

Veteran concert



promoter/artist manager **Sonny Flores** died Thursday night in Dallas. (service details below)

According to his daughter **Michelle**, Flores was 71. He died from complications associated with diabetes.

Many oldtimers in the music business will recall Flores as one of the top music and show promoters in the Dallas-Ft. Worth area. Flores worked in the industry for

more than 30 years.

Throughout



his career he developed a reputation as an influential promoter and he later began to manage several major groups, most notably **Little Joe y La Familia, La Mafia, Elyssia Marie Y Senal,** and **La Fiebre.**

In recent years Flores and his daughter **Michelle** ran the Hispanic Talent Management in Dallas for management, booking and promotions.

I interviewed Flores several times through the years, getting his assessment of the music industry for several Tex-Mex music specials in *Billboard*. He was a no-nonsense type of professional with a thorough understanding of business.

Michelle said the family is working on funeral arrangements and details should be released much later this afternoon. This story will be updated with those funeral service details.

**SERVICE UPDATE:** A Celebration of Life will be held at the Infomart located on 1950 Stemmons Freeway, Dallas Texas at 6 -9 pm. Monday, Feb. 15.

Meanwhile, historian **Ramon Hernandez** recalled that Flores' nickname was "El Borrego."

Hernandez said he mentioned Flores several times in a new Little Joe autobiographical book that is due to be released later this year.

*(Additional reporting by Ramon Hernandez)*

From Ramon Hernandez's archives he was able to produce these additional notes on Flores.

**Vivianno 'Sonny' Flores** was born in Welder, Texas on January 27, 1939.

In 1953, he moved to Chicago where seven years later, he went to work with (José) Valenzuela Promotions.

Although he was known for wearing a cowboy hat, jeans and boots, in the '70s he went hippy, grew his curly hair into an afro and started wearing bell-bottomed Temptations-styled suits with a thin tie and elevator shoes.

When Little Joe saw his bushy white afro, he nicknamed him "La Borrega," a nickname that stuck for the rest of his life.

In November 1969, Little Joe brought Sonny to Temple, Texas as part of his road crew. A year later, Sonny moved to Dallas and freelanced doing public relations for Little Joe and other artists until 1975.

In 1976, he opened "Chicano's Disco" plus two other clubs in Dallas. He still continued to work with Little Joe and in 1979, they held the first Super Dance in Dallas.

In 1979, Sonny took over the management of **Little Joe y La Familia** as road manager and booking agent, while still continuing to promoter other artists. A year later, Sonny founded Mañana Productions, which provided Hispanic entertainment acts for major corporations plus Gilley's, Bill Bob's, the Longhorn Ballroom and other prestigious night clubs.

Following the trend, in June 1985 Little Joe and **Sherwood Cryer** opened up Little Joe's Night Club in Pasadena, Texas just a few blocks up from Gilley's. Sonny managed this club until he became road manager and assistant booking agent for

**La Mafia**

in Houston a year later. This gig lasted two years at which time he changed the name of his agency to Mañana Talent Agency and Entertainment Consultants.

In late 1988, when he found out he was a diabetic, his wife Cathy wanted him to get off the road and they moved back to Dallas. It was there he co-founded Hispanic Talent Unlimited. Some of the artists on his roster then included **Little Joe, Joe López y Mazz, Selena y Los Dinos, La Sombra, David Lee Garza, Ram Herrera, Emilio Navaira, Roberto Pulido, Shelly Lares, Gary Hobbs** plus many other Tejano artists.

**OFFICIAL OBITUARY FURTHER BELOW**

*If you knew or worked with Flores, or would like to express your memories, photos or sentiments, please do.*

*Thank you.*

**Comments:**

*"So sad to hear that I have lost another ol' friend. It was a honor to have known Sonny y Cata for 30 years plus. I would have to agree with Sarah that Sonny could keep us entertained with his storys of his life and times on the road. I remember when I managed the llegendary Melrose Hotel and I received a call from Sonny when Little Joe, Johnny y La Familia were out promoting the "Live For Shilitz" lp and were stopping in Dallas to do a super dance and were looking for a place to do a live press conference and they held it at the Melrose. It was a incredible weekend. I spent alot of good times listening to Sonny thur the years. It didn't matter where Mary and I ran into Sonny y Cata we always hugged and say our hello's.*

*"Sorry Cathy that I could not be there at Sonny arrangement I have been out of town, see you soon, Que Diosito los bendiga.*

*You will be missed Borrega*

Roy "El Viejito" Ramos, [elviejito2004@yahoo.com](mailto:elviejito2004@yahoo.com)

"Prayers and Condolences to the Flores Family. May he Rest In Peace. Que Diosito lo tenga en La Gloria.!"

