

Dad is 90!

Reflection of Delis Negrón Jr., together with Olivia Negrón.

[Delis Negrón Jr. is the Poet's eldest son, born in 1929 when the poet was 28. Still called "Tato" by his brothers and sisters, he grew up working for his father's newspapers as delivery boy, linotypist, later reporter and actor in the Poet's radio plays. He was an officer-pilot in the Navy with four children of his own when his father died. He recalled to me that once when his father and a teenage friend were waiting for Tato, the friend (speaking Spanish) asked "Doctor Negrón" if Tato drives. Without a pause, the Poet answered, "Tato maneje, más su Papá no deje."]
-Olivia Negrón

He had a photographic memory. Anything he ever read he could recall verbatim. He was very kind and never belittled anyone. He gave me his bullfight

passes [press passes] because he couldn't stand the cruelty. He was very patient and tolerant and fair. He loved books and had total recall of anything he read. He was alcohol intolerant, and always said that a sip of wine would get him drunk, so he seldom indulged, but I could never get him to stop smoking. He made friends easily and never belittled anyone.

-Delis Negrón Jr.

[All of his children talk about his phenomenal memory. Tato told me the they tested him many times, asking, did you read this book? pulling a volume at random from the shelf. What is on page whatever, third paragraph? And he never got it wrong. Also for newspapers he read, same thing, by page and column. And he read FAST. They talk about him reading about as fast as he could turn the pages. The neighborhood all called him Doctor Negrón. The room that was his study in the little house on Durango Street was lined floor-to-ceiling with books in four languages, and had a desk, a leather sofa and an upright piano. It still smelled of tobacco smoke when I saw it 7 years after he died.]

-Olivia Negrón