



## Santos Castilleja

March 31, 1961 - May 14, 2010

Santos Castilleja (49) of Harrah passed away on Friday May 14, 2010 in Harrah. He was born in Prosser on March 31, 1961 to Victor and Josephina (Muniz) Castilleja Sr. He was raised in the Yakima Valley and graduated from White Swan in 1980. He attended CWU and worked for Labbeemint, Goldendale Aluminum. Santos continued his education at Perry Tech where he obtained an HVAC certificate. He was working for AMB Tools at the time of his death. Santos enjoyed softball (Harrah Boys) and was known as sugar bear. he played basketball for the Rim riders. He was active in the Wapato Football Booster and White Swan Parent Football and was known for his hot dogs and hamburgers. He loved family get-togethers, family volleyball tournaments, making tamales as a family for Christmas, and working on his mustang with his boys. He always talked about how amazing it was watching his boys being born. He loved watching sports on TV, supporting his son's football and basketball teams. He was an active Community member, Harrah Town council member and grandparent of three. He enjoyed his Sunday coffee with Steve and Kiana. Santo's always had a smile on his face and was kind hearted and would never say no to anyone. He enjoyed pinching and squeezing his niece and nephews cheeks. Santos loved working in his garden which he called "Dads Sanctuary" and he had a green thumb for growing plants. He considered Kiana and Sierra the girls he and Melissa never had. He donated a kidney to his sister, Shorty in 1989. Santo's had nicknames for all his nieces and nephews, mostly adding "gut" to the ends of their names

except for Angelina which he always called Gina-Gina.

He is survived by his wife of 28 years, Melissa of Harrah; his father, Victor Castilleja Sr. of Wapato; four sons, Danny (Vanessa) Rothrock Castilleja of Florida, Andrew Castilleja of Wapato and Aaron and Ki Castilleja both of Harrah; three grandchildren; three brothers, Victor (Sheree) of Yakima, Steve (Rachel) and Ray (Jolena) both of Harrah; six sisters, Sylvia Arambul of Wapato; Rosie (Hector) Diaz of Texas, Estella (Art) Gonzalez of Sunnyside, Alicia (Felix Jr.) Cordova of Harrah, Mary (Isaac) Bobb of Brownstown and Christy (Jeff) Chumley of Toppenish and numerous nieces and nephews. Santos was preceded in death by his mother, his father-in-law, Charles R. Gwinn; his stepmother, Virginia Castilleja, his brother-in-law, Jim Aleck Sr. and his grandmother, Andrea Coronado.

Visitation will be on Thursday at Colonial Funeral Home from 11-6. Funeral services will be held at the Harrah Grace Brethren Church in Harrah on Friday at 10AM with interment to follow at Reservation Community Memorial Park west of Wapato. The family suggests memorial contributions may be made to the American Heart Association or the Kidney Foundation. Friends can send condolences at [www.toppenishfunerals.com](http://www.toppenishfunerals.com). Colonial Funeral Home is in charge of arrangements.

# Previous Events

## Visitation

MAY 27. 11:00 AM - 6:00 PM (PT)

Colonial Funeral Home  
228 S. Alder  
Toppenish, WA

# Tribute Wall



“ Santos Castilleja

October 05, 2023 at 11:22 AM



“ Hey there! This post couldn't be written any better! Reading this post reminds me of my previous room mate! He always kept talking about this. I will forward this page to him. Pretty sure he will have a good read. Thanks for sharing!

*ghd sale###imported-begin###ghd sale###imported-end##*

November 30, 2013 at 05:22 AM



“ Woah! I'm really enjoying the template/theme of this blog. It's simple, yet effective. A lot of times it's challenging to get that "perfect balance" between superb usability and visual appearance. I must say that you've done a amazing job with this. Additionally, the blog loads very quick for me on Chrome. Exceptional Blog!

*nike running shoes###imported-begin###nike running shoes###imported-end##*

November 27, 2013 at 05:03 PM



“ Therefore, many finalized adjustments to positions have to be achieved concerning Thurs . prior to a shut. Birkenstock For Sale###imported-begin###Birkenstock For Sale###imported-end##

July 29, 2013 at 08:26 PM



“ *lost touch since high school but always remembered, a great friend and person. will miss him, sorry in your loss castilleja family.##imported-begin##joe montemayor##imported-end##*

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May 24, 2010 at 03:32 PM



“ For those of you that missed Santos service; Melissa asked me to say a few words at the his service.

