



## Tom Zapara

June 16, 2024

Tom Zapara, a long-time ASI member and past board chair of ASI Missions, Inc., from Laguna Beach, California, went to sleep in Jesus on Sunday, June 16, 2024, with wife Vi and family members at his side. He was weeks shy of his 101st birthday. Tom's love for God and complete trust in His will led him to live in expectation of the second coming of Jesus. In addition to Vi, Tom is survived by daughter Shelley, her husband Jere Fox, their daughter Cindy, five grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren.

Tom and Vi were integrally involved in ASI during a very important time of expanding vision and ministry. Tom served as president for the Pacific Union Chapter of ASI. Both he and Vi were directly involved in the formation of Mission Church Builders, ASI Missions, Inc., SDA Layman's New Church Development, and numerous ASI projects, including the Magabook program for student colporteurs and various printing and language translation projects.

Tom and Vi were also major players in the establishment of Hart Research Center, the Tom and Vi Zapara School of Business at La Sierra University, the Tom & Vi Zapara Rehabilitation Pavilion at Loma Linda University Health, the Zapara Excellence in Teaching Award for Adventist educators, and too many other significant projects to list.

Tom and Vi started their lives in North Dakota, both children of Ukrainian

immigrants. They first met in Southern California in the 1940's. One of Tom's greatest characteristics was his determined persistence. He asked Vi to marry him at least ten times before she finally said yes—on a phone call from Alaska where he and a buddy had been colporteurs all summer long. When Vi said yes, Tom wasted no time in returning home where they started a storybook relationship that lasted 77 years.

Together, in their kitchen, Tom and Vi founded their first company that would grow into Zee Medical Corporation, the world leader in industrial first aid kits for manufacturing companies. Zee was Tom's Army nickname when he served as a medic in World War II. Through Tom and Vi's sheer will and persistence, and with the blessing of God, the company grew to legendary heights. After selling the business, they established Life Support Products, another major company that served the United States emergency response market.

Tom and Vi have been generous philanthropists over decades. They financially supported numerous ministries and empowered creative ideas that have had untold worldwide impact on the mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Tom was very positive and upbeat and continually looked for opportunities to extend the blessings he had received. He never wavered in believing that God was responsible for his personal and financial success, and he was determined to be faithful to the responsibilities that he knew God had given him. Tom maintained his unique capacity to analyze ideas, reduce them into the abstract, and examine their potential. Six weeks prior to his death, he was engaged in learning about AI and brainstorming how it could be used for ministry.

Tom's main hobby was creating beautiful exotic wooden bowls and decorative pieces in his garage shop. Many friends enjoy having a Tom Zapara original

grace their home or office.

Tom loved to talk over a meal. Some of his close friends and family members already have prearranged appointments to meet Tom under the Tree of Life to celebrate being in heaven and to share all the ways God led them. He also expressed the hope that Jesus himself might join him in a meal under that same tree.

Vi and her family thank you, the ASI family, for your prayers as they continue their journey in this life. While they're experiencing natural sadness and grief in this moment of loss, they invite you to join them in celebrating the life of a man dedicated to God and family.

The Celebration of Life for Tom will be at the La Sierra University Tom and Vi Zapara School of Business, Riverside, CA The memorial will be live-streamed Sunday, July 28, at 3:00pm (Pacific) at the following link:

[https://www.youtube.com/live/EIRIq\\_ksNsU](https://www.youtube.com/live/EIRIq_ksNsU)

# Previous Events

## Celebration of Life for Tom Zapara

JUL **28**. 3:00 PM (PT)

Zapara School of Business La Sierra University  
4500 Riverwalk Parkway  
Riverside, CA 92505

*You will be able to watch the Celebration of Life service live at: [https://www.youtube.com/live/EIRIq\\_ksNsU](https://www.youtube.com/live/EIRIq_ksNsU)*

# Tribute Wall



“ *Reflecting on Memories created a Celebrating the Life of Tom Zapara in memory of Tom Zapara*



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**Reflecting on Memories** - July 26, 2024 at 10:49 AM



“ *Reflecting on Memories created a Tribute Video in memory of Tom Zapara*



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**Reflecting on Memories** - June 20, 2024 at 12:06 AM



“ *So sorry to hear of Toms passing but a life well lived. He never forgot his childhood friends and my father Raymond Lee thought the world of him. Marcus Lee and Family.*

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**Marcus Lee** - October 15, 2024 at 04:42 PM

RR

“ To the Zapara family,

*“Know ye not that there is a prince and a great man fallen this day in Israel?” (2 Samuel 3:38).*

*I was deeply saddened to hear of Tom's passing and took a moment to reflect on the times I spent as his pastor and visiting Tom and Vi at their home. Tom and I shared a love for woodworking, and I fondly remember the time we spent in his woodworking shop. His passion for his hobby was evident in every piece he created, and I cherish the items he made for me.*

*Recently, during a visit to their home, I saw that Tom's health was rapidly declining. We shared a final prayer together, where he took my hand and prayed for me. I have never known a more generous or better Christian than Tom.*

*Tom and I discussed creating a website to commemorate his generous life, which he supported. It is impossible to count the thousands of lives he touched; Tom inspired everyone he met. I created this website to comfort his family and friends, ensuring that Tom's spirit lives on in the memories of those he left behind. Tom was a medic and soldier in WW2, and he was a mighty warrior for the Lord as well.*

*As C.S. Lewis once wrote, “The greater the love, the greater the grief.” I wish healing to each family member and his many friends. Remember, there are as many days as there are nights, and we look forward to the day when we can meet Tom again.*

*Looking forward to the day we can meet again,*

*Pastor Roger Rustad*

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**Roger Rustad** - June 20, 2024 at 01:58 AM

CZ

*Roger, when did you visit my father, I don't recall meeting you.*

**Cynthia Zapara** - June 24, 2024 at 11:13 PM

RR

*I visited with Tom and Vi a number of times recently and had prayer with him. The last time has been close to a year I guess and I could see his decline. I have known Tom and Vi since the 1980's when I was their pastor, and been to their house many times. Tom and I shared the love of woodworking and spent time in his woodworking shop. It was find of funny one of the last times I visited with Tom and Vi, I brought him a special Desmond Doss collectors Challenge Coin, because he had also been a medic in WW2, and he thanked me and said that he could treasure that. Vi got up and took the coin out of his hand and gave it back to me and said, "he can't have that, we are trying to get rid of things".*

*Is there a funeral scheduled? Let me know and feel free to reach out to me.*

**Roger Rustad** - June 30, 2024 at 12:05 PM



“ 3 files added to the album Zapara Family Memories Album



**Reflecting on Memories** - June 20, 2024 at 12:09 AM