



Abel Vela

June 26, 1926 - June 16, 2020

MAJOR ABEL VELA June 26-1926- June 16, 2020

On June 26, 1926 Abel Vela was born to Aurelio and Maria Vela. He passed away at home in the loving arms of his wife of Angela Vela on June 16, 2020. Abel was one of 3 children whose family lived as migrant workers, picking cotton in the fields of Beeville, Texas.

In 1932, the Vela family was forced to move to San Antonio after Aurelio contracted tuberculosis and was unable to receive care in their small Texas town. Also their hope was also to work menial jobs and find better opportunities for their children's education. Even at a young age, Abel pursued excellence in education as a student at David Barkley Elementary School and later as a proud graduate of Sidney Lanier High School Class of 1944.

Prior to graduating, Abel volunteered and was inducted into the United States Army. Upon completion of Infantry Basic Training, he found himself at The European Theater of Operations fighting through France, Luxembourg, and Germany. Four years later, he returned to San Antonio as a Master Sergeant and attended St. Mary's University.

In 1950, he was commissioned Second Lieutenant, Vela through the ROTC program and received his BBA Degree and was designed a Distinguished

Military Graduate in 1953. During his military career as an officer, he was assigned to the 82nd Airborne Division of Paratroopers and 8th Infantry Division. He was professor of Military Science at the University of Indiana. Later he served in 7th and 5th Special Forces, and attended all the Army schools commensurate with his grade to include Command and General Staff College.

He honorably served in Vietnam from 1962-1969 as an advisor to the South Vietnamese Army. Some of the Major Vela's assignments were Senior Military to the Vietnamese, 21st Division Artillery Commander, the 4th Corps Special Forces Commander, the National Special Forces Officers Training School Commander and the Military Province Chief 4th Corps. While serving in Vietnam, Vela was awarded numerous medals and awards including two Bronze Stars, two Purple Hearts, and the Vietnamese Medal of Honor. Upon returning to the United States from Viet Nam, he was assigned to John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center as an instructor in the counterinsurgency and Clandestine Warfare Department.

After 27 years of his honorable military career in the United States Army, Major Abel Vela knew it was now time to pursue plans for a bright future and a successful business career that would also include his family. In 1974, Vela Food Enterprises DBA McDonald's broke ground on the Westside of San Antonio. Later, five more successful restaurants opened across the city.

With many in the community, he was known as "Mr. McDonald's". As leaders in the community, Abel and Angela purposed to generously support the community schools, churches and numerous non-profit organizations. As a businessman, he was presented special recognition and awards from McDonald's, area businesses and non-profit organizations of San Antonio.

Abel is preceded in death by his parents, Aurelio and Maria Vela, Manuel

Vela, brother, Olivia Vela, sister, Daniel Abel Vela, son, and Elizabeth Ann Vela, daughter. He is survived by his beautiful and loving wife of 72 years Angela Haager Vela, children: Frederick Vela (Velia), Rosalind Thevaos (Pete) and Richard Vela, (Cynthia) 15 grandchildren, 40 great grandchildren and 1 great great-grand child.

On Friday, June 26, services will be held at Destiny Church 8635 Callaghan Rd. 78230. Viewing will be held at 10am. The Celebration of Life will be held 11am.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made online at soldiersangels.org or mailed to Soldiers' Angels
2895 NE Loop 410, Suite 107 San Antonio 78218 *Kindly note in the memo:
In honor of Major Abel Vela.

*Please wear a mask upon entering the church, immediately be seated, and maintain social distancing protocol in respect of the safety of the Vela family and others. (Mask may be removed when seated.)

Cemetery Details

Ft. Sam Houston National Cemetery

1520 Harry Wurzbach
San Antonio, TX 78209

Previous Events

Visitation

JUN **26**. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (CT)

Destiny Church
8635 Callaghan Road
San Antonio, TX 78230

Funeral Service

JUN **26**. 11:00 AM (CT)

Destiny Church
8635 Callaghan Road
San Antonio, TX 78230

Tribute Wall



“ *Rene Pintor lit a candle in memory of Abel Vela*



Rene Pintor - August 29, 2020 at 09:58 PM



“ *My deepest condolences to the family. I use to work at one of his stores at McDonald's back in 1995. RIP Mr. Vela ❤️🙏🙏🙏*

