



Sam Diaz Fabela Jr.

April 28, 1929 - February 19, 2024

Sam Diaz Fabela, (94), of Vista, California, passed away peacefully surrounded by his children on February 19, 2024. Sam was born “Eusebio Fabela” to Sam Tarin Fabela and Cruz Fabela, on April 28, 1929, in McFarland, CA. The oldest of 13 children, Sam toiled as a farmworker during his youth to help support his family. He escaped abject poverty by joining the Air Force during the Korean War, where he was trained in air traffic controlling. As a civilian, he leveraged his military training into a successful career with the Federal Aviation Administration. During his impressive career, he served as an Air Traffic Controller and Assistant Tower Chief at the San Jose Airport, and then became the Tower Chief of Imperial County Airport and later at the Sonoma County Airport, in Santa Rosa, CA. While in Imperial County, he was also assigned to work with Mexican air traffic control officials to train them in international protocols. He finished his career as the very first ever Air Traffic Control Tower Chief at the Ontario International Airport, where he retired in 1987. Sam was a self-made man and although he had no formal education, he loved to learn, auditing college classes or reading on subjects that interested him. He was also a talented musician, having learned guitar at a young age and singing mariachi songs beautifully into his 90s, mostly with his similarly talented brothers and sisters at family gatherings. Despite his advanced age, he amazed all who met him with how mentally and physically strong he remained until his final hours, spending the last few years caring for his wife Lucia, the love of his life, with whom he had just celebrated 70 years

of marriage. In addition to Lucia (90), he is also survived by his six children — Anita, Sam Jr., Susan, Beatrice, Steve, and Robert — as well as four younger siblings, 14 grandchildren, 18 great-grandchildren, and 2 great-great-grandchildren, all of whom adored and respected him deeply. Sam's family will host a funeral service on Wednesday, March 13, 2024, at 11:00 am at St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church in Vista, CA.

In lieu of flowers, please consider making a donation to a fund to help support Sam's most precious love, his surviving wife Lucia, with assisted living and medical care by donating via Venmo to @CareforLucia.

Previous Events

Celebration of Life Service/ Visitation

MAR 12. 5:00 PM - 9:00 PM (PT)

Magallón Funeral Home
1421 North Santa Fe Avenue
Vista, CA 92084
(760) 522-3356
magallonfuneraldirectors@gmail.com
<http://www.magallonfuneralhome.com>

Funeral Mass

MAR 13. 11:00 AM (PT)

Saint Francis of Assisi Catholic Church
525 W. Vista Way
Vista, CA 92083
<http://stfrancis-vista.org>

Committal Service / Military Honors

MAR 13. 2:15 PM (PT)

Miramar National Cemetery
5795 Nobel Drive
San Diego, CA 92122

Tribute Wall

BN

“ 4 files added to the tribute wall



Bea Nikoley - February 28, 2024 at 02:45 AM

BN

“ *Bea Nikoley sent a virtual gift in memory of Sam Diaz Fabela Jr.*



Bea Nikoley - February 28, 2024 at 02:39 AM

CL

“ 4 files added to the tribute wall



Chelsey Leal - February 27, 2024 at 02:36 PM



“ 1 file added to the album Pictures from the Leal's



Emma Leal - February 26, 2024 at 11:05 PM



“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Christopher Adam Baca - February 24, 2024 at 11:47 AM

DA

“ 4 files added to the album *Pictures from the Leal's*



Damian - February 21, 2024 at 06:04 PM

DA

“ 1 file added to the album *Fabela Family*



Damian - February 21, 2024 at 05:59 PM

DL

“ 1 file added to the album *Pictures from the Leal's*



Damian Leal - February 21, 2024 at 03:28 PM

DL

“ 1 file added to the album *Pictures from the Leal's*



Damian Leal - February 21, 2024 at 02:21 PM