**Israel aka P.B.T.**

*"I would like to thank all of you for your comments about my brother Sonny. He loved music and loved all that he did in his life. He was eager to help anyone at any time, all they had to do was ask. His love for music was in his heart and it never left him even after he was not able to continue due to his health. Your love, friendship and respect you had for him is so wonderful to hear. He so loved his family and friends, which that is what he considered you all as being....familia. We hope to see you on Monday at his "Celebration of Life" and he will be with us in spirit. Thank you."*

**Gloria Flores Arizmendez,** [gloria.arizmendez@sbcglobal.net](mailto:gloria.arizmendez@sbcglobal.net)

*"Awww--Tejano at it's greatest--such memories! long time family friends--condolences to" Kathy" (Cata) and his family---- R.I.P. Sunny....."*

**Rosí Juarez**

*"I had the honor of following Sonny as manager of Little Joe & La Familia. Sonny and I compared notes for years and I found that Sonny was a treasure to the Tejano Industry. There was nothing that he would not do for any musician that needed a helping hand or a little friendly advise. Sonny got a few bad raps and it a shame that a certain individual did not step forward an apologize to him before his death. Sonny was a good guy. Cathy, I apologize for anyone that owed him an apology."*

**Margo Morones, former mgr Little Joe/Owner Embroiders T Shirts**

"Sonny Flores was a Good Man I worked with him on a lot of shows when he was managing **La Fiebre**

. RIP Amigo"

**Joey Rodriguez, Mgr David Lee Garza Y Los Musicales**

*"I am saddened by this news and deeply touched that Cata, Sonny's wife, would be thinking of his Tejano family at this time."*

*Sonny was my mentor who taught me "the ropes" of the Tejano industry. As an apprentice I learned much about Sonny Flores the manager and of the person whose humanity I remember most of all. His gears were constantly turning with ideas, always thinking of the "next thing". He*

*had a way of seeing through a multidimensional lens and could sense talent potential instantly. His strength was in his commanding presence and creative communication skills - he could make things happen that had not been done before. His humor would pack a punch and leave one reeling for hours. He cooked the best caldo de pollo I ever had and he talked more about his grandchildren than anyone I've known. His family meant the world to him.*

*"I will miss his phone calls asking about the Tejano Convention. He would call sometimes in January just to wish David and me a Happy New Year's. If he heard there was a tornado in Kansas he would call to see if we were ok. Or just to say "What's happening" with that great gruff of a Texas Spanglish accent. That was Sonny.*

*"I enjoyed the way he'd tell stories about his glory days working with legendary Tejano artists (with incredible details I should add).*

*"I will miss my friend Sonny. As a true pioneer of the Tejano industry his legacy lives on and I will never forget him."*

**Sarah Ruiz Chavez**

*"Our condolences go out to la Familia Flores.. Sonny was our booking agent for a few years. gave us alot of work.. opening showsfor Ramon Ayala.. Selena, La Mafia and La Fiebre back in the day.. You will be missed our friend Sonny Flores.."**Jerry Garces/Grupo Pession "QEPD Sonny Flores. Pesames a su familia y amistades."***

**Herman Rodriguez-Bajandas**

*"Sorry to hear that Ramiro"*

**Joe Gonzalez**

*"My condolences go out to his family and friends "*

**Rosa Guajardo**

## **OFFICIAL OBITUARY**

Viviano "Sonny" Flores

Viviano "Sonny" Flores passed away on February 11th, 2010 at the age of 71 from complications associated with Diabetes. Mr. Flores was born on January 27th, 1939 in Waelder Texas. He is preceded in death by his parents, Pablo and Helen Flores, his brother Rene Flores

and beloved sister Elizabeth Flores Burkhart. He is survived by his wife of 42 years, Kathy Sereseroz Flores, and was blessed with three daughters, Anna Marie Flores, Michelle Lynn Flores and Stephanie Calhoon, and son Joseph Paul Flores, along with five grandchildren that he loved dearly.

