

The person that I decided to represent on both my sugar skull and mask is my recently passed grandfather otherwise known as Martin Meketon. My grandfather was truly original. He had a razzle dazzle type of personality that really made him something special. My pop-pop was one of the first male licensed manicurist in the country so you can probably guess that he was a take the road less traveled kind of guy. Anyone who met him knew that the wrinkles on his face were from years of laughter and decades of smiling. He was a storyteller by trade which made it difficult trying to find a truthful family recollection from him because you never knew how much alteration or modification it had gone through over the years. Regardless, he was a great man in which I had the honor in knowing and he will always be apart of me as well as the people he touched around him.

I had a very solid relationship with my pop-pop and in my heart I still do and always will. When I was little, me and my family used to go over my mom-mom and pop-pops condo all the time. I learned how to swim in their pool, and I learned the true magic of the tooth fairy. Some funny backstory on the tooth fairy sentiment was that every time I lost a tooth, my pop-pop would leave a dollar in this little rinky dink butterfly box I made and painted for him along with a message from the tooth fairy. Because as he claimed, he and the tooth fairy were an item and apparently very good friends. So not only was I exposed to a world of magic and possibilities, but I ended up believing in the tooth-fairy until like fifth grade. Regardless, my childhood was definitely one full of laughter and love because of my pop-pop.

The reason I decided to create my sugar skull of my grandfather is because the extravagance of the day of the dead sounds just like my pop-pop. He had such a vibrant personality. I thought that he had the perfect character for such a flamboyant and lively holiday. I was originally going to have a nice solid colored skull with a little bit of subtle sparkle, maybe even a little design in marker, however once I started, I got thinking that the skull did not have to fully represent my pop-pop's entire personality, but instead an extension of himself and a way to honor his eccentric side.

My skull represents my pop-pop as someone who was "large and in charge," free spirited, and essentially, fabulous. To be honest, I don't know if I could really put into words, what my grandfather was like. I don't even think I could accurately create something that can truly capture the essence of my pop-pop. Sometimes in life there are just people you have to know to fully understand who they are and comprehending their spirit, my grandfather was one of those people.

Día de los Muertos has opened my eyes to celebrating the death of my loved ones by showing me that death doesn't have to be so gorish and full of sorrow, instead it can be full of joy and remembrance. Sometimes when I look at an old picture of my pop-pop I feel sad and tearful, however Día de los Muertos allows me to feel nostalgic but also gives me a certain amount of closure. Sometimes we don't always feel as though we were given enough time with the people we love. Celebrating their life sort of gives them away to be here in our memories and in our hearts. Their memory is always revived every year so that they are never forgotten. This holiday allows me to always keep my pop-pop's memory alive and well.

