Emerito Torres

June 15, 1931 ~ September 15, 2021

Emerito Torres 1931-2021

On September 15, after a battle with Alzheimer's, the patriarch of our family and friend to all looked up to the sky one last time and moved on to the next life. He was fortunate to be at home and surrounded by family.

Emerito was born in 1931 in the small town of Quemado De Guines, Cuba. He, his 3 sisters and 6 brothers helped manage a large sugarcane plantation and cattle farm which was created by his grandparents Jose and Francisca and then greatly expanded by his father Maximo. His mother Pilar died when he was a child, and he was raised by his grandmother and father. He talked often of his love for the farm, riding horses, playing baseball, boxing, diving from tall palms into shallow creeks and eating all the delicious fruits and vegetables that Cuba had to offer. He went to school just long enough to learn to read and write then spent his time working hard to provide for the large family. He read the newspaper to his father every day. He kept them apprised of current events and the unfolding developments of WWII. Reading the newspaper piqued his interest in politics. In his early twenties he left the farm, moved to Havana, and joined the Cuban Air Force. When Fidel Castro began a revolution, Emerito was eager to defend the Cuba he knew and loved. He often told stories of pursuing Che Guevara and the guerrilla fighters in the jungles of the Sierra Maestra. After the revolution he stayed in Havana, working in his brother's medical clinic. In 1965 the United States began Freedom Flights to bring Cuban refugees to Miami. Emerito was one of the first to sign up and was told the waiting period would only be a few months. Ultimately, he spent 5 years in the terrible conditions of a forced labor camp before his number was finally called.

He arrived in Miami on January 1, 1970, with only "the clothes on my back." He kneeled to kiss the tarmac, grateful for his freedom. Although he spoke no English, he quickly got three jobs working day and night. A month later he moved to Greenwich, Connecticut. He found a job in a hospital where he met Annette Fonnesbeck, a nice nurse from Utah. They were married and had their first two children in Greenwich. He was baptized a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints before they moved to Salt Lake City in 1974. They were sealed April 25, 1975, in the Salt Lake Temple.

Emerito found his dream home in Sugarhouse. On its large lot he renewed his love for farming by creating beautiful vegetable and flower gardens. He and Annette added four more children to their family. He worked for 25 years as a florist with Salt Lake City Parks Department where he grew, designed, and immaculately maintained flower beds at all city properties. He loved working at Liberty Park and the Jordan Park International Peace Gardens.

Emerito left Cuba in despair for his homeland under Castro, but he gained a lifelong love and appreciation for the United States, its freedoms, and the American Dream. He was fortunate to have found a new community in the Salt Lake Parley's Stake. He never lacked friends and was respected by all who knew his story. No one was more

industrious. He served all in need, giving generously of his labor and skills. He took pride in hard work, always making sure the job was done right. He lived his life with a hoe, rake, or machete in his hands until two weeks before he died. His politics were conservative, and he despised communism. He enjoyed discussing politics and always had great concern for anyone he felt took their American citizenship and freedoms for granted.

He loved over-ripe bananas, buttercup squash, black beans and rice, pork roast, yucca, astrophysics, a perfectly manicured hedge, and a well-tailored suit. He had great faith, loved going to church and knew his Heavenly Father loved him. More than anything he loved his family in Salt Lake City, Miami, and Cuba. He never stopped working to provide for his wife, children and 26 grandchildren.

Preceded in death by his parents, three sisters and two brothers. Survived by brothers Armando, Gerardo, Luis, Alberto of Florida, and Cuba. Also survived by his patient and loving wife and children: Matthew (Emily), Jennifer Smart (Tim), Peter (Sarah), Aaron (Hillary), Maria Mendivil (Alain), Paul (Tricia); and grandchildren Chandler, Gabriel, Lucas, Theo, Vivian, Lucia; Samuel, Olivia, Eliza, Lucy; Maximo, Sophia, Grace, Emma; Abram, Isabelle, Hazel, Mack; Thomas, Vincent, Ada, Elaine; Maile, Lydia, Rachel, Paul and 5 great grandchildren, along with a host of in-laws and extended family across the country who loved him.

Heavenly gardens will now thrive. Emerito has arrived.

Services will be held Friday October 01, 2021, at 11:00 am at the Parley's Stake Center – 1870 E. Parleys Canyon Blvd. SLC, UT 84106. Friends may visit Friday from 9:00 am to 10:30 am at the same location. Interment at Logan City Cemetery following services

Please use the following link for those who wish to view the service online. https://youtu.be/H_Kg9RTcLro