



Martin P. Payan

NOV 11, 1946 - MAR 2, 2026



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In Loving Memory of Martin Perez Payan

Martin Perez Payan, born on Veterans Day, November 11, 1946. Beloved husband, father, grandfather, son, brother, uncle, padrino, veteran, mentor, and friend, passed away on a beautiful starry night, Monday, March 2, 2026 at Jennifer Moreno Veterans Affairs Medical Center, La Jolla, California.

Martin's passing left behind a legacy defined by service, compassion, humor, and unwavering love for his family and community.

Born in a casita de adobo in Nuevo Casas Grandes, Chihuahua, Mexico. The eldest of ten children born to Francisca Payan (Perez) of Chihuahua, Mexico and Jesus Franco Payan of Lordsburg, New Mexico, USA. From an early age Martin carried the quiet strength and responsibility that often comes with being the oldest, helping guide and support those who came after him. As a teenager, he journeyed to the United States in search of opportunity, building a life defined by hard work, resilience, and determination.

Martin proudly served his adopted country in the United States Army during the Vietnam War—an honor he carried with deep pride throughout his life. His service reflected the courage, loyalty, and commitment that would define the man he became.

He worked and retired from NASSCO. A skilled and dedicated professional, earning many certifications such as an auto mechanic, long-haul driver, counselor, maintenance, and upon retirement focused solely on holistic healing and massage therapy. Yet the work that meant the most to him was the work he did for others. Martin was deeply involved in the Alcoholics Anonymous community, where he devoted countless hours helping people find hope and healing. His compassion led him to volunteer regularly in county jails, homeless shelters and



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rehabilitation centers, where he shared his story and reminded others that redemption and new beginnings were always possible.

Martin had a rare gift for storytelling. With quick wit, perfectly timed humor, and a sparkle in his eye, he could captivate a room with stories that made people laugh, reflect, and feel connected. Whether among family, friends, or strangers, he had a way of making people feel seen and welcomed.

He was known by many as a selfless and giving man—someone who would stop whatever he was doing to lend a helping hand. To Martin, no person was a stranger for long. His generosity of spirit and willingness to serve others left an indelible mark on the lives of countless people.

Above all else, Martin loved his family deeply. He is survived by his wife of 27 years, Patricia “Paty” Ruesga, children Diana, Martin, and Mireya, whom he shared with his former wife Elizabeth Ruiz, stepchildren Laura, Bruno, and Diego, whom he embraced with love. He also leaves behind 12 grandchildren, who will carry his memory forward and nine siblings, Alicia, Jesus, Ruben, Bertha, Margarita, Luisa, Rene, Norma, and Javier.

Martin’s life was one of courage, laughter, redemption, and generosity. He taught those around him the power of resilience, the value of service to others, and the importance of living with heart and humor.

Though he is no longer with us, the stories he told, the lives he touched, and the love he gave will continue to echo through the many hearts he changed forever.

He will be deeply missed, lovingly remembered, and forever honored.



Events

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VIEWING

Sunday, March 29, 2026

4:00 PM - 8:00 PM PT

Greenwood Memorial Park - Salli Lynn Chapel

4300 Imperial Ave., San Diego CA 92113



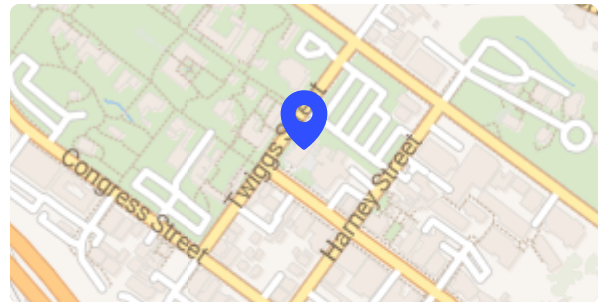
Catholic service

Monday, March 30, 2026

11:00 AM - 12:00 PM PT

Immaculate Conception Church

2540 San Diego Ave., San Diego CA 92110



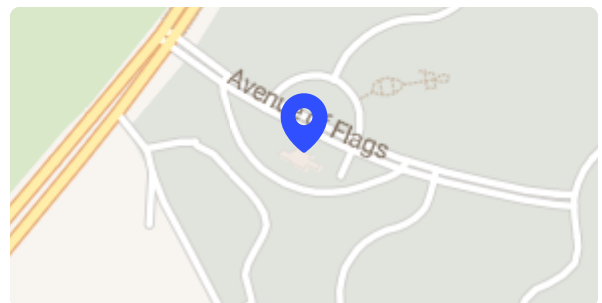
Committal Service with Army Honors

Monday, March 30, 2026

1:15 PM - 2:15 PM PT

Miramar National Cemetery

5795 Nobel Drive, San Diego CA 92121





Tribute Wall

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Steven V. planted a Memorial Tree in honor of Martin.

March 29 at 3:19 PM



Anonymous sent a Strength & Solace Spray to the Payan family.

March 29 at 11:21 AM



Anonymous planted a grove of 3 Memorial Trees in honor of Martin.

March 29 at 10:12 AM



Maria S posted:

My fondest childhood memory of Mr Payan was the story he once told me and the other kids that were at his house visiting Diana (my best friend) Martin and Neca. I was about 10 years old when he told us about his time in Vietnam and I remember he said something that was really cool. He said that during his time at war a bullet hit his metal helmet leaving a dent and I remember he brought out the helmet to show us. We were all in amazement at the sight. He told the story very passionately and proudly. I clearly remember that day like it was yesterday. Mr Payan would also invite me and my siblings on his family trips to the mountains to see the snow, camping and just about anywhere he took his family. I remember seeing snow, rivers and mountains for the first time. Those were the best days of my childhood thanks to Mr Payan and his family. He was truly a hero in my eyes and definitely left a mark on my heart. He was also like a father figure to me and all the kids in the neighborhood. He will never be forgotten. Today my heart aches for my beautiful best friend/comadre and everyone who loved him. My deepest sympathy and condolences are with his family and friends. May Mr. Payan rest in eternal peace in the kingdom of heaven. Much love and respect, Angelita

March 29 at 10:05 AM



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Maria S posted:

My fondest memory of Mr. Payan was when he proudly told me a story about his time in Vietnam. Specifically a time when he said a bullet hit his metal helmet and left a dent which he showed us proudly. I was about 10 years old when he shared with me and his daughter (my best friend Diana) that incredible story of his time at war. It's been over 40 years and I still remember it clearly, I can still picture the helmet with a dent on it. I remember how proud and grateful he was for being able to share this story with us. Mr. Payan was very nice and kind. He treated me and my siblings as his own family. I also remember the times invited me and my siblings to go camping, river rafting and to the mountains to see the snow for the first time. That's how wonderful of a person he was to everyone he knew. He definitely left a mark in my heart. Rest in peace Mr. Payan, you will never be forgotten. My deepest condolences and prayers are with Mr Payan and his family. I have great memories and love for the Payan family.

March 29 at 9:19 AM



Moreno Family, Texas. sent a Florist Choice Bouquet to the Payan family.



March 24 at 6:37 PM



Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Martin by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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