*We are here to celebrate the life of a kind, selfless, wonderful soft spoken person.*

*Santos was born into what quickly became a very large family. As it goes in families with many children, some children grow up to be outspoken while others grow up to be quiet and soft spoken. He was always very quiet, but his silence spoke strongly and deeply.*

*Santos worked hard at school and loved playing sports. After graduating from High School, he attended college at Central Washington University in Ellensburg. His giving heart showed. He donated a kidney to his sister Alice in 1989. He unselfishly gave up his time to serve on the Harrah City Council for the last several years as well as numerous hours helping with various sports organizations.*

*In 2003, Santos graduated from JM Perry Institute earning an HVAC certification. He then began his career with Divco working on commercial air conditioners. This required him to climb to the top of tall commercial buildings. He quickly found other employment because you see, Santos was afraid of heights. In 2004 he found employment with AMB tools and Equipment in Yakima servicing and repairing commercial pressure washers.*

*I worked for the City of Yakima, and had the pleasure to see Santos from time to time when he would come and repair the machines that City employees would somehow manage to break.*

*I grew up with Santos my whole life. We attended Harrah grade school from kindergarten through 5th grade. Summers were filled with riding our bikes, swimming in the irrigation ditches around Harrah and playing pee wee baseball. We were then bused from Harrah to White Swan Middle School and then White Swan High School until...of course he bought THE Mustang...cool dude!!!*

*When I drove up to the house yesterday to visit with his family, there it was sitting in the yard. A work in progress, and a different color than the last time I saw it. No hood scoop, but a sunroof I had not seen before. It has been one of Santos' legacies. When we were in high school, it became our "wheels" to school, at least on the days it was running, or when he was able to put it all back together before the weekend was over. Checking on the Mustang's progress yesterday, I noticed a White Swan High School parking permit. Funny, I don't remember that in our High School days. Ah, then I noticed TWO parking permit stickers. Hmm what was up with this? I found the answer, yes, Andrew and then later Aaron were able to drive THE Mustang to High School.*

*Speaking of High School, there were 5 of us that hung out together. All day, everyday...pretty much inseparable.*

*In our junior year, we came up with the idea to attend the Masquerade Dance going dressed as gangsters. It was then the fun began....without our parent's generosity, we had to be frugal, so we shopped at goodwill and second hand stores for all of the necessary garb gangsters wore. We ended up with pin strip suits that probably sold for hundreds of dollars when they were new, shirts, ties...the works. I think the whole outfit per person was about 6 bucks, and 2.50 of that were for hats. We couldn't find 5 hats that were the same, so we bought brand new straw hats that farmers wore back then...it was all we could find that represented the gangster look. We sure didn't care cuz man...we looked liked 1920's gangsters. We were Cooool ...!!!*

*Attending a smaller school gave every kid ample chances to play sports. And who was always first in line? Santos of course. He enjoyed sports so much that when he became a father, he couldn't stand by and watch his boys play but had to assist the coaches doing whatever they needed him to do.*

*Santos was my roommate in my brief college career.  
I recall about 2 or 3 weeks after the beginning of school, about 2 in  
the morning we were both awakened to noises in the hallway, and  
the frightful sound of someone pounding on our dormitory door. As  
we both leaped from our beds, I*