Rene Pintor - August 29, 2020 at 09:35 PM

RC

“ *My deepest condolences to Angie and the children and grand children. I had the pleasure of working closely with ABEL with the McDonald's restaurants. I enjoyed his humor and his dedication to our community. May he Rest In Peace.*

Rene Gonzalez, CPA

rene gonzalez, cpa - July 10, 2020 at 02:37 PM

AR

My deepest heartfelt condolences to Tia Angie and all her family. I am just finding out, 5-2-2020, Tio Abel passed away. I am so sorry. He was a very friendly person who visited my mom very often. His parents, Tio Aurelio and Tia Maria visited my grandparents often. As a little girl Tio Aurelio and Tia Maria would take me to their house. Now Tio Abel has joined his parents and siblings in heaven. RIP all the Velas. Love you Tia Angie. You were always so loving and so kind.

Alicia Flores Ramon - May 02, 2021 at 05:42 PM

ML

“ I extend my deepest sympathies to you and your family. May the soul of your father be at peace with our Heavenly Father.
Sincerely, Mari Lozano (Marivel Garcia)

Marivel Lozano - June 27, 2020 at 06:18 PM

SM

“ My condolences to the family of Major Abel Vela. His legacy is evident in the lives of his descendants. May God's peace and comfort carry you through.
Sincerely, Sonia Maldonado



Sonia Maldonado - June 26, 2020 at 10:45 AM



“ Sweetest Sunrise Bouquet was purchased for the family of Abel Vela.



June 26, 2020 at 01:14 AM



“ Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Abel Vela.



June 25, 2020 at 01:35 PM

TM

“The measure of a man, is his impact on so many people and the love for his family, friends and fellow man. Great is his influence on so many. No one can doubt his commitment, sacrifice and passion, for his God, wife and children and friends.”

Able Vela along with Angie had a profound impact on my family's life's. Their countless acts of kindness and along with sharing of Gods salvation to our mom and leading a prayer group for her miraculous healing, forever changed the course of my family's and my life for the better. Able showed me that one could be manly and a Godly man at the same time. He was a very kind and generous man. I watched how graceful he handled the passing of his youngest son Danny, who was my best friend.

For a brief time Able was here, and for a long time his impact will mattered.

Bravo my friend, life well lived.

Todd Magatagan - June 23, 2020 at 04:32 PM



“Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Abel Vela.



June 23, 2020 at 03:11 PM



“ *Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Abel Vela.*



June 23, 2020 at 09:43 AM



“ *When a great warrior is called home, we all experience loss Not only was Abel a great warrior for the U. S. but most importantly for the kingdom of God! He was a great example of leadership in the corporate arena, the community, the church and in his family. Many valuable lessons have been learned from such a great man, and many precious memories will not be forgotten. As we grieve with the family, we send much love and prayers their way.*

Gary Brown

Gary Brown - June 22, 2020 at 10:24 PM

BS

“ Rick & Cynthia, Fred & Velia, Pete and Rosalyn, grandchildren, and especially Angie:

I am so sad for the loss you are experiencing. Because of my wife Cindy's passing two years ago I can certainly sympathize with you all. Abel was a great man and an amazing family man. I know he will be greatly missed. Yet, "we do not grieve as those that have no hope". You are a strong Christian family and I know our Lord Jesus Christ will give you comfort and be an ever present help.

I know you are rejoicing Abel is now with Lisa and Danny (I knew both of them as well and greatly admired both - Danny in our youth group and Lisa at IBC where her giggle was legendary). We look even more to look forward to on that great reunion day in heaven. But I do understand the great loss in this life. Praying for you all. Love you.

Brother Bob Sayre

Bob Allen Sayre Sr. - June 22, 2020 at 09:58 PM

OR

*Rick and Cynthia, & all the family, we are very saddened for your loss!
We will continue praying for the family.
Mr. Vela a great man of God, I have very special memory of him!
Our sincere condolences!
Ovidio & Mary Rodriguez*

Ovidio & Mary Rodriguez - June 23, 2020 at 12:15 AM

JM

Mr. Vela and Angie had a TREMENDOUS influence over the lives of two young boys and a single mom,,,, they had nothing to ever gain, but only to show kindness, generosity, and open their loving family to us

Mr. Vela will never know how much his influence was by setting an example in both Family and business, meant to my brother and myself

Sincere condolences to the entire Vela Family

I know my mother Dianna, will be there welcoming him into heaven!

Jeffrey Magatagan

Jeffrey Magatagan - June 23, 2020 at 12:45 PM