



Jose Acosta Calderon

JUL 19, 1940 - MAR 1, 2026



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Jose Acosta Calderon, of Sinaloa, Mexico, who made his life in San Francisco, California, entered eternal rest peacefully, surrounded by family on March 1, 2026, aged 85 years. "Chepe" survived prostate cancer in his 70's, but a short battle against it again finally ended his suffering, and in his departure, he has been reunited with his parents, younger sister, and younger brother. He is survived by his wife, two daughters, two sons, and three grandchildren. Although of modest stature, he will be dearly missed as the large presence that paved the way for five brothers and three sisters, and kept an eye out for the everyman throughout his life.

Despite growing up in extreme poverty and only possessing an abbreviated elementary education, he worked from childhood to age 62 with an unwavering constitution that allowed him to carve out survival and seek out a better life. As a farmworker, he picked every piece of produce under the sun, in addition to the brutal work of picking cotton. He migrated north and was part of the "Bracero" program in his teens, suffering the indignity of gasoline and pesticide baths, in order to support his family back in Mexico with his labor until they would all be reunited in Northern California. For whatever his transgressions, he always had an honest heart, at one point declining to pursue being a police officer in Mexico once they demonstrated he would be expected to torture his fellow human beings. His sense of right and wrong was best characterized by a lifelong commitment to worker's rights, standing up against racial and economic exploitation where he encountered it, especially in his dedication to being a union man.

He spent most of his adult life as a construction worker, consistently commended for his commitment to safety, including one fateful day where he sacrificed his own well being to save someone from falling from three stories up off of a building. A new father, he was lucky to survive plunging down into a dirt pile, and a broken nose, ribs, and arms, did not stop him from working to provide for his family, painting Navy boats until he was fully recovered to return to construction.



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The hard living, however, had a toll; it resulted in alcoholism, a disease he beat when he reconnected to his Catholic faith. He was committed to his faith until his final days, maintaining his sobriety for decades. His labor built countless buildings throughout the decades in California, often driving past the finished structures at random and pridefully pointing out his contributions to civic life. Although his formal education was severely limited, his curiosity carried him to make the most of his well-traveled experiences, evidenced by an uncanny sense of geography, including the ability to name capitals domestically and globally.

He outweighed the burdens of his challenges, imperfections, and complications with a giving spirit directly responsible for bettering hundreds of lives, both in and outside of his family. He was, as his older cousin said, someone with a thousand thoughts; a thousand worlds.

He loved dressing well, nice cars kept clean, hearty restaurant meals (especially a good diner), playing cards with his family, talking about the weather and geopolitics, watching baseball and boxing, and the classic Mexican cinema and ballads of his youth. Since he lived for nearly a century, he will be remembered for the better part of the next hundred years, while he cruises in his great Impala in the sky.



Tribute Wall

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Enrique Calderon lit a candle in honor of Jose.

Lo siento mucho por la pérdida del señor José Acosta. Siempre fue muy amable conmigo y me hacía sentir bienvenido en su casa cuando iba a visitar a Danny. Recuerdo las conversaciones que teníamos sobre lo que pasaba en el mundo, siempre tenía algo interesante que compartir. Les mando todo mi amor y mis más sinceras condolencias en este momento tan difícil.



March 28 at 10:06 AM



Anonymous planted a Memorial Tree in honor of Jose.



March 26 at 9:44 PM



Memories only last if you share them

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



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