

**In Loving Memory  
of**

***MICHAEL ZINZUN***

**Sunrise**

**February 14, 1949**

**Sunset**

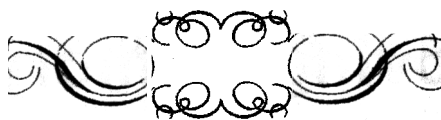
**July 9, 2006**



**Saturday, July 15, 2006**

**1:00 PM**

**Metropolitan Baptist Church  
2283 North Fair Oaks Avenue  
Altadena, California 91001**



## Obituary

Michael Zinzun was born February 14, 1949 in Chicago Illinois. He was the second child born to Michael and Jean Zinzun.

Michael migrated to Oakland, California in 1959 where he resided with his cousin Carmen Collins until his Mom and eight brothers and sisters arrived.

Michael attended Light House Full Gospel Church Pastored by Matthew A. Jones, where he received his spiritual foundation. Michael always respected and highly esteemed Elder Jones and his teachings.

Michael attended Lincoln elementary, McKinley Jr. High and finished High School at Blair High. Upon completing school, Michael set out to conquer the world. Michael had dreams and he knew at an early age that he was destined for greatness, born to lead, and organize.

Several years later Michael enrolled in LA Tech and upon graduating, he became a certified Auto Mechanic. Shortly thereafter, Michael opened his own Automotive shop located in Altadena, California where he enjoyed repairing every kind of car you could imagine. However, this was not enough for Mike, after being there at the shop, he began to befriend several of the young men in the neighborhood, and before you knew it they were hanging out in the shop learning how to repair cars. This went on for several years.

Michael began to hunger for more, so he closed shop and set out to research and study other areas of concern. He became an active member of the world renown Black Panther Party for Self Defense, he was an organizer of the Free Breakfast, Free clothing and Food Bank programs, which were eventually implemented nationwide. In 1972, he founded the Pasadena Information Center which provided the above referenced services as well as political and legal services. His free "Off the Roach" pest extermination program was very successful. Zinzun estimates that over 20,000 homes had been exterminated.

He founded the Los Angeles based Coalition Against Police Abuse, the Police Misconduct Lawyer Referral Service and the Southern Africa Support Committee. He traveled extensively around the globe, to such diverse countries as Namibia, Africa, Cuba, Brazil, and China and many of the European countries to oversee elections as part of a United Nations sanctioned and sponsored observer team. This official team included former President Jimmy Carter.

He attended a five country European speaking tour, his topic being "Gangs, Drugs and Police Abuse", in such diverse countries as Spain, Germany, Italy, England and the Netherlands. It was billed as a "Tour For Change".

Michael Zinzun hosted a live television talk show "Message from the Grass Roots" for three years.

Zinzun is survived by his wife Florence; two children and four stepchildren: Robert, Randy, Michael Jr., Kindra, Tony and Michele; his mother, Jean Ornelas of Fontana; Father in-law and Mother in-law James and Betty Berdley of Los Angeles; seven siblings, Linda Smith of Duarte, Mateo Ornelas of Chicago, Raquel Ornelas-Barlow of Atlanta, Juanita Ornelas-Edwards of Fontana, Juan Ornelas of Oklahoma City Carmen Ornelas-Crutchfield of West Covina and Antonio Ornelas of Atlanta and Rita Zinzun who preceded Michael in death. Michael also had nineteen grandchildren, a host of nieces and nephews that he loved dearly.



**ALL POWER TO THE PEOPLE**



# ALL POWER TO THE PEOPLE

I miss you Dad  
 I miss you so Dear  
 I swear on my life  
 I wish you were here  
 My heart is crushed  
 My happiness is gone  
 When you left,  
 You took it all;  
 Before my eyes I saw  
 My world fall  
 I Love You Daddy

Even before my father got involved in all the Community struggles, he made sure we had food, clothing and a whole lot of love. He was a great provider. We were poor and didn't even know it.

