

Obituaries

Iconic Mexican comedian 'Chespirito' dies at 85



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Roberto Gomez Bolanos as El Chavo del Ocho

MEXICO CITY (AP) — Roberto Gomez Bolanos, the iconic Mexican comedian who wrote and played the boy television character "El Chavo del Ocho" that defined a generation for millions of Latin American children, died Friday at age 85.

Known as "Chespirito" (chess-pee-REE-to), he changed comedy in Latin America, taking his inspiration from Laurel and Hardy as well as Mexico's other transcendent comedian who eventually made it to Hollywood, Cantinflas.

His two most famous characters were El Chavo del Ocho, who lived in the homes of Latin America and beyond with his barrel, freckles, striped shirt and frayed cap, and the naive superhero El Chapulin Colorado, or The Crimson Grasshopper. His morning show was a staple for preschoolers, much like *Captain Kangaroo* in the United States.

His employer, the Televisa television network, which is the world's largest producer of Spanish-language programs, did not give the cause of death. It said his body would be flown from his home in Cancun to Mexico City on Saturday for a private funeral Mass at the network's headquarters, and a public tribute was planned for Sunday at Azteca stadium.

He warmed the hearts of millions with a clean comedy style far removed from the sexual innuendo and obscenity-laced jokes popular today. In a career that started in the 1950s, he wrote hundreds of television episodes, 20 films and theater productions that drew record-breaking audiences.

His prolific output earned him the nickname Chespirito. It came from the Spanish phonetic pronunciation of Shakespeare — Chespir — combined with "ito," a diminutive commonly used in Mexico that seemed natural for Gomez Bolanos because of his short stature.

"Nicknames are the most essential in life, more valuable than names," the actor said in 2011.

On Friday, Mexican President Enrique Pena Nieto tweeted, "Mexico has lost an icon whose work has transcended generations and borders."

Born Feb. 21, 1929, he trained as an engineer, but he was dedicated to writing from a young age.

Talented both on the screen and behind it, he achieved smashing success in 1970 with the creation of *Chespirito*, a television show that included segments about "The Crimson Grasshopper."

The goofy superhero dressed in a red bodysuit and hood with antennae that helped him detect danger miles away. He completed the outfit with yellow shorts and boots, giving him the look of a red bumblebee. The character, whose superpowers included shrinking to the size of a pill and dodging enemies, constantly repeated his signature phrases, "You didn't count on my cleverness" and "All the good people, follow me."

In 1971, Gomez Bolanos wrote and acted as *El Chavo del Ocho* (The Boy from the Eight), a reference to the channel that broadcast the show.

El Chavo proved so popular that reruns are still shown in multiple countries in Latin American and on Spanish language television in the United States. Many Latin Americans, living under dictatorships during the height of the show, found his underdog triumphs heroic in the face of authority.

In a 2005 interview with the Mexican newspaper *La Jornada*, Gomez Bolano said he always wrote with working class people in mind.

"There are writers who pour out words, concepts that sound really important but that basically say nothing," he said. "I always tried to be as concise as possible, all to try and reach everyone, but especially the simple people, those who needed to be reached more than anyone else."

He also delved successfully in theater for adults. In 1992 he produced, directed and acted in 11 and 12, the story of a man who loses his genitals in an accident and wants to impregnate his wife. The play set a record in Mexico, surpassing 3,200 performances.

Gomez Bolanos is survived by his second wife, actress Florinda Meza, as well as six children from his first marriage and 12 grandchildren.

Acclaimed Egyptian novelist Radwa Ashour dead at 68

CAIRO (AP) — Acclaimed Egyptian novelist and educator Radwa Ashour, who used her often deeply personal writing style to champion human rights issues, has died after a long battle with cancer. She was 68.

She chronicled her fight against cancer in her novel *Heavier than Radwa*, set against the turbulent days of Egypt's revolution. She died Sunday and her funeral was Monday.

Born in Cairo in 1946, Ashour's writing won multiple awards, including the Constantine Cavafy Prize for Literature in 2007 and the Owais Prize in 2011. She wrote more than fifteen books, the best-known of which is the *Granada* trilogy, which chronicles the rise and fall of Arab civilization in Spain.

"I sometimes refer to her as a 'woman of steel' because she seemed so indefatigable ... and it's hard for those of us who knew her to believe that anything could win when it took her on," said Barbara Romaine, a professor at

Villanova University who translated three of her books. She added that Ashour played an important role for "the advancement of women's presence in the literary world."

