

**UNITED FARM WORKERS OF AMERICA, AFL-CIO  
LA PAZ, KEENE, CALIF 93570**

**Contact Marc Grossman  
Joceyln Sherman  
(805) 822-5571**

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## **STATEMENT FROM THE UNITED FARM WORKERS**

***United Farm Workers of America Secretary-Treasurer David Martinez and union First Vice President Arturo Rodriguez today issued the following joint statement on behalf of the UFW***

**The death of Cesar Chavez is a devastating personal loss for his family and for those of us in the movement who worked with him. It is still difficult for many of us to describe in words the emotions that we feel.**

**But it is not too early for us to testify to the legacy he leaves behind.**

**This movement, this union, was Cesar Chavez's life. For him, *La Causa*—the cause—was a life-long commitment. He gave it his last ounce of energy every day, day in and day out. And in the end, he gave it his life.**

**So it is understandable that the press would be wondering whether or not Cesar's death marks the end of the cause for which he fought.**

**For those who loved him and worked with him, for the millions who labor in America's farms and vineyards, and for millions more whose lives were changed by his example, Cesar's life can most appropriately be compared to the stone that gets cast into the middle of a pond.**

**From its impact, ripples grow in ever widening circles.**

**Those ripples are entire generations of farm workers who he taught to fight nonviolently and to stand up for their rights. They are the union members who work under UFW contract and enjoy the blessings of collective bargaining. But even at ranches with no union contracts, many growers can no longer treat people in the same old way because they'll fight back, just as Cesar taught them.**

**Cesar forever reversed the culture of oppression for farm workers who knew him and for farm workers he never met.**

Cesar put it best ~~himself~~ in a 1984 address before the Commonwealth Club of San Francisco

Once social change begins, it cannot be reversed You cannot uneducate the person who has learned to read You cannot humiliate the person who feels pride You cannot oppress the people who are not afraid anymore

Our opponents must understand that it's not just a union we have built. Unions, like other institutions, can come and go But we're more than an institution

For nearly 20 years, our union has been on the cutting edge of a people's cause And you cannot do away with an entire people' you cannot stamp out a people's cause

Regardless of what the future holds for our union, regardless of what the future holds for farm workers, our accomplishments cannot be undone *La Causa*—our cause—doesn't have to be experienced twice The consciousness and pride that were raised by our union are alive and thriving inside millions of young Hispanics who will never work on a farm

(Copies of the full text of that speech can be picked up here today )

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We have a few announcements this afternoon

The reciting of the rosary will be held in Cesar's memory on Wednesday evening, April 28, followed by an all-night vigil A march, followed by a Mass of Christian Burial will be conducted on the morning of Thursday, April 29

In keeping with the wishes Cesar expressed to his family, funeral services will take place in Delano, where he founded the United Farm Workers 31 years ago and where he conducted his first and last ~~long~~ public fasts in 1968 and 1988, respectively

Also according to his expressed wishes, Cesar's brother Richard, a journeyman carpenter before joining the UFW in the 1960s, is building a plain pine casket to receive the body

More detailed information concerning the Wednesday and Thursday schedules will be released as details are arranged Information on other events planned between now and the funeral services will be released as soon as they are available

For your information, Cesar's body arrived in California from Arizona at 6 30 Friday evening at Meadows Field in Bakersfield on a airplane chartered by <sup>Ben Miran</sup> ~~union supporter~~ from Phoenix <sup>Tania Davis Martinez</sup> ~~Two union officers~~ accompanied the body on the plane

We were met at the airport by Helen Chavez, Cesar's widow, his brother, Richard, all of his eight children and many of his 27 grandchildren. The body was transported by hearse to the Kern County Coroner's office in Bakersfield, where an autopsy was performed last night. All questions about the autopsy should be directed to County Coroner Helen Frankel. The only thing we want to emphasize is that from what we understand at this point, death resulted from natural causes.

At 8 30 p.m. Friday, a rosary was recited here at La Paz by about 200 UFW staff and Chavez family members.

An honor guard composed of farm workers has accompanied Cesar's body since it arrived in California. Farm workers will continue this round-the-clock vigil.

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