

Latino Life

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Steve Casanova, Coahuiltecan leader in S.A., dies

Posted on January 28, 2009 | BY [ELAINE AYALA](#)

Steve Casanova, head of one of the five tribal families of the Tap Pilam Coahuiltecan Nation in San Antonio, has died.

An associate professor of [Chicano Studies](#) at St. Cloud University in Minnesota, Casanova was the father of two boys, said Ramon Vasquez, executive director of the American Indians in Texas at the Spanish Colonial Missions, which was established by Tap Pilam.

An activist in the Chicano Movement of the 1970s, Casanova was working on a book on mesquite trees and how they were used by ancient Coahuiltecan, said friend and artist Ramon Sanchez y Vasquez. The Coahuiltecan are regarded as the first inhabitants of the area now known as San Antonio.

“He was one of the persons that helped established Tap Pilam, Coahuiltecan Nation at San Antonio,” Vasquez y Sanchez said. “He was the youngest, and I was the oldest.”

“Although his family was related to the Canary Islanders, he was proud of his Native American heritage,” the artist added.

A rosary will be said for Casanova at 5 p.m. Friday, Jan. 30, at Mission Park Funeral Chapel, 1700 S.E. Military Drive. A Mass will be said at 10 a.m. Saturday, Jan. 31, at Mission Espada, 10040 Espada Road.

Mission Espada was one of his favorite spots in the city, his friends said.

Elaine Ayala

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