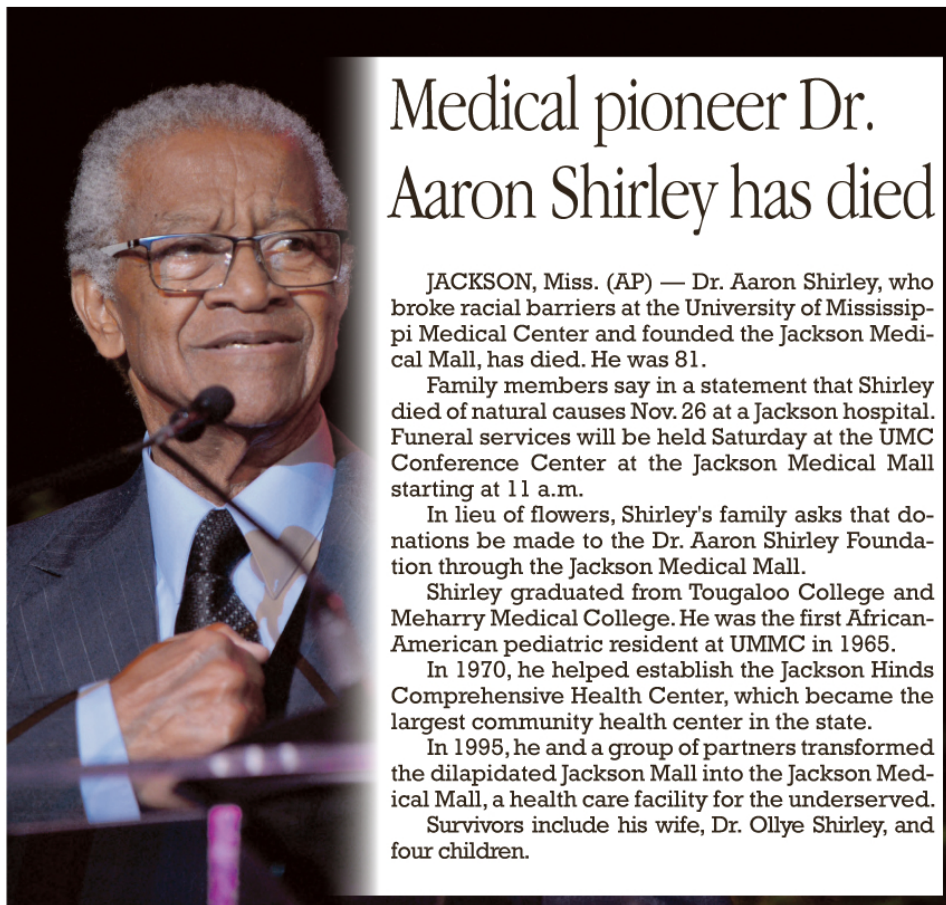
She was politically active her entire life, notably as a founding member of the March 9 movement calling for the independence of Egypt's universities.

"She was involved up to the very last moment. As long as she could walk, she went out to protests," said prominent novelist Ahdaf Soueif, a close friend.

Ashour saw her own writing as a way to "challenge the dominant discourse" and "conjure up the unaccounted for, marginalized and silenced areas of the past and the present."

"I write, the space becomes my own, and I am no longer an object acted upon but a subject acting in history," she said in a journal article.

She is survived by her husband, Palestinian poet Mourid Barghouti, and her son, poet Tamim Barghouti.



Medical pioneer Dr. Aaron Shirley has died

JACKSON, Miss. (AP) — Dr. Aaron Shirley, who broke racial barriers at the University of Mississippi Medical Center and founded the Jackson Medical Mall, has died. He was 81.

Family members say in a statement that Shirley died of natural causes Nov. 26 at a Jackson hospital. Funeral services will be held Saturday at the UMC Conference Center at the Jackson Medical Mall starting at 11 a.m.

In lieu of flowers, Shirley's family asks that donations be made to the Dr. Aaron Shirley Foundation through the Jackson Medical Mall.

Shirley graduated from Tougaloo College and Meharry Medical College. He was the first African-American pediatric resident at UMMC in 1965.

In 1970, he helped establish the Jackson Hinds Comprehensive Health Center, which became the largest community health center in the state.

In 1995, he and a group of partners transformed the dilapidated Jackson Mall into the Jackson Medical Mall, a health care facility for the underserved.

Survivors include his wife, Dr. Olye Shirley, and four children.

RANGE FUNERAL HOME



LOSSIE M. MCCLARIEN, 100, Homemaker, died November 30. Funeral 10 am Saturday at Macedonia Baptist Church Coconut Grove.

HALL-FERGUSON-HEWITT MORTUARY

FRANK JONES JR., 82, Landscaper, for FPL, died November 25. Funeral will be held 12 noon Saturday at Hall-Ferguson-Hewitt Chapel.

RICHARD LAW, 87, Retired Roofer, died November 27. Final Funeral Service will be held in Cordele, Georgia at William Funeral Home 407 W. 17th Avenue Cordele, GA 31015.

CONNIE MARCUS, 84, Auto Mechanic, died November 28. Funeral will be held 2 pm Saturday at Hall-Ferguson-Hewitt Chapel.

HADLEY DAVIS FUNERAL HOME - Miami Gardens

EDWARD L. BROWN, 48, Cargo Transporter, died November 25, in Atlanta, GA. Funeral be held 12 pm Saturday at St James Catholic Church.

