



# Samuel Cecil Gonzalez

December 2, 1938 - March 23, 2019

## An Unintended Legacy - Love for Family, Friends, Fun, Sports and Art

His art reflected how he viewed and lived life - in vivid color, in search of something better, unafraid to take risks, imaginatively, innovatively, and with optimism.

Samuel Cecil Gonzalez, died peacefully in his sleep on March 23, 2019, at his home in Manteca, CA, following a fierce battle against anaplastic thyroid cancer. He was 80 years old. During his transition to a new journey, he was surrounded by loving family members, as he was in life. For Gonzalez, his wife and family were his highest priority, and he remained laser-focused on providing the best opportunities for them.

Gonzalez was born on December 2, 1938, in San Francisco, the son of Cecil Calnia Gonzalez and Isabel Wightman. Challenges beyond his control during childhood forced him to move often, which influenced his ability and talent to use art as a positive way to express his feelings and to explore beauty in nature and in life.

As a student at Los Gatos High School, Gonzalez excelled in sports and received numerous trophies for football and swimming. After graduating from high school in 1956, he enlisted in the U.S. Airforce (1957-1960) and was stationed in Winnipeg, Canada, where he worked as a radar operator. A true California boy, he talked about having to adjust to subzero degree temperatures and how he and his buddies frequently played basketball when temperatures “warmed” to 32 degrees.

In 1961, following his stint in the Air Force, and during his college days at San José State University, Gonzalez met Nina Dublin through mutual friends. The two married in 1962, and moved to Cleveland, Ohio, where he worked as a graphic illustrator, designing cards for American Greetings, and where the couple’s first daughter, Shelley was born. The cold weather prompted the Gonzalez’s to move back to San Francisco, where their second daughter, Celestine, was born. He built his career as a commercial artist, working as a graphic illustrator for several advertising agencies, including Sturgis Advertising. In the

late 1960s, he created Top Drawer Studios. With an office located on Pier 5, he became one of the first Filipino Americans to own and direct an advertising agency in San Francisco.

Through his adventurous spirit and steadfast belief to produce strong women in his daughters, Gonzalez set out to create fantastic make-believe voyages for his children. Be it climbing the pretend Himalayas in Golden Gate Park or exploring on an imaginary three-person island in the wilderness of the foothills of the Sierra Nevada, he introduced them to a life of the unknown, unexpected, and prepared them for a world to conquer.

By 1972, Gonzalez moved to a slower-paced, down-to-earth vibe in Modesto. His artwork and talent could be seen through his work for the McClatchy newspaper, The Modesto Bee, where he influenced marketing, promotion, and art for more than 20 years, during the mid-1970s until 1997. Starting as an illustrator, he was quickly promoted to Marketing Director at The Bee, where he helped the paper transition from print to online publication. He received accolades and national awards for his relentless commitment to the community and promotion of the local newspaper.

Sam was a member of FANHS (Filipino American National Historical Society), Central Valley Chapter, Sacred Heart Church in Turlock, St. Anthony's of Padua in Manteca, Spring Creek Golf and Country Club and also, Dryden Men's Golf Club. Of course, being a San Francisco native, he enjoyed supporting his Bay Area teams, the SF Giants, 49ers, and Golden State Warriors. Before and after retirement, Sam loved spending time with his wife Nina playing the machines at casinos visiting family and friends, and traveling internationally as far as China, Europe, and South America. His spur-of-the-moment spirit was simple and easy, and this could be a quick, short trip with his daughters through California's gold country with the family dog, Heidi.

Sam loved watching his grandchildren play sports, and found pleasure in going to their soccer and basketball games. He encouraged hard work, making good decisions, and always trying your best in school and sports.

When possible, Gonzalez used his art to challenge the status quo. He told his daughters, "If you leave the world a better place than when you arrived, you have accomplished something great." There is no doubt that over the past eighty years, he added much more to the world than he took.

On March 31, 2019, Sam and Nina would have celebrated their 57th Wedding Anniversary.

Gonzalez leaves behind his wife, Nina Dublin Gonzalez; daughters, Shelley Gonzalez London (Patrick), Celestine Gonzalez de Bustamante (Héctor); grandchildren, Taylor, Samuel, and Matthew London, and Claire Bustamante; sisters-in-law, Rita Previtiera (John), Carmen Hu (Richard), Helena Custer (Jim), Ling Olson (David), Darlene Mendes (Pandy Welch); nieces, Diana Wilkerson, Basie De la Cruz and nephew, Curtis De la Cruz, and many, many other nieces and nephews. In passing, he joins his father, Cecil Calnia Gonzalez, sister, Jane De la Cruz, nephew, Leo De la Cruz, niece, Regina De la Cruz.

With Gonzalez's passing, the world has lost a great lover of art, beauty, and family. When asked about the legacy he'd like to leave, he said, "The legacy isn't important. What's important is family. Life brings you all kinds of things. Do your best. Make good choices, and try not to make too many bad ones, too many times."

Sam was a quiet and humble guy, with a great appreciation for humor. He will be missed by all who knew and loved him - family, friends, and the community.

#### Memorial Services:

Recitation of the Rosary

Turlock Funeral Home – Main Chapel

425 N. Soderquist Rd., Turlock

Tuesday, April 2, 2019

6:00 p.m.

Led By

Alma Christiansen

Reception to Follow

Turlock Funeral Home – Small Chapel

Tuesday, April 2, 2019

7:00 p.m.

Funeral Mass

Sacred Heart Catholic Church

1200 Lyons Ave., Turlock

Wednesday, April 3, 2019

10:30 a.m.

Officiating

Father Luis Cordeiro

Pallbearers

Patrick London

Andrew Andrade

Robert Orozco

John Previtera Jr.

Corey Gin

Chet Salvatorelli

Honorary Pallbearers

Samuel London

Matthew London

Interment

Turlock Memorial Park

575 N. Soderquist Rd., Turlock

Celebration of Life Reception to Follow

Turlock Ball Room (Portuguese Hall) / Turlock Pentecost Hall

At the corner of: 528 N. Golden State Blvd. & 777 Geer Rd.

Estimated Time: 12:30 p.m.

# Cemetery Details

## Turlock Memorial Park

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

# Previous Events

## Visitation

**APR 2.** 5:00 PM - 6:00 PM (PT)

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

## Recitation of the Rosary

**APR 2.** 6:00 PM - 7:00 PM (PT)

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

## Reception to Follow

**APR 2.** 7:00 PM - 10:00 PM (PT)

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

## Funeral Mass

APR 3. 10:30 AM - 11:30 AM (PT)

Sacred Heart Catholic Church  
1200 Lyons Ave.  
Turlock, CA

## Interment Following Funeral Mass

APR 3. 11:30 AM - 12:30 PM (PT)

Turlock Memorial Park  
575 N Soderquist Rd  
Turlock, CA 95380-3749  
(209) 632-9111

## Reception to Follow

APR 3. 12:30 PM - 3:30 PM (PT)

Turlock Ball Room Pentecost Association  
528 N. Golden State Blvd.  
Turlock, CA 95380

# Tribute Wall



“ *Samuel Cecil Gonzalez*

January 28, 2023 at 09:01 AM



“ *1 file added to the album Memories Album*

*to be a happy one.  
I'd like to leave an after glow  
of smiles when life is done.  
I'd like to leave an echo  
whispering softly down the ways,  
of happy times and laughing times  
and bright and sunny days.*

**TURLOCK FUNERAL HOME** - April 02, 2019 at 10:42 AM