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May 23, 2010 at 11:36 AM



“ Melissa, my sister, I am so sorry to hear about Santo. When I got the call, I thought and prayed it was a bad dream I was having. But, as it was not, I wished I could of been there for you and the boys, Aunt Margaret and the rest of our family. We tried so hard to be with all of you, but mother nature changed that and we couldn't make it over the mountains. We were so close and I wanted to continue driving but you know me....chicken when it comes to them mountains and when there is snow and ice on them. Santo is probably laughing from up above and making me look more like a chicken. I would always be checking out the weather whenever I would come over there....haha. I want the whole family to know that it broke my heart to hear about Santo's passing and I just wished we could of made it there to comfort all of you. I was sending it all in my thoughts and I hope you all got it. Like I told you before.....Uncle Chuck it smiling from above because he has his favorite son-in-law with him and they will watch over all of you and us. He was a great father and your soulmate and I love you. Know that he will always be around.....just look into your boys hearts, their actions, and there smiles. I just wished we could of made it, we had fish, rice and a present from John. It will get better in time....you have all the memories to remember his crazy jokes, his beautiful smile and his caring for life. WE ARE SENDING lots of hugs and kisses for all of you.....Jennie##imported-begin##Jennie, Mark Reyes & Families##imported-end##

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May 23, 2010 at 09:42 AM



“ are prayers are with your family, GOD BLESS the GOMEZS##imported-begin##Roy Darlene Gomez##imported-end##

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May 23, 2010 at 01:56 AM



“ *Castilleja family,  
I am so sorry for your loss. I went to school with Santos and remember his smile and kind heart. I'm not surprised to hear how wonderful of a man he became. May God comfort his family in this time of sorrow.*  
Nellie###imported-begin##Noelia Moore (Nellie)###imported-end##

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May 21, 2010 at 08:07 PM



“ *I am so sorry to hear about Sandy. My prayers go out to you and your family. I greatly enjoyed and appreciated Sandy as a student and an athlete. There are too few people like him.*  
Warren###imported-begin##Warren Craig###imported-end##

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May 21, 2010 at 03:52 PM



“ *Melissa, Boys and All the Castilleja Familia,*  
  
*I am truly sorry to hear about Santos' passing. May memories and love for each other keep you strong and moving forward. My prayers and thoughts are with you ALL...*  
  
*God Bless!!!!###imported-begin##Sarah Arambul###imported-end##*

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May 21, 2010 at 02:32 AM



“ Dear Melissa and family, I am so sorry for your loss of Santos. I enjoyed getting to know you when Ki was in kindergarten and thought Santos was a caring and thoughtful dad. My heart is heavy and hope yours is lightened in knowing so many of us share your sorrow. Sincerely, Lynne Dufault###imported-begin###Lynne Dufault###imported-end##

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May 21, 2010 at 01:36 AM



“ Melissa, I am so sad to hear of Santos passing. At a time like this, I am at loss for words to express our condolences to you and your family. Words can't mend your heartache, I am so sorry. I wish you comfort and may you find the strength in the love of family and friends. My thoughts and prayers are with you and your family.###imported-begin###MARY CASTILLEJA###imported-end##

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May 20, 2010 at 08:53 PM



“ Castilleja family--We are so sorry to hear of your loss. Your entire family is in our thoughts and prayers during this most difficult time. Please accept my familys deepest condolences.###imported-begin###Dorothy Rocha and Family###imported-end##

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May 20, 2010 at 04:33 PM



“ Sandy you and I go way back all the way to pitt and pitt panthers baseball. then time went by and I can remember this little boy on my football field as his dad helped him do his conditioning after practice and I looked and I told my assisstant coaches that this is a dad who loves his sons.

*I have had the honor to coach Andrew, Aaron and Kia,  
My heart and soul goes out to all of you .*

*Melissa you know how special you are and always have been to me*

*To all the boys remember what we always say, stay strong, be strong, and always remember your family.*

*I love all of you*

*Melissa if you need anything please let me know*

*Heidi and I prayers are with you*

*Love Coach Pitt###imported-begin##RHETT PITT###imported-end##*

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May 19, 2010 at 10:31 PM



“ My husband Eric worked with Santos at AMB tools. When I heard Santos had passed, I was in denial; hoping it was a bad joke. I am still in disbelief that this man, who was always so kind and always smiling, is gone. Santos made it no secret that his family was absolutely #1! What an awesome laugh he had., and his eyes would light up when he talked about his boys. I will miss that about him.

