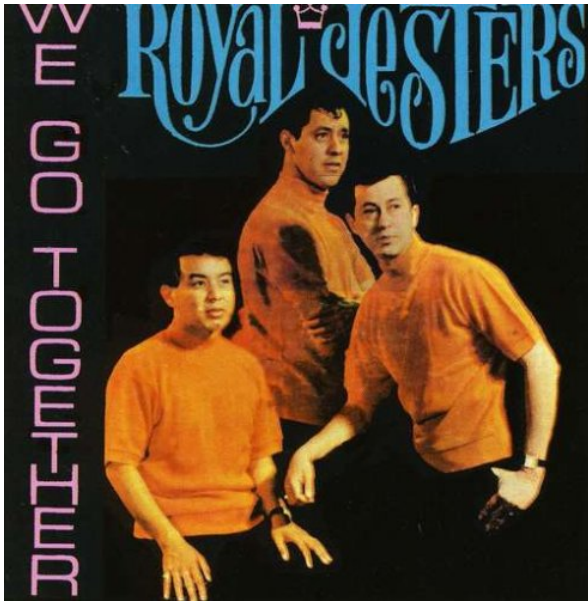


## Óscar Lawson remembered in farewell gathering

Written by Ramiro Burr

Thursday, 13 January 2011 15:54 - Last Updated Thursday, 13 January 2011 16:03

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(**Royal Jester Oscar Lawson** touched a lot of lives in his long professional life. Our correspondent **Ramón Hernández** checks in from the final gathering.)

The mood was sad yet joyous and the atmosphere was somber yet festive as hundreds of Óscar Lawson's peers packed the Mission Park Funeral Home to pay their last respects.

Former Royal Jester vocalists **Henry Hernández, Louie Escalante, Jack Martínez, David Marez** and **Joe Jama** were all present; as well as a slew of former Jester

musicians including **Luvine Elias Jr.**, who played keyboard during four Gospel tunes.

**Frank Rodarte**, formerly with nationally acclaimed Los Blues, made his saxophone cry as he played "Amazing Grace," "How Great Thou Art" and "Just A Closer Walk with Thee," which for some reason brought a smile to the Lawson family.

Tejano living legends, who as the Jesters, topped Billboard's pop charts during the 1960s **Sunny Ozuna**

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of the Sunliners and

### **René Ornelas**

of Rene and Rene, viewed Óscar's body, prayed and gave the Lawson family their condolences.

The funeral room jam packed. It was as they say in the music business, SRO (Standing Room Only). Manuel and Rudy Tee Gonzales of the Reno Bops who used to back the Jesters during the 1950s could hardly move in a sea of people that included **Ramiro Cervera, Charlie Alvarado** of Charlie and the Jives; Joe Bravo, Little Henry Parrilla of the Laveers, Henry Peña of the Kasuals, Ramiro and Gilbert Rodríguez of the Bluenotes, Vic Love, Ernie Garibay, Bobby Esquivel, Rocky Hernández of the OBG Band, Jorge Alejandro, George Rivas, Alex De León of Canela Band and Rico del Barrio.

**Al Reed**, presently in Santa Ana, California, could not attend, but in his place sent his daughter **JoAnn Gonzales**.

Musicians included **Gibby Escobedo, Gilbert Velásquez, Donald Garza, George Cantú, Pete "Corse" Garza, Charlie De León, Ray Gutiérrez** and others, most of them from Latin Breed and the Sunliner Band.

At a glance, distributors plus music and record promoters included **Chano Elizondo, Moses Anguiano, Bobby Galvan, Carlos Sandoval, Michael Ochoa** and Michael Arellano.

Other VIPs were TTMA's **Frank Salazar, Hispanic Music Hall of Fame founder Sam Zuniga, Juan Mendoza, David Gonzales, Jesse García** and **Richard Herrera** as well as television, radio and print personalities as Andres Ricardo Morín, Brandy López, KONO's Wild Bill Riley and Héctor Saldaña.

While everyone was saddened with Óscar's passing, as the priest said, "We are here celebrating a birth into eternal life. Death is birth into a beautiful world. Our brother enjoyed the Rosary. He was a very Holy man and when he was a teenager, he wanted to be a priest. He was very

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active at Mary Magdalene Church ... We know Óscar is in an eternal banquet with Jesus Christ.”

Then addressing Lawson, he said, “We know that you will be singing the oldies with Mother Mary.”

Óscar Lawson was musical royalty and he will be missed, but his voice will be heard for generations to come and thus he will never be forgotten.