



# Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Steve by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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