*My heart aches for Melissa and his boys and his whole family. I pray you will find peace in your heart soon. Santos, my friend ...you will be missed.###imported-begin##Terri Beernink###imported-end##*

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May 19, 2010 at 08:42 PM



“ *Melissa I am so sad to see that Santos has passed away. I remember doing your home loan for both of you and I will always remember his smile! He was always smiling and so such a nice person. I so enjoyed helping both of you. My thoughts are with you and your family.*

*God Bless you*

*Debbie Kelsey (Bergstrom)###imported-begin##Debbie Kelsey (Bergstrom)###imported-end##*

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May 19, 2010 at 07:23 PM



“ *I am sorry to hear of Santos' passing. I worked with Santos at AMB Tools, but in the Tacoma store. I recall all the fun times at the company golf tournament where it seems I was always teamed up with Santos. I will miss his weekly calls asking me to send him parts.*

*Bill Wolfe###imported-begin##Bill Wolfe###imported-end##*

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May 19, 2010 at 06:18 PM



“ *Estella and family:*

*So sad to hear of Santos's passing. You have a strong, beautiful and close family and I know you all will keep his memory alive. God bless! Love ya, Ramiro, Dede, Monica, Romi, Kayla and Liz Gonzalez###imported-begin##Ramiro & Dede Gonzalez & Family###imported-end##*

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May 19, 2010 at 03:32 PM



“ sorry for your loss I enjoyed growing and going to school with Santos and boy he will be missed I can still see him living next to Jill and me and him talking when I would come over I will miss you Santos###imported-begin###Randy Head###imported-end##

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May 19, 2010 at 02:28 PM



“ Castilleja Family, Sandy and I played "Ball" together thru highschool. I played for Granger and Sandy always talked to me before and after the games and was always a gentleman! Thru the years when we ran into each other, we talked about our kids first...then our playing years. He was so proud of his Family and I'm sure his same gentle athletic, strong spirit will flow thru generations of Castillejas. Missing him will extend throughout this valley. I was proud to call him friend and extend prayers to his family for comfort in these times. -Craig and Eva, Colt, Erica, Jessica and Chase###imported-begin###Craig Carpenter###imported-end##

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May 19, 2010 at 01:47 PM



“ I am so sorry to hear of Santos' passing. It has been a long time since we've seen each other, but I have fond memories of him. I grew up with him and his sisters in Harrah and White Swan. I wish I could attend his memorial but cannot. His family is in our thoughts and prayers.###imported-begin###Jose G. Gonzales###imported-end##

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May 19, 2010 at 01:42 PM



“ To My "Prince" Santos...  
You will be deeply missed, and i will always remeber the High school years we shared together. Youre always in my heart...  
Marylou Cordova Espinoza###imported-begin##Marylou Cordova Espinoza###imported-end##

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May 19, 2010 at 01:01 PM



“ My heart goes out to your family. I graduated with Sandy at White Swan and I have always remembered him as a kind and gentle spirit. I have ran into him periodically and was happy to find he hadn't changed a bit in spirit. He is a man to be proud of and remembered.###imported-begin##Tami Rodriguez (Brown)###imported-end##

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May 19, 2010 at 11:11 AM



“ Dear Castilleja Family;

*I am so sorry to hear of the loss of Santos. I remember such beautiful kindness when I remember him and your whole family. Mary and I were classmates all through school.*

*I remember Santos and Mingo playing baseball and being so FUN! They both had a love of life that you could see every day.*

*Please know our prayers are with you and we are hoping that you find peace.*

*Although I didn't know Santos as a friend, I do know who he was as a person and I know you can all be proud of him.*

*Please let me know how you are doing, I miss you all and hope you are well,*

*Love always,*

*Laurie Kanzleiter Sison###imported-begin###Laurie Kanzleiter Sison###imported-end###*

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May 19, 2010 at 07:54 AM



“ *I graduated with "Sandy" as we knew him. He was a kind and always caring person. My heart go out to his family for their loss in a great person....Julie###imported-begin###Julie Watkins-Sherman###imported-end###*

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May 19, 2010 at 03:13 AM



“ Santos,

*Kaityn's Dan left her on Sunday and as we looked out into the Valley towards Mt. Adams on Sunday... a bright light casted from above onto the valley...the journey home at times seems so unfair, but knowing that the smile and laughter you shared...can be heard through your family and those you have touched...##imported-begin##A. Zagelow##imported-end##*

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May 19, 2010 at 03:05 AM