

Jesse Segovia Biography
1937-2000
Austin, Texas

Jesse E. Segovia was born on June 26, 1937 in Austin, Texas. Born to Maria Estrada and Crescenciano Segovia, he was raised on Santa Maria Street in East Austin. Jesse's parents contributed to the growth of Austin, as owners of the first tortilla factory in this city in the late 1920s and 1930s. Located in the heart of Austin's downtown district, near the corner of West Second Street and San Antonio Street, the Austin Tortilla Manufacturing Company later achieved additional historic recognition as the Liberty Lunch Building. Setting the example of hard work and perseverance, his parents influenced the entrepreneurial spirit that would shape Jesse's own life and work.

Jesse attended Allen Junior High School. As a young man, one of his first jobs was working for his uncle, Fred Mendez, who was a well-known photographer in Austin. Jesse also liked drawing and demonstrated his talent as an artist at an early age. This talent eventually led him to his first job as a painter with Henry Signs in 1952. He also worked the Cisneros Sign Company in the 1950s. Little by little he gained experience working with sign fabrication and painting. By the 1960's he was self-employed and proficient in sign layout, die-cutting, graphics and silk screens. The decades of the 1980s and 1990s he was the preferred sign maker for numerous candidates running for political office in Austin and the Central Texas area. He also worked as a sign painter for Travis County from 1988 through 1997.

While Jesse's work was in demand, he also took time to care for his family and neighborhood. Jesse and his wife, Beatrice, bought a house on 2010 Bergman Avenue in 1960. This is where he and Beatrice raised their four sons—Jesse Joe, Steve, Gabriel and James. In the 1970s, Jesse helped his community when his home and others along Bergman Avenue were in the path of the city's plan to develop the Fiesta Gardens area. Together with other neighbors, Jesse helped establish the East Town Lake Citizens Neighborhood Association in 1974. ETLCNA, with Jesse as its first president, assisted those neighbors who wished to maintain ownership of their homes and helped others who needed relocation assistance. It was Jesse's belief that a small group of people could make a difference to save their homes and protect their neighborhood. As a life-long member of Cristo Rey Church, Jesse practiced the values that contributed to the well-being of his family, neighbors and friends.

Jesse E. Segovia passed away on September 21, 2000 at the age of 63. After 46 years, his wife Beatrice still lives in their house on Bergman Avenue. Jesse is survived by his wife, four sons and 12 grandchildren. In honor of his work and contributions to the community, the renaming of Bergman Avenue to Jesse E. Segovia Street is an appropriate tribute.

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