



**Amado
Paredes Cárdenas
(1906 - 2000)**

Chiloé - The Beginnings

Amado Paredes was born on April 1, 1906, to Amador Paredes and Teresa Cárdenas. His birthplace was Achao on the island of Chiloé, where the southern extreme of the country crumbles into thousands of islands and fjords.

He was the third of seven siblings (the others being Albina, Ana Celia, Ricardo, Teresa, Delfina and Rosario), all of whom received an impeccable upbringing. This was to prove a crucial factor in Amado's life, and he remained firm in the conviction that a good environment and a stable home are the essential foundations of a healthy and fulfilling life.

It is doubtless his mother, Teresa Cárdenas, who had the most profound influence on his life. His love and gratitude for her, never faltered.

According to Amado, his parents started from scratch in Chiloé. They owned a small parcel of land where they grew potatoes and wheat. But his father did not stay in agriculture long, and for health reasons he moved to Antofagasta. Here, the mine in Chuquicamata had recently started up and Amador found success in the construction business while the family lived in Achao. The family later returned to the south, where Amador built a handsome, Germanic - style house in Puerto Montt. It earned much admiration. "It was called the glass house," recalls Amado with pride, noting that the construction earned the family "prestige."

Valdivia - Schoolteacher

It was these remote lands, scoured by the weather's worst inclemency, that instilled in Amado Paredes a hardy resilience and love of a challenge.

He started out life as a schoolteacher, later trying his hand at half a dozen other careers before finding success in the metallurgy industry. In 1920, aged 14, he was sent to the Valdivia Teacher Training College at the insistence of his mother. He studied there for five years, during which time he learnt German - another skill which was to prove telling later in life.

A talented and outstanding pupil, he completed his education aged 20, now a qualified primary

schoolteacher. He never forgot his mother's resolve to bring him up in an impeccable and devout family environment and her determination to send him to teacher training college in Valdivia.

A voracious reader and poetry lover, Amado is fêted as Valdivia's own "Poet Laureate".

In 1924, as his studies drew to an end, Amado undertook his military service with the Llanquihue regiment. In full military dress, he graduated in 1925 as a schoolteacher in Valdivia, going on to teach in the Curaco de Vélez School. He carried out his duties with distinction in 1927 in the Achao School and in 1928 in the Puerto Varas School.

Constitución - Entrepreneur

After arriving at the Constitución School in 1923, he initiated the city's first evening classes. It was in the same city he married Marta Gaete Larenas and had four children: Mario, Fernando, Jaime and Carlos. Shortly after marrying he left teaching for the construction and timber industry.

For seven years he worked as a professional lumberjack before deciding to follow in his father's footsteps due to his success at the time. "I realized this was the way to make money," he chuckles.

He left for Constitución and entered the construction business, drawing on the knowledge he had acquired "watching and learning" his father. "I put up some very fine buildings there," he relates with due humility, remarking as an aside that in Santiago there are entire districts that he built.

At the same time, together with his friend and colleague Eduardo Martín, he went into the timber business. Just like the construction industry, it proved to be highly profitable.

New Directions

After his first wife died in 1957, Amado married Raquel Legrand Saavedra. Together they had two sons: Alvaro and Javier. The seventh child born to the family was Alejandro González Legrand, better known as the entertainer "Coco Legrand."

His life took a new course in 1967 when he left the construction business and went into industry, setting up Metalpar with his sons Jaime, Mario and Fernando. As destiny decrees, one simple conversation with a brother-in-law who ran a small bus fleet in Puerto Montt led to his founding the Metalpar Coachwork firm.

Amado recalls, "I went to the Banco del Estado and I told the manager I was changing my line of business. He advised me against it, told me it was a waste of money, that I already had five factories. But I said to him "wait and see," and I ignored his advice."

Perhaps someone else would have rested easy with the economic stability afforded him by his company, but not Amado Paredes.



Torreón de Paredes

In 1979, aged 73, he founded Viñedos Torreón de Paredes S.A., a winery with 150 hectares of vineyards in and around Rengo (Region IV). Today, the winery exports to over 15 countries. His sons Alvaro and Javier worked hand in hand with Amado at the winery, following his example and now running the business.

The fact that the winery was founded during the wine industry's worst ever economic crisis proved to its immeasurable profit. Whilst others grubbed up their vines to plant kiwis, Amado insisted on planting vitis vinifera. He also restored the old, late-18th century colonial tower that has now become the winery's trademark.



Distinctions

In 1984 he received the "Distinguished Services to the Nation" decoration from the then President of the Republic, Augusto Pinochet Ugarte. This was largely to honor his philanthropic work in the island of Quinchao in Chiloé, where he built and donated the first Agriculture and Fishing College to the region. The school was named after his mother, Teresa Cárdenas de Paredes.

In addition to this celebrated decoration, Don Amado Paredes Cárdenas was also named "Illustrious Son" of Achao and Consituición by mayoral authority in recognition of services rendered to the education and development of these towns.

On 25th August 2000 the Rengo Municipal Council voted unanimously to award him the title of "Illustrious Son" of the town. The award acknowledged both his business achievements, having founded the winery Torreón de Paredes in the area, and also his philanthropic activities, given that the entire school bus fleet was donated by Metalpar.



"Pope mobile"

Another of his inspired ideas was the conception of the Chilean "Pope mobile." As president of Metalpar he commissioned the construction of the first Chilean Pope car in preparation for Pope John Paul II's visit to Chile in 1986, and donated the automobile to the Chilean government. Today the "Pope mobile," designed and created by Amado Paredes, sits in the museum that commemorates the Pope's visit.



The Farewell...

On 21st December 2000, surrounded by his wife Raquel Legrand and his children, Amado passed away at the age of 94 in his home in Santiago.

