

# Gusztavo Vallo



December 27, 1941 ~ January 14, 2022

Gusztavo was a loving husband, father, grandfather, brother, and friend who passed away peacefully at Our Lady of Lake on Saturday January 14, 2022 at the age of 80. He was a resident of Denham Springs, LA.

Visitation will be at Seale Funeral Home in Denham Springs on January 23, 2022 from 12pm-2pm. Gusztavo is survived by his wife of 54 years, Ana Portillo Vallo; son, Gustav I. Vallo and wife, Mariela; daughters Muriel Thibodeaux and husband, Douglas and Carolina Michel and husband, Lind. He is also survived by grandchildren, Gustav A. Vallo, Charles Nickolas Thibodeaux, and Alyssa Michel; and his brother, Jenő Cserjési of Budapest, Hungary. He was preceded in death by his parents, Ilona Burics and Gustav S. Vallo.

Gusztavo was born in Budapest, Hungary at the time of WWII, just 20 days after the attack on Pearl Harbor, on December 27th, 1941. Gusztavo's family raised him during the times of German, and later Russian, occupation of their war-torn country.

Imagine a time of war is going on and you're a child living in basements, sometimes starving, and hiding because buildings are being bombed and blowing up around you. The Vallo family left the big city of Budapest and lived in a smaller city away from the major fighting. Gusztavo's father fled from his country to avoid being drafted into Hitler's army and to avoid persecution. His mother had to raise Gusztavo by herself. At the age of 14, Gusztavo and other refugees crossed the mined borders of Hungary into Austria. His aunt enrolled him into school to learn Russian and German. Later, with just the clothes he had on his back and a suitcase, Gusztavo boarded a plane along with other refugees to fly to Paraguay, South America for a new life. While there he had to learn Spanish to

communicate with people around him. He worked doing many different jobs, including being a truck driver in the deserts of South America. Later he was drafted into the Paraguay police force. The sister of one of his buddies caught his eye and he boldly told her, "One day I will marry you". This young woman would one day become his wife and the mother of his children. But as a foreigner from another country, Gusztavo the gringo, felt limited as to what better jobs and life he could make for himself and Ana. Meanwhile, Gusztavo learned that his father relocated to Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

Gusztavo moved to Baton Rouge in March of 1967. Gusztavo attended LSU to learn English and attended trade school to become a master electrician. On April 29, 1967, he married Ana by proxy so she could travel to the United States.

Gusztavo met a fellow Hungarian by the name of Jozsef "Joe" Horvath, who gave him his first job in Baton Rouge as a mechanic at a gas station off Highland Road. Later he worked as an aircraft mechanic, sold Snap-On, and became a maintenance supervisor at a motor rewind shop. Mrs. Ana came up to Louisiana during that time and they were married in a religious ceremony on June 23, 1967. Gusztavo moved Ana and their children, Muriel, Gus and Carolina, to Denham Springs where he bought 10 acres of land in 1977.

Gusztavo started an electrical repair company called Vallo Tools and Equipment. He worked out of his truck and could fix anything with a wire, from welding machines, asphalt pavers, overhead cranes, printing presses to jail cell door controls! Gusztavo would convert and upgrade test tube electronics over to IC circuit boards. He worked in industry settings, machine shops, plants, sugar cane plantations, tugboats, and in government buildings. And he would take his 3 kids along with him. This way he could spend individual time with his children because he was always working.

Muriel, Gus, and Carolina were exposed to all kinds of things as kids through Gus' work. Because of his thick Hungarian accent, people would have a hard time understanding him. His young kids translated for him and would tell a supervisor or manager- "you're operating your machine wrong and that's why it's breaking down", "Do it like this, run it like this" or "your printing press is out of timing". Gus' kids remember telling these people that their dad was smarter than them and they should listen to what he said because they'd save money. Gus would tell them how to run their business and how to be better at it.

If anyone came to his home and saw “accumulated junk” and wondered why he collected all that he did, it’s because he came from nothing and he earned everything he had over his lifetime. He learned the value of having to work to get something, whether it was having something to eat or a roof over his head. Gusztavo knew hard work would make anything possible. I guess when you learn at an early age that starving really sucks, you learn to do what it takes to keep your belly full. And that’s why Gusztavo loved to eat!

Gusztavo “Big Gus” Karoly Vallo had quite a journey, struggles and accomplishments throughout his life! He will be missed by his loving family and friends.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the St. Elizabeth Foundation, 8054 Summa Ave., Suite A, Baton Rouge, LA 70809.