He is survived by his siblings; Lydia Cavazos, Delia Lopez, Ruben Flores, Rebecca Campos from Donna, Texas; Ruth Ruiz from Edcouch, Texas; Samuel Flores, Gloria Arizmendez, and Pablo Flores from the Houston area; Virginia Coston from Dallas; and Robert Flores from San Antonio, Texas.

Sonny was known throughout the state of Texas and the country for his talent as a music promoter. His passion for music began as a youngster in the late 40s, while observing his father, a Dance Organizer for Migrant Farm workers in the Rio Grande Valley. Years later, as a teenager in the 1950s, he participated and won numerous local talent contests known as "Los Aficionados" that were held throughout the Rio Grande Valley. During those years, he befriended a young singer from San Benito Texas, named Baldemar Huerta, aka "Freddy Fender," and other entertainers who later went on to become Texas Music greats.

Like most Hispanics during those years, Sonny worked as a Migrant Farm Worker, after traveling back and forth between Texas and other states, he settled in Kansas City, Kansas, where he worked at Dwight D. Eisenhower's Private Club, where he learned how to cook.

Later, in the 1960s, he moved to the Chicago Illinois, where he honed his cooking skills while working as a dietician at a local Chicago area hospital. During weekends, he pursued his love of music, working closely with Jose Valenzuela and Frank Zuniga, both famed local Chicago music promoters.

He would travel to all parts of the country scouting for new talent, and that's where he met and helped promote up and coming musical acts especially from Texas, such as; Joe and Johnny Hernandez of Little Joe and the Latinaires, Shorty and the Corvettes, Roy Montelongo, Augustine Ramirez, Los Pavo Reales, Los Aguilares, Paulino Bernal, Los Fabulosos Cuatro, Mel Villareal Y Los Unicos, Laura Canales, Ruben and Alfonso Ramos, Snowball, Carlos Guzman, Sonny Ozuna, Jimmy Edwards, Royal Jesters, Isidro Lopez, Joe Bravo, Rudy T and the Reno Bops, Los Chachos, Jesse and Rene Serata, El Charro Negro "Bobby Butler" and many more bands.

Sonny later returned to his beloved Texas and settled in Dallas Texas, where he was hired at the Famed Dallas Landmark, the Fairmount Hotel and elevated to the ranks of Chef. His passion and determination for the music and the industry continued, later providing him with opportunities to pursue his passion on a full time basis in music promotion and talent management. Sonny managed Famed Tejano greats such as Little Joe Y La Familia, La Mafia, New Variety Band and La Fiebre and many others.

He also owned and operated Texas Talent Agency, Manana Talent Agency and Hispanic Talent Agency and was well known for his Super Dances at the Dallas Convention Center, which he organized and promoted, working with Tejano Music notables such as Selena, David Lee Garza, Roberto Pulido, Grupo Mazz, Ramiro "Ram" Herrera, Patsy Torres and Blue Harmony Shelly Lares, La Sombra, La Fiebre, Jaime Y los Chamacos, Gary Hobbs, and many, many more talented artists.

Under Sonny's ambitious management, La Familia gained fame and notoriety resulting in being asked to perform for then President George H. Bush's Inauguration, which would have made them the first Tejano act to perform at a Presidential Inauguration. But, due to conflicts, were unable to perform at the function.

During the 80s, Sonny worked for the Sherwood Cryer of the famed Gilley's organization, as manager of Lil' Joe's Night Club in Pasadena Texas, where he continued providing audiences in the Houston area with Top rated Tejano Music talent.

Throughout his lifetime, Sonny's careers were his passions, he was always known as someone who was compassionate toward others, helping upstart bands, giving advice and assisting in booking unknown acts together with larger known as a way to help those coming up get exposure. Standing tall, always dressed in black and his wide brimmed hat. Sonny was a major force not only in the music industry, but in the lives of his family, friends and everyone he met.

A Celebration of Life will be held at the Infomart located on 1950 Stemmons Freeway, Dallas Texas 75207 on February 15th, 2010 from 6 pm-9 pm.