



Benito V. Rivera

July 27, 1936 - November 2, 2020

Benito V. Rivera passed away November 2, 2020 at his home, surrounded by his family.

In 1936, Benito was born in San Fernando, Pampanga in the Philippines. He was the eighth child of Josefa Vergara, an entrepreneur, and Alfredo H. Rivera, a physician who had earned his medical doctorate at Indiana University in 1921.

During the World War II Japanese occupation, Benito's parents feared that the entire family line could be wiped out in a single attack. They sent five-year-old Benito along with one sister to live with two aunts for a couple years. Once, when he could not sleep and was found crying, his aunt consoled him by telling him to pray to God that he should go to Heaven. He replied, "I don't want to go to Heaven; I want to go HOME!" Happily, he was reunited with his entire family when the war ended.

Benito was the prodigy student of his piano teacher. Although he dreamed of joining a new teacher in Manila, his parents believed he was too young to leave home in the name of Music. Therefore, he pivoted and requested that he join the seminary at Ateneo de Davao, a Jesuit college. He would earn a degree in philosophy there, but to his dismay, Benito was permitted only 30 minutes a week to practice his beloved piano, including the minutes it took to commute across campus.

In 1964, the seminary sent him to Woodstock College in Maryland to further his study in theology. There, he appealed to the American Jesuits who

allowed him to enroll at the nearby Peabody Conservatory in Baltimore. He earned two degrees in piano performance there. He knew music was to be his life's work. When Benito informed his mother that he was leaving the priesthood, she wept for two days behind locked doors. Soon after, Benito fell in love with a fellow student in a masters piano seminar who would become his wife of 50 years.

He earned a Ph.D in musicology at Rutgers University in 1974, and became a United States citizen in 1977. He taught at Bernard Baruch College, the University of Richmond, and North Texas State University.

In 1985, Benito joined the faculty at IU's Jacobs School of Music. His signature seminar: the history of music theory. He was a beloved professor. Upon retirement in 2001, Benito took ice-skating lessons at Frank Southern because he wanted to learn how to fall without breaking a hip. Benito also enjoyed golf, swimming, running, cooking, puzzles and reading. He relentlessly explored and mapped out the distinctive streets of Venice, Italy. In recent years, he rediscovered his love of playing the piano, and applied his usual discipline in honing his technical skills to fully articulate his own interpretation of the score.

He is survived by his wife Diane G. Rivera; his sister Teresita Arcilla; his son David B. Rivera (Lily); his daughter Madeline Rivera-Gill (Kevin); his four grandchildren Elijah Gill, Maya Gill, Veronica Rivera and Xavier Rivera; and numerous extended family members, all of whom regarded him as a quiet observer, a self-deprecating humorist, a generous friend, and a loving husband, father, and Lolo.

In Lieu of flowers memorial contributions may be made to the RBBCSC Student Assistance Fund, 600 S. Edgewood Dr. Ellettsville, Indiana 47429.

Tribute Wall

PM

“ Dearest Diane ~ I am so sorry about the loss of your beloved husband. I am holding you and your family in God's Light. I was thinking of you strongly today and thought I would try to find you. I am sorry this is how I located you, but When you feel you might want to contact me, I would love to hear from you. You can reach me at 641-919-9294. Sending you all Love. Patti Miller (from our days at Drake)

Patti Miller - December 04, 2020 at 12:52 AM

CL

“ Dear Diane, I am sorry to hear about the passing of Benito. This is Celia, married to Andy Lising, Benito's cousin. If you recall, we were long time neighbors of Lina and Toy in B. Gonzales and we would meet each other when you would come to Manila.

We are praying for the repose of Benito's soul and for you and family to be strong at this most difficult time.

Celia

Celia Lising - November 11, 2020 at 11:25 AM

LV

“ Dear Diane,
My husband Bert Vergara was second cousin of Nick (Benito) and at the time he was very sick and eventually passed away, Nick was faithfully writing us notes of consolation, a source of strength in our deep sorrow. He also joined us - Mel, Marie and Lina - on what was to be the last trip to Hongkong of Ate Mel. He was such a gentle caring brother to her and a sympathetic cousin to me. i can only imagine how much his loss mean to you. But please know my children and I join you in praying for the repose of his soul. Hugs to you and your family.
Sincerely,
Lillian

lillian vergara - November 11, 2020 at 05:56 AM

MB

“ I am sorry to learn about Benito's passing. Thank you, Benito, for my first trip to Sam's Club, your trying not to giggle at my golf swing (failing, mostly), and your genuine interest. You were so kind, and I know how much you were loved and will be missed by your family.

