



Papāli'i Fitisemanu

August 15, 1961 - April 10, 2026

Papāli'i Reupena Kupi Fitisemanu, a beloved husband, father, son, and brother, passed peacefully into eternal rest on April 10, 2026, after a courageous battle with illness. He is affectionately known as “Pena.” He was born in Vaivase, Samoa on August 15, 1961, to Tavita and Marina Fitisemanu.

Pena was a strong family man, who was hard-working, always helping others, and loved God. He has had many jobs from a young age, and this was the start of his strong work ethic and the integrity he believed in which carried over to every part of his life. He married Sonja Niumatalolo in April 25, 1981. They were blessed with two children, daughter Cori Lamala Fitisemanu and Reupena Talamesi Tiger Fitisemanu.

At the age of 22 he enlisted in the U.S Army where he went on to serve honorably and bravely for 9 years. He was assigned to an Armor unit where he held many leadership roles, one of which was a Tank Commander. He fought in Desert Shield and Desert Storm where after days and nights of firing on Iraq's war vehicles to protect himself and his comrades, lives were saved and he earned the Bronze Star medal. He attained other achievements and awards while in the military, but shortly after war, he chose not to reenlist and was honorably discharged from the U.S. Army.

He went on to successfully enter and graduate in the 116th Honolulu Police

Department Recruit class on March 17, 1993. He was awarded as the “Most Inspirational Recruit” from his graduating class. In 2015, after a long, successful, and hard-earned career in Law Enforcement he retired. That year his son Tiger was going to college at the University of Utah and play football for the Utes. His daughter Cori started working in Utah. So on to the next chapter, Pena and Sonja moved to Utah. They were ready for this new cold weather living. Not really new to them because while in the Army, they were stationed in Ft. Knox, Kentucky, he served a one-year hardship tour in South Korea, Ft. Polk, Louisiana, Giessen West Germany, and Ft. Irwin, California.

Of course, Pena did not stay retired for long. He was hired by the State of Utah Attorney General’s office in the Commerce department for DOPL as an Investigator. After a year, circumstances warranted that Pena and Sonja move back to Hawaii for more than two years to help Sonja’s aging father. Pena went to work for the Honolulu, Hawaii Attorney General’s office in Medicaid Fraud. After they returned to Utah, he returned to work for DOPL. Sadly, due to illness, Pena decided to retire from the State of Utah summer of 2024. Retirement was a lot of sleeping, watching his favorite Samurai movies and Samoan news, cruising in the car with Sonja, and doctor’s appointments. When they could, they traveled. In their younger years they traveled through Europe, the U.S., and the Pacific especially to Samoa. His dream was to build a little home in Samoa and live there part of year, especially during the Utah winters.

As a devoted member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, he faithfully served the Lord and those around him. He served with love and humility as a counselor in the bishopric under three bishops, on the high council under three stake presidents, as Young Men president on multiple occasions, and as a scout leader and Cubmaster.

He volunteered and only used work leave to chaperone all of his son’s school

field trips from kindergarten to the 6th grade. Amazingly, he made time to be a very hands-on father to his children, nieces, and nephews. He was always teaching something about life. Otherwise, he loved to laugh, tease, and have fun. Luckily for his family, he was a very talented cook.

Pena was proud of his Samoan heritage and held the matai title of Papāli'i.

Sadly, on April 10, 2026, Pena went on to his final calling with our Lord, Jesus Christ, in heaven. He fought his greatest battle with his health in his senior years and never gave up. He truly was his wife's brave warrior. He never gave up the fight, but his physical body was tired. We are sure he is busy in heaven.

It has been said heaven has gained another angel, in Pena's case and to all who knew him, "heaven has called back a true Warrior." He was one of a kind. Everything he stood for and worked so hard for was for love, honor, humility, family, and service to others. Those who knew him best especially his wife Sonja, knew she was treated as his Queen. He served his country, state, God, friends, and family. We miss him dearly. Rest in heavenly peace now until we meet again.

Pena's Motto: "I have loved well, served mightily, and lived blessed."

Pena is survived by his wife Sonja Fualosa Niumatalolo Fitisemanu, daughter Cori Lamala Fitisemanu, son Reupena Talamesi Tiger Fitisemanu; hanai grandchildren Lj Christian Fuatogi and Faamoa Pesa; and siblings Talamesi, Marina Tilo, Velma Albert, Rachel Acfalle, Martha Semu, Amilale, Ainslie Ah Kam, and Tauati Taulogo.

He was preceded in death by his father Tavita Fitisemanu, mother Marina Lina

Fruean Fitisemanu, older sister Ruta burgess, and older brother Alapati Fitisemanu.

His service information for April 25, 2026, which is also Pena and Sonja's 45th wedding anniversary, is as follows:

Funeral Service

Saturday, April 25, 2026

At Salt Lake Hunter Stake Center

3737 S 5600 W

West Valley City, Utah 84120

9:00 – 11:30 a.m. Family Service

12:00 – 1:00 p.m. Bishop's Service

Burial to Follow at: Memorial Redwood Mortuary

6500 S Redwood Road

West Jordan, Utah 84123

We extend our heartfelt thank-you to all our families and friends who have come together with us to celebrate the life of our beloved Pena. Some have traveled from far. Thank-you to the hard-working family and friends behind the scenes whether it was set-up, decorating, cooking, and clean-up. Your love for Pena has not gone unnoticed. He was so deserving of this honor. May the good Lord bless each and every one of you. We will remember, love, and appreciate you always. Love Sonja, Cori, and Tiger(Sarah).

Cemetery Details

Memorial Redwood Cemetery

6500 South Redwood Rd.
West Jordan, UT 84123

Previous Events

Family Service

APR 25. 9:00 AM - 11:30 AM (MT)

Hunter LDS Stake Center
3737 S 5600 W
West Valley City, UT 84120

Bishops Service

APR 25. 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM (MT)

Hunter LDS Stake Center
3737 S 5600 W
West Valley City, UT 84120

Graveside Service

APR 25. 2:00 PM - 3:00 PM (MT)

Memorial Redwood Cemetery
6500 South Redwood Rd.
West Jordan, UT 84123

Tribute Wall

KL

“ *What a great tribute. I only worked briefly with Pena, but he was so kind and easy to get along with. I know he's busy in the next life, keeping the faith. Love to all his friends and family at this sad time.*

Kim Lesh - May 07 at 02:55 PM

JM

“ *While we mourn his absence here, we find comfort knowing he has returned to a heavenly embrace.*

Jenna Mayne - May 07 at 10:29 AM

DO

“ *Pena you were a great man!! Glad to have known you brother. RIP!!!*

Dave Olsen - May 04 at 06:17 PM