



Joseph Martin Lopes

May 11, 2026

Joseph Martin Lopes passed away surrounded by love and care on May 11, 2026 in Modesto, California at the age of 91. Joe was a devoted husband of 47 years to his treasured wife, Janet Elizabeth (Hardie) Lopes, whose cremated remains will be laid to rest in his embrace in Turlock, California, his place of birth. He is survived by his five children, Teresa Lopes, Kathy Creekmore (Don), Kim Feldhaus (Ron), Kevin Lopes (Wendy), Jolene Thinnis (Coley); and his grandchildren, Donnie Creekmore, Darrell Creekmore, Ashley Pierce Walters, Kayla Pierce, Tristan Pierce and Ethan Lopes.

Orphaned by his dearly loved parents at 12, Joe became an independent, creative thinker and problem solver at an early age. He leveraged the self-reliance gained from his humble roots in the dairy work of Turlock, California to attain a bachelor's degree and teaching credential from California State University, Stanislaus and California State University, Fresno, and he subsequently achieved a Masters in Vocational Arts from Ball State University. Prior to his teaching career, Joe worked in valley agriculture from vines to melons to canneries. Additionally, he was a skilled butcher and co-owned a meat company, was an auto mechanic, and was an airplane mechanic at Oakland International Airport.

An educator in Modesto City Schools for 36 years, Joe taught first at Downey High School. Later, he was part of the pioneering staff of Davis High School

and Beyer High School. He met his wife Jan as a colleague at Davis. He taught auto shop, wood shop, metal shop and electronics at the secondary level and electricity courses at Modesto JC. He retired as the Work Experience Coordinator at Beyer High School.

Joe earnestly believed in community service. He especially enjoyed the challenge and camaraderie of being a board member and chairman for the Mocse Federal Credit Union for 32 years; he was then honored as a Board Member Emeritus until his passing. He was highly involved in Modesto's Sylvan Improvement Club for over 20 years where he was selected to be president. Additionally, he was elected to the Hart-Ransom school board where he served as president.

Throughout his time in Modesto, he lovingly maintained an almond orchard in the West Modesto/Wood Colony area. On his ranch, he tended a family orchard of over 30 fruit trees, an enormous vegetable garden and boysenberry patch, and he cared for a host of farm animals. Additionally, Joe was a winemaker: he pruned and maintained his own vines and built a special "wine house" to house his barrels for the aging process. He crafted his own beer; it was known as "Joe's Mean Green" because it was bottled in green bottles and had a jolly good kick to it. He joyfully continued these hobbies into his retirement years. Joe loved to host a good party, and was known for his elaborate Halloween parties and eventful gatherings with friends. Always quick to share a joke, he is remembered for his sense of humor and love of storytelling.

Joe was a master craftsman; he was known to always have a project and a plan. His friends and family remain surrounded by his intricate and thoughtfully crafted woodworking projects, stained glass, welding and metalwork projects, leatherwork, and other mindfully crafted creations.

In retirement, he designed and built his dream house overlooking the ocean in Shelter Cove, California, where he was actively involved in the Shelter Cove Pioneers community organization, was a docent at the lighthouse, and helped organize and coordinate many community projects. He became CERT qualified so he could assist others in emergencies.

Joe was a car lover all his life, and he owned, modified, and maintained a wide variety of vehicles over the years, everything from a Model A Victoria to his favorite, his "Purple Plum" Buick Riviera.

He was an avid reader, a researcher and a lifelong learner. Joe enjoyed travelling in North America and abroad: many of his favorite memories were of traveling to Canada, Mexico, Europe, Africa, Hawaii, and the Azores.

Always an optimist and a dreamer, Joe created his own destiny and legacy on his own terms. He will be greatly missed by all who knew and loved him.

Family and friends are warmly welcomed to a viewing at 10:00 AM, which will lead into a graveside service at 11:00 AM on Friday, June 5, 2026. A reception will take place immediately after. All memorial services will be held at Turlock Memorial Park and Funeral Home.

Donations in Joe's name can be made to the "Joe and Jan Lopes Scholarship Fund," care of the Shelter Cove Pioneers, 9126-c Shelter Cove Rd. Whitethorn, CA 95589.

Cemetery Details

Turlock Memorial Park

575 N. Soderquist Rd.
Turlock, CA 95380
(209) 632-9111
<http://turlockmemorialpark.com>

Upcoming Events

Visitation

JUN 5. 10:00 AM (PT)

Turlock Funeral Home
425 North Soderquist Road
Turlock, CA 95381
(209) 632-9111
<https://turlockfuneralhome.com>

Main Chapel

Graveside Service

JUN 5. 11:00 AM (PT)

Turlock Memorial Park
575 N. Soderquist Rd.
Turlock, CA 95380
(209) 632-9111
<http://turlockmemorialpark.com>

Reception to Follow

JUN 5. 12:00 PM (PT)

Turlock Funeral Home
425 North Soderquist Road
Turlock, CA 95381
(209) 632-9111
<https://turlockfuneralhome.com>

Small Chapel