

Hispanic artist killed in plane crash

Man came to Valley in 1991, battled homelessness

By BRYAN WELLS
TRIBUNE

One of the victims in a Monday plane crash near Mesa was a man who pulled himself from homelessness and alcoholism to become a painter who was recently honored in an East Valley monthly Hispanic magazine.



Marco Antonio Galaviz, 40, died

along with his stepson, John David Matlock, in the 9 a.m. crash near Falcon Field Municipal Airport, said Yoli Hernandez, who publishes the free magazine *Barrionozona* with her husband from their Apache Junction home.

Authorities have not identified the victims, but Hernandez said that Galaviz's wife, Sheryl, who is Matlock's mother, confirmed the deaths Tuesday.

Galaviz's art, depicting traditional Mexican figures similar to the work of famed Mexican painter Diego Rivera, was recently featured on the cover of the January *Barrionozona*, along with an article by Galaviz with the headline "Rising from the Ashes."

Hernandez described Galaviz as shy and humble.

"He just had wonderful talent," Hernandez said. "He painted just humble people, working-class people."



ON THE COVER: This artwork by Marco Antonio Galaviz was on the cover of *Barrionozona*, an East Valley Hispanic magazine.

Matlock was the pilot of the 1942 Stearman Biplane, which he had recently purchased and repaired to working condition, said Michael Braegger, a Gilbert dentist and pilot who shared a hangar with Matlock at Falcon Field.

Braegger said he remembered Galaviz sitting in the front seat of the World War II-era biplane as he spoke to Matlock in the rear pilot seat.

"I told him to have a good

flight," Braegger said, recalling that he heard the plane take off minutes later.

Another pilot saw the wreckage from the crash about seven miles from the airport, near state Route 87 and the Fort McDowell Rodeo Grounds, authorities said Monday.

A Federal Aviation Administration official on Tuesday said the crash is still under investigation and its cause is

unknown.

The National Transportation Safety Board will also investigate.

Galaviz's wife declined to talk to reporters Tuesday. Family members on Tuesday were discussing funeral plans, which could include cremation, Hernandez said.

Hernandez said she believed Galaviz and his wife most recently lived in Cave Creek. Matlock was from Mesa.

According to Galaviz's article in *Barrionozona*, he came to the Valley in 1991 from his hometown, Valle del Mayo, Chinotahueca, in Sonora, Mexico. When he first came to the United States, Galaviz spoke no English and had no job or immigration documents.

"I was a tramp without a trade or a benefit, a worm of society, lost in the vice of alcohol and with no sense and direction in life," he wrote.

Living in the streets, Galaviz visited shelters for food and sometimes slept at flophouses near Second Avenue and Fillmore Street in downtown Phoenix, which has since been renovated into condominiums that also exhibit some of Galaviz's paintings.

There, Galaviz said he met the woman he would later marry, and who helped him turn his life around.

Following a passion for painting, Galaviz swore off alcohol, enrolled in art programs at Paradise Valley Community College in Phoenix, and worked odd jobs around Scottsdale before building prominence as an artist.

"I can say that just as the Phoenix bird rises again from its own ashes, I thus rose again here in Phoenix, as both human being and artist," Galaviz wrote.