- Randy

My Dad taught us discipline respect and awareness of oneself. Being proud of who you are - Tony

Michael,  
 I have always looked to you for strength and support,  
 You were my  
 BIG brother who could make any wrong situation right.  
 I will forever hold you near and dear to my heart Mike  
 I love you - Juanita

I love you My Big brother, he will stay alive in my heart, he always came to my rescue - Carmen

## The Rose Beyond The Wall:

A rose once grew  
 where all could see,  
 Sheltered beside  
 A garden wall,  
 And, as the days  
 Passed swiftly by,  
 It spread its branches,  
 Straight and tall. . .

One day,  
 A beam of light shone through  
 A crevice that had opened  
 wide—  
 The rose bent gently  
 Toward its warmth  
 Then passed beyond  
 To the other side. . .

Now,  
 You who deeply feel its loss,  
 Be comforted-  
 The rose blooms there-  
 Its beauty even greater now,  
 Nurtured  
 By God's own loving care.

- Love Raquel

Michael, I'll miss you -  
 Love Linda

Love you Big  
 brother - Juan

Michael, I'll miss you always  
 - Tony



Father

My father knows the proper way  
The nation should be run;  
He tells us children every day  
Just what should now be done.

All public questions that arise,  
He settles on the spot;  
He waits not till the turmoil dies,  
But grabs it while it's hot.

It almost makes him sick to read  
The things law-makers say;  
My father just the man they need,  
He never goes astray.

In conversation father can  
Do many wondrous things;  
He's built upon a wiser plan  
Than presidents or kings.

He knows the ins and outs of each  
And every deep transaction;  
We look to him for theories,  
And look to him for action

**DADDY I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU!**

**YOUR DAUGHTER  
MICHELLE**

**Michael, much love - Marty**

Order of Service

Organ Prelude..... Soft Music

Processional

Officiating by .....Apostle Dorothy Evans

Scripture Readings..... Minister Henry Graham

Old Testament Isaiah 61:1-3

New Testament 1st Thess 4:13-18

Selection.....Jolynn Spencer

Poem.....Michelle Zinzun

Acknowledgements and Condolences.....Georgette Ornelas

Remarks.....Quincy Bearer

Tony Ornelas

Remarks ..... Limit remarks 2 minutes

Obituary..... Juanita Edwards

Slide Presentation..... Russell Hudspeth

Solo .....Frances Edwards

Eulogy.....Pastor Carlton Edwards of AZUSA World Ministries Pasadena, CA

Closing Prayer.....Pastor Carlton Edwards

Parting View

Recessional....."His Eye is on the Sparrow"



# Michael Zinzun, 57; Ex-Black Panther Challenged Southland Police Agencies

By JOCELYN Y. STEWART  
Times Staff Writer

Long after other revolutionaries of his day had retired or found less-confrontational ways of fighting the system, former Black Panther member Michael Zinzun was still on the front line, doing battle with police.

In frequent clashes — some on the streets, others in the courtroom — Zinzun challenged the practices of law enforcement agencies in Southern California.

Those battles won him the respect of some, the scorn of others, and led to changes in the Los Angeles Police Department. In 1986, Zinzun lost the sight in one eye in a confrontation with Pasadena police. He later won a \$1.2-million settlement.

"I'd rather lose an eye fighting against injustice than live as a quiet slave," he told a Times reporter in 1986. "I just can't see myself standing back."

Zinzun, who protested police brutality, worked with at-risk youth and was the host of a cable television program, died Sunday in his sleep at his home in Pasadena, said his wife, Florence. He was 57. The cause of death has not been determined.

"Michael became an icon [because of] an uncompromising commitment to doing this work, the courage to follow his convictions, and being unafraid to challenge power and authority — at times at dramatic personal costs," said Anthony Thigpenn, a longtime friend and president of Strategic Concepts In Organizing and Policy Education, a social justice organization in South Los Angeles that teaches residents to understand and participate in public policy formulation and decision-making. "There's a real question who will carry on that work now that Michael's gone."

