

The Barela Family Ride Home



Sometimes people come into your life for a long time. Other times, it's just briefly. But in that time, for some reason, they become the most important & complete focus of your time and energy. Such was the case with Al & Samantha Barela.

We never met them. Many of us in AriZona's motorcycling community didn't. But that didn't factor in when their family was in need. Al & Samantha Barela were killed on March 28, due to a breakdown in the escort system during the annual LE Torch Ride. You'll read more about that elsewhere in these pages.

A lot of angry energy has been generated by this senseless and COMPLETELY avoidable wreck. Many channeled that energy into positive action.

Al [52] & Samantha [37] were in town for Bike Week from New Mexico. They needed to be cared for and taken home to their devastated family... including 4 children, 10 grandchildren, sisters, brothers, nieces, nephews, & more.... Theirs is a large & loving family.

With a logistical & financial burden facing the family ~AZ's bikers knew this is how they could help and could show their respect & caring for the family and what they are going through. Christina, owner of At Season's End Mortuary stepped up immediately to take charge of Al & Samantha's bodies, to prepare them for their trip Home; to their Family and to their Maker. Donations were collected at Westgate's Bike Night, at Motorcycles on Main in Mesa, & directly at At Season's End. Bikers took time from their lives to pay respects to the family and to ride with them. The family had requested caskets. As a tribute, custom painter Mark Brodie, of Mark Brodie Motorsport Design, came in and beautifully pinstriped the caskets. *{These photos above were shared on Christina's FB page.}*

Saturday morning April 4, riders gathered at 'At Season's End Mortuary', 861 W. Superstition Blvd Apache Junction, AZ. Their son Josh, along with his wife Miranda, came down from Farmington to receive his parents and accompany the hearses back to their hometown of Farmington, NM.

Christina shared, via Facebook, "A special thank you John Insalaco, the Mayor of Apache Junction for



coming to the send off to express his condolences to the family." Thank you also to Mayor Insalaco for his assistance in ensuring a smooth departure with complete traffic control by AJ's PD from At Season's End to the Freeway ramp; so that the Barela Family escort had a safe start to their long journey home.

The 2 hearses from Cope Memorial Chapel in NM were loaded with their precious cargo. About 15 bikes departed from ASE. Some riders would make the whole trip [~405 miles]; while others would join in and peel off along the way. In Show Low, some riders pulled off, while another 25 or so fell into line to continue the ride. Our friend Yukon Rick in Show Low who helped organize the White Mountain riders, stated, "Everyone was proud to help by seeing fellow riders off to their final resting place." We're told that another 150 bikes, with their son Joe, other family members, friends, & loved ones, met the procession at the AZ/NM border. Many more waited at the ride's end, Cope Memorial Chapel.

The grapevine and other networking had kicked into high gear. By the time Al & Samantha were laid to rest, donations had covered all expenses of getting them there... Mortuary services at both ends of the ride, caskets, cemetery

plots, headstone, transportation, and so on. Christina posted, "Please know that all funding goals have been met and exceeded! All excess funds will be deposited into the family's Wells Fargo fund account." This is how that angry energy was channeled, by doing what could be done for the family.

There are TOO many people who played a part in this wonderful effort on behalf of the Barela Family to make a list here. Chances are that there would be those left out, and that would be unfortunate. Christina made a lovely statement that expresses it so well, "A very special thank you to everyone that made the Barela family fully understand the true impact of how close a community can be. There are so many people that stepped up that I would be unable to name you all but please know the love was felt! I am so proud of my friends, family, community, and biker community for such compassionate efforts!"

Amen to that {:o)

With Respect,

Betsy & Bruce

{Photo top center is Christina, with Josh & Miranda.}

