



Jose Ernesto "Ernest" Fontanez

September 29, 2024

Jose Ernesto ("Ernest") Fontanez, affectionately known by his sons as "Pop," was born on April 2, 1949 in Caguas, Puerto Rico to his parents Gregorio Fontanez and Carmen Perez. He passed away peacefully on September 29, 2024 surrounded by family and loved ones.

Jose migrated with his family to Philadelphia before the age of 10, where he spent his teenage years and graduated from St. Francis Xavier Elementary School. As a teenager, and with immediate family settled in the Fairmount neighborhood of Philadelphia, Jose reunited with his childhood friend, Maria "Cookie" Delgado, after the Delgado family migrated from New York City. They both lived at 2121 Green Street in adjoining apartments with their parents. Jose and Maria often reminisced about courting each other, inspired by the song "Knock Three Times" by Tony Orlando and Dawn. They married in 1967 in a spectacular double wedding with Maria's sister, Carmen, and brother-in-law, Michael Santiago.

Jose dedicated more than 50 years of his life to Philadelphia, exemplifying hard work and commitment to his family, and spending many summers gardening at the corner of 20th and Green Street. He began his career with early factory jobs at the Container Company, working alongside his brothers-in-law whose labor helped them attain middle-class livelihoods. Jose then spent the majority of his professional life in various positions, and most tenured as a security guard, at Hahnemann University Hospital. His dedication ensured the safety and well-being of patients, staff, and visitors alike.

Known for his warm personality and unwavering work ethic, Jose was respected and loved by colleagues and friends. His friendly smile and demeanor made him a cherished member of the Hahnemann community. Many of those doctors and medical staff that he built relationships cared for Pop and helped him manage his ongoing illnesses, especially over the last decade.

Jose faced life's challenges with courage and resilience. For family and friends who knew

him well, it was his strong spirit and embrace of life that will remain forever in our hearts. We are very grateful to the many medical professionals, staff and workers from Davita Dialysis Brown Street, Atria City Center where he lived the last two years and thrived benefiting from an attentive care team, and finally, Jefferson University Hospital where he transitioned.

He is preceded in death by his beloved wife, Maria. Jose is survived by his two sons, Frankie and Jorge; their spouses, Courtenay and Maurice; and his grandchildren, Sol and Rio. He now joins Maria and other loved ones in the next life. Jose will always be remembered for his love of music, barbeque, gardening and for being one of the most passionate sports fans in the city.

Relatives and friends are invited to his viewing on Thursday, October 3 at 7:00-9:00pm at the Dinan Funeral Home, 1923 Spring Garden Street, Philadelphia PA. Another viewing will be held on Friday morning, October 4th from 10:00-11:00am with an 11:00am service to follow. also in the funeral home.