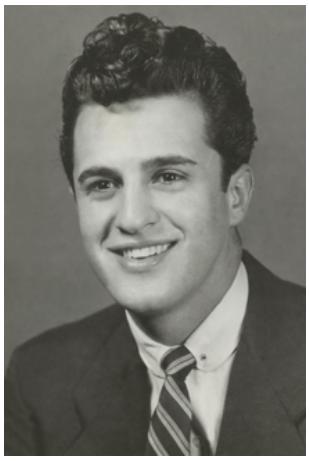


# Paul Gibran Begum

*October 18, 1935 ~ March 29, 2024*

It is with heavy hearts that we announce the passing of our beloved father, husband, brother, grandfather, and friend Paul Gibran Begum, who left us on March 29, 2024 at the age of 88 in Palm Springs, California. Paul's extraordinary life was marked by his remarkable contributions as a writer, poet, filmmaker, entrepreneur, Air Force veteran and poker champion. His remarkable life was a tapestry woven with creativity, adventure, and service leaving an indelible impact on all who knew him.

Born in Bayonne, New Jersey on October 18, 1935 to Mirza Mohammed Beg and Pauline Lucia Restivo, Paul was the third born of twelve children. Despite humble beginnings, his parents instilled in him a sense of independence and entrepreneurship, which served him his entire life. At 16, he embarked on a cross-country hitchhiking adventure, setting the stage for a lifetime of exploration and pursuit of the American Dream.

On his unique life journey, he found a deep appreciation for literature, film, business and travel. He served his country with honor as a member of the Air Force in the Korean War. As a morse code radio operator ranked top of his class, he was stationed around the world, sometimes in desolate locations like the deserts of North Africa, Libya and Turkey. His mission was to decipher enemy codes, with a keen understanding of listening to scrambled messages, which he would translate with Top Secret clearance ciphers.

After his military service, he worked for McDonnell Douglas where he produced important films for air avoidance systems. Paul attended Brigham Young University for a time, but his true desire was to pursue his passion for storytelling, through filmmaking and theater in New York and Los Angeles. Paul pursued many paths in life like acting, writing & directing. His productions were a reflection of his diverse experiences and profound insights into the human condition. This experience would lead him to study deeper into the importance of religion for his own life. This new awakening helped him forge a new path to the LDS Church.

He had many well-known friends in the entertainment industry, especially during the Golden Age of Cinema. With the assistance of a loan from Elvis Presley, he was able to keep his infamous "Shoebox Theater" in Hollywood, on Melrose Avenue, where he won many awards and accolades. He was also roommates with Anthony Perkins, lead actor in "Psycho," and rode motorcycles with Steve McQueen.

Another passion Paul had was cuisine, especially Middle Eastern, given that his father was from Afghanistan. He was inspired to open up and build his own restaurant, "Ali Baba's" in 1970. The building he designed is still standing today, known now as The Amber Restaurant on 3300 South.

Even later in life, Paul's love for filmmaking continued with passion. He wrote and directed a short film entitled "Face on the Barroom Floor," starring Mickey Rooney, shot entirely in Salt Lake City. Additionally, he wrote numerous screenplays such as The Final Steal, Blood on the Snow, Youth is the Time, Seed of Doubt and Tree

Full of Stars.

Paul’s entrepreneurial spirit led him to create publicly traded business ventures such as Utah Wired, Klever Marketing and Avtel Communications, which became famous for one of the quickest/largest single day Nasdaq stock increases at that time. Additionally, he created Pets Smellfree and EnviroAir Masks.

He was also known for his visionary pursuits in real estate and was akin to buying large blocks of land. Two such examples include one megablock between 7th and 8th South & West Temple, which he later sold to Rick Warner. The second being the block across from Pioneer Park in the 1980’s, which was deemed the “ghetto “ at the time. His keen eye for potential transformed areas like Pioneer Park into thriving neighborhoods. Not confined to just the city, he owned a beautiful rustic ranch in Heber situated on the Provo River. He relished that space due to his close affinity with the spiritual splendor of that stretch of river.

There was no person Paul wouldn’t talk to on the streets, restaurants, or grocery stores. He met some of his most enduring friends in this manner, sometimes shocking the more reserved people of Salt Lake City who didn’t know him, surprised as to why a strange man was talking philosophically to them about such things as: “If they had 3 wishes what would they be?”

Paul fueled his passion for life into his children and empowered them to pursue their dreams. He helped instill in them a sense of entrepreneurial spirit, giving to the poor and needy, hard work, a good education, a sense of adventure and a passion for travel and adventure. They took family trips all over the world to places like England, Ireland, Malaysia, Thailand, Australia, New Zealand, France, Costa Rica, Jamaica and the Bahamas.

Paul’s generous support for his children never diminished. As a single father for much of their upbringing, he went the extra mile to provide them with a loving childhood in a beautiful family-centric neighborhood above Wasatch Blvd. in Salt Lake City. Always a strong supporter of education, he wanted his kids to be close to a great school to become independent freethinkers for their future endeavors. He also chose this specific area to help raise them with spiritual guidance.

Paul is survived by his wife Yeonah, his children Tony, Gibran, Saladin & Serene, as well as 9 grandchildren, 4 great grandchildren, brothers, sisters and countless friends who will miss him dearly.

A memorial service to celebrate Paul's life will be held at Larkin Sunset Lawn, 2350 E. 1300 S., Salt Lake City on April 13, 2024, with the viewing being from 1:00 - 2:00 PM and graveside service from 2:00 - 3:00 PM.
Paul loved the area of the East Bench as a safe haven for his family and had spent many Sundays at the Monument Park Ward debating the virtues of the “True Christian Spirit.”

He was inspired by all those around him and life itself and it showed with his dynamic perspective on life. He enjoyed conversations with his LDS friends that included LDS President Thomas S. Monson, who was at his wedding to Yeonah Choi.

Paul, affectionately known as “Cabo” to many, leaves behind a legacy of love, creativity, adventure, and a keen sense of humor. His memory will continue to inspire all that knew him and his spirit will forever guide us.

To this day, people he touched still ask about him as they miss his uplifting spirit. Rest in peace, Cabo ’84! Your presence will be deeply missed, but your legacy will live on in the hearts of all who knew you. We wish you safe travels where “There is a River,” meeting with those that you loved dearly, welcoming you with open arms in Heaven.

We wish our father a great journey into what he had always believed happens when your soul returns to the Father. Thank you for everything. Your everlasting imprint on our lives will remain with us forever. You will be missed and cherished until we meet again.