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Retired Div. 1 Manager Jesse Castorena Died Monday, Age 53

(July 6, 2006) Retired Division 1 Transportation Manager Jesse Castorena, who was always quick with a smile and a laugh and who often provided music at Metro events, died Monday at age 53 following a five-year battle with pancreatic cancer.

A vigil is scheduled at 5 p.m., Sunday, at St. Joseph Church, 1150 West Holt Ave., Pomona (909-629-4101). A

funeral at the church will begin at 9:30 a.m., Monday, July 10, with the burial to follow at Queen of Heaven Cemetery, 2161 South Fullerton Rd., in Rowland Heights.

Castorena and his wife, Esther, had just celebrated their 35th anniversary on Saturday. He retired from Metro in February 2002.

Castorena was very active at St. Joseph's Church where he taught religious education. He was president of the St. Vincent de Paul Society and was a member of the Knights of Columbus.

When Castorena was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer five years ago, he was given only three to six months to live.

'God gave him more time'

"But, he lived for years; he fought it and was proud of that," Esther Castorena recalled, "Jesse said that God gave him more time to do His work."



Former Division 1 Manager Jesse Castorena celebrates at 'Best of the Best' gala in this photo taken March 31, 2001.

Castorena, who frequently wore a snap-brim hat over his long, black pony tail, also had a passion for music. He often brought his DJ equipment to Metro events and worked weddings on many weekends.

"I asked Jesse, 'Are you sure this is a



Castorena often brought his DJ equipment to Metro events.

hobby?" his wife said. "But, he loved music and he said, 'This is what I do.'"

Castorena was hired by the SCRTD as a bus operator on his 21st birthday in October, 1973, and drove a bus for 10 years. At one point, he joined the

Transit Police, but served on the force for only a short time, according to his wife.

He became a dispatcher, road supervisor and then assistant transportation manager at divisions 18 and 9. He eventually was promoted to transportation manager at Division 10 and also served as manager at Division 7 before being transferred to his last post at Division 1.

In addition to his wife, Esther, Castorena is survived by his daughter, Christina, 28, and son Jess, 15. Survivors include his father, Jesse Sr., two sisters and three brothers.