OSCAR CARTER JR., died November 21, at North Shore Hospital. Funeral will be held 2 pm Saturday in the chapel.

ROSIE L. COLLINS, 70, Retired Office Administrator, died November 25, at Jackson North Hospital. Funeral will be held 11 am Saturday at Valley Grove Missionary Baptist Church.

ROSE GREEN, 50, Retired Manager, died November 29, at North Shore Hospital. Arrangements are incomplete.

VASQUEZ METAYER, 72, Business Owner, died November 21, at Broward General Hospital. Funeral will be held 9 am Saturday at Haitian Evangelical Baptist Church.

HAROLD NOTTAGE SR., 63, Retired Mechanic, died November 27, at Miami Jewish Nursing Home. Funeral will be held 10 am Saturday in the chapel.

THELMA TURNER, 60, died November 26, at Jackson Memorial Hospital. Arrangements are incomplete.

HADLEY DAVIS FUNERAL HOME - MLK

VERA J HENDRIX, 65, Teacher, died November 28 at Palmetto Hospital. Funeral will be held 10 am Saturday in the chapel.

JOHN DANIEL MORRIS, 78, Equipment Operator, died November 25, at Jackson Memorial. Funeral will be held 2 pm Saturday chapel.

BARBARA WALKER, 51, Store Manager, died November 29, at South Miami Hospital. Funeral will be held 2 pm Saturday at Bible Baptist Church.

PAX FUNERAL HOMES - Broward

OCILIA ANESTAL, died November 18, in Fort Lauderdale, FL. Arrangements are incomplete.

EDMA B. BEAUBURUN, died November 25, in Fort Lauderdale, FL. Funeral will be held 9 am Saturday at St. Clement Catholic Church (Wilton Manors, Florida).

SILASSEL LOUIS, died November 24, in Plantation, FL. Funeral will be held Sunday at Sinai S.D.A. Church (Plantation, Florida).

WRIGHT & YOUNG FUNERAL HOME

CLAUDETTE BROWN, 61, PBX Operator, died November 18. Funeral will be held 11 am Saturday at Fulford United Methodist.

MARY DILLARD, 80, died November 24. Funeral will be held 2:30 pm Saturday in the chapel.

ATAVIA JONES, 37, Office Manager, died November 25. Funeral will be held 2 pm Saturday at Antioch M.B. Church of Miami Gardens.

SHIRLENE LASSITER, 61, Medical Coder, died November 26. Funeral will be held 1 pm Saturday in the chapel.

LOUISE ROBINSON, 58, Medical Assistant, died November 26. Funeral will be held 11 am Saturday in the chapel.

TOMMY WALKER, 53, Security Officer, died November 22. Funeral will be held 10 am Friday at New Shiloh M.B. Church.

JAMES C. BOYD FUNERAL HOME

OSCAR JEROME HALL SR., 71, died. Funeral will be held 10 am Saturday at James C. Boyd Funeral Home.

THELMA HATCHER, 87, died. Funeral will be held 1 pm Saturday at New Hope Baptist Church.

MANKER FUNERAL HOME

ROBERT TILLMAN, 85, Cab Driver, died December 1, at Arch Plaza Nursing Home. Funeral arrangements are incomplete.

JAMES DANDRIDGE, 84, Employee, for Miami-Dade Water & Sewer, died Nov. 29, at Jackson Memorial Hospital. Memorial service was held 6:30 pm Tuesday at Manker Memorial Chapel.

PATRICIA JEAN PERRY, 66, Bus Driver, died November 24, at North Shore Medical Center. Funeral will be held 11 am Saturday at Jordon Grove M.B. Church.

PAX VILLAS - Orlando

ELIE COLIN, died November 20, in Orlando, FL. Funeral will be held 10 am Saturday at Christ Sanctified Church - Orlando.

JOSEPH PYROL, died November 27, in Orlando, FL. Funeral will be held 11 am Friday at Pax Villa Funeral Homes, Chapel - Orlando.

JAY'S FUNERAL HOME

ABE PARTRIDGE JR., 50, Cook, died November 23. Funeral will be held 12 noon Saturday at Jay Johnson Chapel.

LOUISE PUGH, 69, Homemaker, died November 19. Funeral will be held 1 pm Saturday at Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church.

ROY MIZELL & KURTZ FUNERAL HOME

HELEN M. HAMM, 81, of Fort Lauderdale, died November 30. Funeral will be held 10 am Saturday at First Baptist Church Piney Grove.

KATHY KNIGHT, 52, of Hollywood, died November 30. Funeral will be held 11 am Saturday at Roy Mizell & Kurtz Worship Center.

HOMER MURRAY, 66, of Fort Lauderdale, died November 30. Funeral will be held 1:30 pm Saturday at Roy Mizell & Kurtz Worship Center.

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