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Former Rosemead City Manager Frank G. Tripepi – known for a can-do personality – dies at 74

The longtime public servant passed away June 19 after a battle with cancer. But not before establishing a legacy that friends and family say set the city on a better path.



Frank G. Tripepi was City Manager of Rosemead from 1974-2002. (Courtesy photo)

By **ROBERT MORALES** | rmorales@scng.com | Press Telegram

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One could say that Frank G. Tripepi was a can-do person. As city manager of Rosemead for 28 years from 1974-2002, his accomplishments were many.

Tripepi, who was a mere 25 years old when he began his tenure as Rosemead City Manager, lost his battle with cancer on June 19 and died at the age of 74.

He was remembered this week for setting a foundation for the city to thrive.

The [Rosemead](#) City Council's joint statement reflected that.

It read, in part, "During his time as Rosemead's City Manager, Frank worked tirelessly to enhance the quality of life for Rosemead residents and beautify neighborhoods and commercial corridors."

Officials say it was through Tripepi's efforts that the Garvey Community Center and Garvey Senior Apartments were built to better serve the community.

To honor him, a multipurpose room was named after him, known as the 'FGT' room at the Garvey Community Center.

In addition, he secured Southern California Edison to build its headquarter facilities in Rosemead.

Margaret Clark has been on the [Rosemead City Council](#) since 1991. She raved about Tripepi during a telephone conversation Wednesday.

"He was fantastic," she said. "He just really set us up in such a good way."

A report from the state auditor in October 2019 showed that only [14 cities among the 471 listed](#) were more fiscally sound than Rosemead.

"He set up those policies and we've sort of carried them on," Clark said.

Ryder Smith, Tripepi's son-in-law, said Tripepi made it a point to get to know all of the city managers in the [San Gabriel Valley](#).

"Frank had a very global approach," Smith said. "That's why he got to know every city manager, went to all the regional events. He was very involved with the League of California Cities and did a ton of work up in Sacramento."

Smith intimated that being involved in city government meant the world to Tripepi.

"Well, I think he liked the idea of being able to serve a community and make an impact on people and see the difference every day because it's local government," Smith said. "So much of the stuff that happens at the federal level is distant, whereas fixing a street, solving a crime, building a park, like, that stuff makes a real impact on the faces of people you see every day, and so Frank was a big fan of that and being able to see that impact in Rosemead."



Indeed, he was that guy with whom others loved to work, said friends and family.

“Just great, just great,” Clark said, reflecting on how it was to work with Tripepi. “I could call him any time, he’d respond. He was always very courteous and cared about even my family.”

Tripepi was born in Dearborn, Mich., and moved to California just before he turned 1. He attended La Mirada High School and Cal State Fullerton. He was drafted and served with the Army in the Vietnam War. In 1971, while stationed at a gun tower, he was attacked and fell 45 feet, suffering severe injuries.

Among his awards were the National Defense Service Medal and the Vietnam Campaign Medal.

Tripepi married his high school sweetheart, Rhonda Reiley, in 1971 upon his return from Vietnam. They had one child, daughter Nicole.

Tripepi was hired as assistant city manager of Rosemead in 1972 before being promoted. After his tenure in Rosemead, Tripepi became president and CEO of Willdan Financial and in 2008-09 he had a brief return to local government as interim city manager of La Puente.

His daughter, Nicole, couldn’t say enough about the character of her father.

“Everyone loved my dad,” she said. “There isn’t a person out there that he wouldn’t help however he could. ‘Let me make a call’ was one of his favorite phrases, because he always knew someone he could call to help you out. I’m still in disbelief that he’s not here anymore.

“He was such a big part of my life and I miss him terribly. I will try to carry on his legacy of helping others, and hope that I can come close to helping the number of people he did in his lifetime.”

Tripepi is survived by his wife; daughter; son-in-law; granddaughter Reagan; sister Valentina Shoop; and brother-in-law Ron Shoop.

His funeral services will be 9 a.m. Friday at SkyRose Chapel at Rose Hills in Whittier. A graveside military burial will follow.



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Robert Morales | reporter

Robert Morales covers the Los Angeles Kings for the Southern California News Group.

rmorales@scng.com

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