Zinzun came of age in the highly politicized days of the late 1960s.

The beginning of his radicalization came when he was an auto mechanic, operating his own small repair shop be-



Los Angeles Times

## MICHAEL ZINZUN

*He was blinded in one eye in a confrontation with police. "I'd rather lose an eye fighting against injustice than live as a quiet slave," he said.*

hind a gas station in Altadena. A large oil company purchased the station and evicted Zinzun, putting an end to his entrepreneurial endeavor.

In 1970, he joined the Black Panther Party, found it politically stifling, and left less than two years later. He later referred to his time in the party as "an educational experience," one that clearly influenced his life's path.

By the mid-1970s, there was "almost an epidemic of either shootings or beatings" of African Americans by police, said Thigpenn, who was director of campaign field operations for Antonio Villaraigosa during the 2005 L.A. mayoral race.

Zinzun was working on issues in Pasadena, Kwaku Duran in Long Beach and Thigpenn on a case in Pacoima. The three men came together in the Coalition Against Police Abuse, Thigpenn said.

When an allegation of abuse arose, coalition members would meet with the victim's family and the community and search for ways to achieve justice, Thigpenn said. The coalition also documented incidents of abuse and sometimes accompanied community members to the police stations to file complaints.

A key element of the organization's platform was the call for the creation of a civilian po-

lice review board in cities throughout Los Angeles County, a call that reached its height after the controversial 1979 police shooting of an African American woman, Eula Love, outside her home in South Los Angeles. The coalition collected thousands of signatures but failed to obtain enough support to place the issue on the ballot.

By the late 1970s, Zinzun's organization had attracted the attention of the Los Angeles Police Department's Public Disorder Intelligence Division, which infiltrated the group with undercover agents. The coalition joined with other organizations and sued the police. In the fallout surrounding the lawsuit, the LAPD disbanded the division. The coalition received part of a monetary settlement.

Sometimes, instead of observing and documenting police actions, Zinzun was in the middle of the fray.

In 1982 he was present when Pasadena police officers attempted to arrest a man for public drunkenness and another for allegedly striking a police officer. Police later arrested Zinzun, accusing him of making threats against five officers at the scene, an allegation he denied.

"I been around police long enough to know what you can

and can't say to the police," he told a Times reporter in 1982. The case was later dropped.

The 1986 incident, in which Zinzun lost his sight, began when he heard the shouts of a man being arrested by police. A crowd gathered and in the commotion that followed, police said Zinzun punched an officer.

He injured his eye, they said, when he fell while being chased by police. Zinzun denied striking an officer. He said that he was pushed down on the pavement and that officers had beaten him with a flashlight.

After Zinzun lost an election for a seat on what is now the Pasadena City Council, he successfully sued the city of Los Angeles and an assistant police chief for defamation. A lawyer for Zinzun argued that during the campaign the city and the assistant chief disseminated information in a way that wrongly suggested that Zinzun was the subject of a file in the Police Department's anti-terrorist division. A jury awarded Zinzun \$3.8 million, but in 1991 a judge overturned the award.

Interest in Zinzun's efforts to combat police abuse increased after the beating of Rodney King and the 1992 riots. Mainstream leaders were much more accessible to members of the coalition. "Before you couldn't even get them on the phone," he told The Times in 1992.

Zinzun was born Feb. 14, 1949, in Chicago and spent part of his childhood in the Cabrini-Green housing projects. His father died when he was 8, and his mother sent him to Pasadena to live with an aunt.

In addition to his wife, Florence, whom he married in 1982 after his divorce from his first wife, Zinzun is survived by his mother, four sisters, two brothers and six children and stepchildren.

Though he continued to work on police issues in recent months, Zinzun had turned his attention to the kitchen. He was enrolled in a Pasadena culinary school, studying to be a chef. "He just wanted to learn everything," his wife said.