



# Tereza Villator Baniaga

AUG 20, 1921 - JUN 13, 2024



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## Tereza Baniaga Obituary

Tereza Villator Baniaga peacefully entered her heavenly home on June 13, 2024, in the presence of her loving family at her Waipio Acres residence. She was 102 years old.

She was born on August 20, 1921, to Ariston and Balbina Villator in Dingras, Ilocos Norte, the Philippines. As the second oldest child, Tereza at seven years old willingly sacrificed her education to help with the family chores. She fetched water, winnowed rice and washed clothes in the river. She later wrote in her autobiography, "I never go school. But thank the Lord, He help me, and I learn so many things." These domestic skills taught her to be resourceful and hard-working... honorable traits that remained with her throughout her life.

In 1950, she wed Marcelino Baniaga through an arranged marriage and shortly afterward, Marcelino returned to Hawaii to fulfill his job as a contract worker. Tereza and young daughter Adela remained in the Philippines until they joined Marcelino on Oahu in 1954, where she bore three more children in the years to come: Carmelita who died at birth, Marcelino, Jr. (Marc), and Virginia.

Tereza assimilated well to this diverse island culture. She quickly befriended others in her church and community which put her at ease in the new environment. Her resourcefulness brought extra income for her young growing family. She laundered clothes regularly for some plantation workers, and also sold them her scrumptious Filipino desserts.



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For 20 years, she trimmed sweet pineapple at Dole Cannery in Kalihi, often working 12-hour days. But Tereza never complained about being tired. Her friendships at the cannery brought laughter and opportunity to share her cooking with co-workers. In her retirement years, she visited Ilocos Norte often. She knew the importance of maintaining family relationships and was intentional in keeping that connection with her kin in the homeland. She desired the same for her children and grandchildren, who accompanied her on occasional visits.

Her hands seldom remained idle. Sewing and crocheting were the outlets for her creativity. But her favorite pastime was tending to her garden—a place where tropical fruits (bananas, papayas, lychee), Filipino vegetables (marungay, talong, saluyot), and bright flowers (anthuriums, orchids, heliconia) flourished abundantly—a place where she found joy cutting down a banana tree or harvesting the fruits of her labor and generously offering them to neighbors and friends.

Tereza's faith in Jesus Christ was her strength and she delighted in reading her well-worn Bible every morning. God's word influenced every part of her life, empowering her to live fearlessly. One of her favorite verses, Psalm 118:1, states, "Give thanks to the Lord for He is good, His love endures forever." She knew the source from whom her blessings flowed. In turn, Tereza's love, kindness, generosity, servant's heart, wisdom, and grace have flowed into the hearts of her children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren and many others who have had the privilege of knowing her. She was the fragrance of Christ. She loved well and was well-loved.

She is survived by 3 children: Adela (George) Rhoades, Marcelino (Lisa) Baniaga, Jr., and Virginia (Michael) Weros; 8 grandchildren: Chris (Melanie) Rhoades, Shannon (Mark) Heil, Jonathan Rhoades, Brandon (Kyong) Baniaga, Nathan (Joanna) Baniaga, Lauryn (Derrick) Laguatan, Rachel (Timur) Zhividze, and Abigail (Drew) Davenport; 13 great-grandchildren: Ellie & Ava Rhoades; Mika, Coby, & Kona Heil; Jonah & Micah Baniaga; Hezekiah, Ezekiel, Zoey, Elisha Grace, Zachariah & Faith Laguatan.



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Funeral Service will be held on Thursday, September 19, 2024 at Mililani Mortuary Mauka Chapel.

Visitation begins at 9:30 am and service 10:30 am.

Burial 12:30 pm at Mililani Memorial Park Cemetery.

To send flowers  
to the family, please visit our floral store.

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## Tribute Wall

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PW

**Penny Wharton** posted:

In loving memory of Tereza Baniaga. May your hearts be filled with wonderful memories of joyful times together. Blessed are they that mourn for they shall be comforted. Matthew 5:4

September 19 at 12:46 AM

PW

**Penny Wharton** posted:

In loving memory of Tereza Baniaga. May your hearts be filled with wonderful memories of joyful times together. Blessed are they that mourn for they shall be comforted Matthew 5:4

September 19 at 12:40 AM

AB

**Albert Nariz Ballesteros** posted:

I cherish the memories of going to Auntie Tereza's house on the weekends picking the lychee tree and the annual Easter Egg hunt. The Easter Egg hunt was awesome because it was something she taught me which I then taught my kids. It wasn't just a game but a way for the kids to be relational and to pass on from generation to generation. She was a beautiful soul and always shared Christ with me. Although it took many years into adulthood, I was happy I was able to share with her that I accepted Jesus as my lord and savior. May she live bright in our Father's kingdom.

July 16 at 12:07 PM



# Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Tereza by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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