



Tomas A. Vasquez Sr.

December 21, 1937 - April 23, 2025

In Loving Memory of Tomas Ayala Vasquez Sr., Honored son, father, grandfather, and musical pioneer.

Tomas Ayala Vasquez Sr. passed peacefully to be with Our Lord on April 23, 2025, at the age of 87. Born legally blind on December 21, 1937, in Brownsville, Texas, he was the beloved son of Josefina Ayala Vasquez and Juan Salazar Vasquez (PFC, HQ Battery, 949th Field Artillery Battalion – WWII Veteran, Honorably Discharged).

He is preceded in death by his parents; his second wife, Virginia R. (Vicky) Vasquez; his loving grandmother Mrs. Ayala, his stepdaughter, Lucia Ayala and his uncle, Francisco “Pancho” Padilla.

Tomas leaves behind to cherish his memory, his loving family, his four children, Jose Rene Vasquez (Norma); Lydia V Quezada (+Felipe Jr); Tomas Ayala Vasquez Jr (Angela); Antonio Darrell Vasquez (Jennifer) as well as their mother, Petra P. Diaz; his aunt Belia Vasquez (97 yrs. old) and his brother, Victor Vasquez (unknown whereabouts). He is also survived by his stepdaughter, Sylvia Gutierrez (Rolando) and her children, Rolando Gutierrez, Jr. and Melinda Gutierrez and stepson, Raul Ramirez.

In addition, he is lovingly remembered by his grandchildren- Javier Rene

Vasquez; Evelyn Quezada; Felicia Quezada; Deda (Virginia Ann) Rohr; Ravynn Vasquez; Tomas Luis Vasquez; Zakiya Shabazz; Marcus Shabazz; Malcom Shabazz; Oliver Vasquez; Sofia Vasquez and 1 great-grandchild.

Raised in poverty by his devoted mother and grandmother, Tomas faced life's challenges with remarkable strength and perseverance. Despite his visual impairment, he was fiercely protected and lovingly guided by the strong women in his life, who taught him resilience and toughness. During his early years, he was mentored by his uncle, Tio Pancho—a respected figure in the Brownsville conjunto music scene, known for his craftsmanship in repairing instruments. Under Pancho's wing, Tomas was introduced to the world of music.

Tomas became a self-taught musician at a time when few believed such a feat was possible for someone who was blind. He mastered the bajo sexto, bass guitar, and accordion—etching out a distinct sound that would help define the genre of Conjunto music. Over the years, he performed with numerous groups, recording with local studios and collaborating with many musicians. His contribution to the Conjunto tradition earned him a place as a true pioneer of the genre.

In the 1980's – Tomas legally blind at the time- was involved in a devastating car accident alongside his wife and children. The accident nearly claimed all their lives, but by the grace of God, they miraculously survived. Though Tomas was left crippled and debilitated, his determination never wavered. He relearned how to walk and continue his career as a bajo player, driven by his love for music and his responsibility to provide for his young children. His courage, perseverance, and faith through that trial became a lasting testament to the man he was.

Though respected for his talent, Tomas often spoke of the harsh realities of

the music industry—how his contributions were seldom credited, and how compensation and royalties often went to others. Yet, he never allowed bitterness to overshadow his passion. He simply smiled, picked up his instrument, and played on—driven by the love of the music and the joy it brought him and others.

Tomas Ayala Vasquez Sr. was a modest, soft-spoken, and deeply respected man. His legacy lives on through the countless lives he touched and the enduring music he helped shape. Though he never sought the spotlight, those who heard him play knew they were witnessing something extraordinary.

A Celebration of Life will be held Saturday, May 24, 2025 at 11:00 AM at Treasure Hills Presbyterian Church in Harlingen.

Special thanks to La Familia Adult Day Care Center employees including Veronica Ramirez who would always go out of her way to make Dad comfortable & Nurse- Elma Perez. Angela M. Perez- Vasquez, his daughter in law who cared for him daily in the early morning hours when he got ready to go to the center and evenings to eat dinner and get ready for bed. Dad lived with his middle son, Tomas A. Vasquez Jr & his family for over 10 yrs. Caring, Loving and Sacrificing all they had to keep him comfortable throughout his journey with dementia. Your unconditional love, patience and attention does not go unnoticed.

We are grateful for, Valley Baptist Medical Center NICU floor nurses and doctors. For family and friends praying for us, phone calls, texts.

He will be greatly missed by his children, grandchildren, extended family, fellow musicians, and all who were blessed to know and love him.

God Bless you All and Keep You.

Previous Events

Celebration of Life Service

MAY **24**. 11:00 AM (CT)

Treasure Hills Presbyterian Church
2120 N. Ed Carey Drive
Harlingen, TX

Tribute Wall

LC

“ Love Lindsay and Ryan Callahan purchased the Full Of Love Bouquet for the family of Tomas A. Vasquez Sr..



Love Lindsay and Ryan Callahan - May 22, 2025 at 05:40 PM

LC

“ Love Lindsay and Ryan Callahan planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Tomas A. Vasquez Sr..

Love Lindsay and Ryan Callahan - May 22, 2025 at 05:40 PM

JD

“ Our sincere condolences from the Duran family. May our Lord bless the Vasquez family as you mourn but also celebrate the life of a very special man.

Jon Duran - May 10, 2025 at 08:47 PM

PG

“ My deepest and most sincere condolences to his entire family. I had the pleasure of meeting such a great man. Mr. Vasquez aka Tommy is what I called him. He always had a smile on his face and loved his coffee at La Familia Adult Day Care. May Tommy's family find strength and comfort during this difficult time. I enjoyed listening to his wonderful stories as a musician. RIP Mr. Vasquez 🙏❤️

Patricia De La Garza - May 02, 2025 at 10:00 PM

ME

“ My condolences to you the Vasquez family. May God strengthen you and keep you during this your hour of berevement.

Mona EMMANUEL - May 02, 2025 at 06:08 PM

JT

“ Our sincerely condolences to the family Vasquez From the Tovar family .Thank you guys for the all blessings and memories 🙏 that you ❤️ shared with people around the world. Never be forgotten and loved every day. VIVA Juan Tovar y Los Pobres.



Joel Tovar - May 02, 2025 at 06:43 AM