

MEMBER FORUM

Gabriel "Hap" Navarro

Gabriel Hap Navarro, 94, resident of Santa Maria passed away February 12, 2014 of natural causes. He was born in Los Angeles, California on May 19, 1919 to Gabriel and Leonora Navarro (Diaz). His father was a writer and musician who served as a Captain in the Mexican military band. His parents left a life of privilege in Mexico and immigrated to California late in 1918, during the Mexican Revolution. They followed the underground network to Los Angeles where artists were given refuge from the struggle. Mr. Navarro Sr. worked in the emerging motion picture industry translating dialogue in scripts from English into Spanish.



Hap, as he was called since his childhood, spent his early years in Los Angeles but when his parents separated went with his mother, who took work as a cook in the migrant labor camps of the late 1920s and 1930s. It was a hard time for Hap; still he excelled in his studies despite moving frequently and showed an early aptitude for writing. He returned to LA in the late 1930s and joined his father as a contributing writer for *La Opinión* and *El Pueblo*. His main interest was sports writing, and it was these interests that lead him to pursue a position as publicity director for the Hollywood Legion Stadium after WWII. During wartime he worked at Lockheed Aircraft helping build the P-38, the plane that won the war he would later say. In the early 1950s he was an award-winning matchmaker/promoter of professional boxing at the Hollywood Legion and was honored with induction into the California Boxing Hall of Fame in 2006.



Jose Napoles, George Pasnassus, Hap Navarro and Lauro Salas.



Hap Navarro with the IBRO's Stephen Gordon and Don Cogswell at his induction into the California Boxing Hall of Fame in 2006. Photo courtesy of Don Cogswell.

At Holy Cross Church in LA, he married the lovely Josephine Lucero. They would have been married 66 years this June. They moved to Calexico in the mid 1950s to start a business and be closer to his wife's family. In retrospect

the move proved to be both the best and the most difficult of times for Hap. He loved the people of Calexico and the Imperial Valley and felt a strong bond with the community. He and Jo raised a family and had several businesses including Fosters Freeze, Don Gabriel Gifts, and The Hobby Shop. He was active in the local Lions Club and briefly edited the Calexico Chronical.

Tragedy struck the family in 1962, when his young son David drowned at the municipal pool, a loss from which he never quite recovered. In the late 1970s the family moved to San Diego where Hap purchased a second Fosters Freeze and opened another Don Gabriel and Gabriel Gallery in Parkway Plaza, El Cajon. He made new friends and became very involved in Western Art, and collectibles. He retired in 1993 with plans to move to France, he to write and Jo, an artist, to paint. Plans were interrupted when Jo was diagnosed with an advanced-stage breast cancer. Hap cared for her in their home in San Diego until her death in 1994.

In 2005 he moved to Santa Maria where he continued to write and blog online with boxing and art enthusiasts until 2013 when his health declined. He was always proud of all of his childrens achievements as well as those of his nieces and nephews, most notably son Dan Navarro, singer, songwriter (Lowen and Navarro), nephew Dave Navarro, guitarist (Janes Addiction & Red Hot Chili Peppers) and niece Julie Navarro Carobini, author.

He is survived by his son Dan Navarro of Los Angeles, daughters Didi Reynoso (David) of Santa Maria, and Lenni Navarro Perrotti (Tony), of Houston and Los Angeles, and son Johnny Navarro of Los Angeles. Grandchildren; Renee LaRocco of Santa Maria, Christian Cortez of San Luis Obispo, Joseph Navarro of Los Angeles, and Alex Perrotti of Houston, TX. Great-grandchildren Matthew and Anthony LaRocco of Santa Maria. Siblings; Daniel Navarro (Elaine) of Ventura, and Mike Navarro (Toby) of Los Angeles, numerous nieces and nephews of the Navarro, Lucero, Reveles, Uribe, Rosas, Terrazas, Pesqueira, Pompa, and extended families.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Gabriel and Leonora Navarro, stepmother Maria Navarro, his wife, Josephine Lucero Navarro, His son David Navarro, nephew James Terrazas, In-laws Connie Navarro, Harriet Reveles, Paul Grissom, Conrado Romero, Rafael and Bertha Rosas, Ignacio Pesqueira and Frank Terrazas.

Our heartfelt thanks to the caregivers at Apple Anns RCFE, Rosie and Rita, for their expert, loving care in the final months of his life, as well as Linda Stone and all the caring nurses from Dignity Hospice.

A memorial service will be held at an undetermined future date in San Diego, followed by a private burial at Mountain View Cemetery in Calexico. **Source: Santa Maria Times**