



Mário Viegas Carrascalão

12th May 1937 - 19th May 2017

The media release at bottom from the government correctly indicates facts of the life and times of Mr Carrascalão.

However, some personal observations from family members give a better insight into the core of this unique man.

He was born in Uai-Talibu, Venilale, the fifth of fourteen siblings. Due to the Japanese occupation, he worked the land until he was twelve, as education was not possible until the Japanese left.

He then crammed four full primary school years into just one. He attended high school in Timor Leste and then attended university in Lisbon where he graduated with a degree in Silviculture (Establishing the composition, health and quality of forests). By the way his Thesis scored 19.5 or more tangibly 97.5%.

Along the way, he inherited an interest in politics from his father and at the same time gained the attributes of determination and an open heart from his mother.

He married Maria Helga Stoffel Cidrack and fathered a son and two daughters. The family grew with three grandchildren and this committed family man celebrated fifty years of marriage just a week before his passing.

In 1974 he formed the UDT party observing it was important for the inexperienced party to take the time to gain the knowledge to make an effective and responsible political body.

In the following years of Indonesian occupation he earned the post of Governor.

Mário Viegas Carrascalão had always believed education was the answer to the growth and flourishing of Timor Leste.

During his period as governor, he became the founder of the now University of Timor Leste and of the technical school at Hera.

Perhaps the best way to describe him is by the popular reference by the people of the time. As governor, every Friday he would throw open his doors to the humble people with no other avenue of grievance other than him. He listened, empathised and sourced solutions for the problems of people who had no where else to go.

Through this wonderful action he earned the cherished name of 'Maun-Sexta.' Sexta refers to Friday and Maun is the affectionate word for 'brother' used but not limited to the more humble people of Timor Leste. A term of endearment and well deserved.

He was a man devoted to conciliation, love and equality.

Asking family members the best way to describe him, the words, well educated, humble, deeply devout, courageous, tolerant, discrete and humanitarian came without hesitation.

Above all, 'humble' came up over and over again. A man not looking for recognition, just the urge to help those who need it most.

Mário Viegas Carrascalão led a testing and enduring life.

But it was a life as close to fulfilling and justified as one can get.

Rest in Peace.



Media Release from the Minister of State and of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers and Official Spokesperson for the Government of Timor-Leste.

It was with regret that the Government of Timor-Leste received news this morning of the passing of Mário Viegas Carrascalão, a former Vice Prime Minister in the IV Constitutional Government and senior political figure in Timor-Leste. On behalf of the Government, Prime Minister H.E. Dr. Rui Maria de Araújo offered his deep condolences to Mr. Carrascalão's family, friends and colleagues, and paid tribute to his contribution to the Nation.

Mr. Carrascalão recently turned eighty and only yesterday was awarded the Collar of the Order of Timor-Leste by the President of the Republic in recognition of his service.

Mário Viegas Carrascalão was born in Venilale, Baucau on the 12th of May 1937.

He earned a degree in engineering after studying in Portugal and upon returning to Timor served as the head of the Forestry and Agriculture Department. In 1974 he was a founding member and President of the Timorese Democratic Union [UDT]. During the Indonesian occupation he was Governor between 1982 and 1992 and later became a key participant in the transitional process preparing for Governance post independence. This included his role as Speaker of the National Council and as Vice President of the National Council of Timorese Resistance. In 2000 he formed and became leader of the Social Democratic Party [PSD]. In 2006 he released his autobiography "Timor - Before the Future." As part of a Government reshuffle in 2008, Mr. Carrascalão was sworn in as Vice Prime Minister of Management and State Administration in the IV Constitutional Government.

Spokesperson, Minister of State Agio Pereira, noted "today is a sad day as we recall an energetic and pragmatic leader, committed to serving our Nation. We pay our respects to the Carrascalão family at this difficult time."

*Thank you to family members for info, in particular CCE and JMC.
Photo by L. Carroll*