Michael B Beam - November 07, 2020 at 01:37 PM

SC

“ Dear Diane and family,

We were so sorry to learn of the passing of your dear Benito. He was truly a sweet and gentle man. Jane fondly remembers the class she had with him at IU several years ago.
You are all in our thoughts and prayers.

Sue, John and Jane Cronkhite

Sue Cronkhite - November 06, 2020 at 07:00 PM

HK

“ Dear Diane,

*we have heard about the passing of Benito by Bettina.
We offer you our sincere condolences.
We think of the wonderful hours in your house in Bloomington.
You and Benito have grown close to our hearts.
We will think of Benito every day to accompany him on his way into
the spiritual world.*

Hanstoni and Megumi

Hanstoni Kaufmann - November 06, 2020 at 03:36 PM



“ Madeline and family,

*Benito was a very sweet and gentle man. Having his presence in
our family reunion memories will be missed. In my opinion, Benito
was a role model and he will live on through you four. I wish you all
much ease as you continue on your healing paths from this loss.*

Sympathetic regards from your cousin in Iowa,

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Jessica K Shreeves

Jessica Shreeves - November 05, 2020 at 08:22 PM

JM

“ *Diane, I remember so well your kindness to me 12 years ago when I lost my dear wife. You and Fr. Bill did so much to help me through my loss and I certainly want to express my sincere condolences to you and your family in your loss.*

Jim Montgomery

Jim Montgomery - November 05, 2020 at 06:16 PM

TM

“ *I had the privilege of knowing Benito for thirteen years as a colleague at IU and by reputation before that as a scholar in the fields of music theory and musicology. He was a wonderful colleague, and I greatly admired him for his scholarship and especially as a fine person of impeccable integrity. He was always so modest and unassuming about his own achievements while at the same time so generous in offering praise and support to others. His meticulous publications are models of broad learning, clarity, and careful scholarship. They will be of lasting value to students and scholars to come, who will keep his memory alive as a vir clarissimus. Requiem aeternam dona ei Domine, et lux perpetua luceat ei.*

Thomas J. Mathiesen

Thomas J. Mathiesen - November 05, 2020 at 02:07 PM

JL

“ *We remember so fondly our musical visits with Benito and Diane. Our sympathy is with all the family. Love, Julian and Mary Pat*

Julian R. Livingston - November 05, 2020 at 02:03 PM

NL

“ Dear Diane and family,

Your father always made Larry and I so well come in his home. I fell in love with the whole family.

You became part of my family. We watch the children grow into beautiful people. who

made them gradparents. a real blessing in there lives.

All of you will always be loved and prayed for.

Nancy and Larry

Nancy Lux - November 05, 2020 at 11:14 AM

MC

“ Dear Madeline and Family,
Sending prayers and warmest thoughts.
Love, Martha Croft and Mike Bello

Martha Croft - November 04, 2020 at 09:12 PM

TG

“ Benito, you will be missed. What a gentle soul! I remember you for your obsessions: golf, swimming and ice skating, and how you attacked those activities in your retirement. I also remember watching you prepare a pineapple for the grill and how you wasted none for you grew up in a nation where people were hungry. Thank you for passing on your “gentle” genes on to Madeline and our grandchildren, Elijah and Maya, who are gentle souls as well. Rest In Peace, my friend.

tomand Patty Gill - November 04, 2020 at 07:39 PM

DJ

I had the good fortune of having Dr Rivera as my music theory teacher in the mid 70's at the University of Richmond. I was a young man filled with a passion for music, but with no formal musical training. He had great patience and was very supportive, as he laid down my musical foundation.

He was a compassionate man and intuitive teacher.

Thanks Benito.

Dallas Jacobs

Dallas Jacobs - March 16 at 02:26 PM