

General Torres my grandfather

I have had many idols throughout my life, including Thurgood Marshall; however, I have admired my maternal grandfather, Juan Jos  Torres, the former President of Bolivia, the most. Although I have never met him, as he was assassinated in 1976, I have heard much of his determination, compassion, courage, and respect for human's rights, especially through the story of his political life.

Although he advocated for the drastic improvement of impoverished people's rights, my grandfather was not revolutionary. He was in fact, determined to improve these rights through a peaceful legal reform in order to prevent violent insurrection. After beginning his governmental career as a general in the Bolivian military, he was appointed to many Bolivian ambassadorial positions and became Minister of Labor and then Minister of Education. In these positions, he began to improve the conditions of miners, students, war veterans, and peasants. After going back to the military as Commander and Chief of the military, he became close to the President of Bolivia, Alfredo Ovando. As General Torres was advising him, Ovando began to create reforms for the impoverished. A right-wing faction of the military then created coup d'etat against Ovando who fled. Torres, however, backed up by the peasants and miner, resisted the revolution and became President. As President for the Democratic-Social Party, he respected the human rights of this violent right-wing military group and did not imprison them. In office, he continued to give more rights to the poor. He created a monthly salary for war veterans, raised the salary of the miners and peasants, and created more educational opportunities for students. Later, Torres was assassinated allegedly as one of Operation Condor's victims.

This story reflects my grandfather's fine qualities, which I admire greatly. His life is made very personal to me in the family recounting. I hope to emulate him in any way. (*) Sebastian Becker Torres es nieto del Presidente Torres, hijo de Emma Torres Obleas y Jhonatan Becker. Actualmente, con sus 15 a os, colabora al peri dico Daily News de la Escuela.....