

SHOWBIZ & STYLE

JOURNAL

Rapper Francis Magalona passes away

MANILA—Rapper-TV host Francis Magalona died Friday at the Medical City in Pasig City, his co-hosts at the GMA Network's noontime show *Eat Bulaga* said. He was 44.

by GERRY PLAZA
Inquirer.net

Magalona succumbed to multiple organ failure "secondary to severe sepsis and secondary to pneumonia," according to a doctor who was not authorized to talk to media.

He passed away at 12 noon, said Philippine Daily Inquirer sources. The acclaimed rapper-musician was rushed to the Medical City on Thursday night, Inquirer sources said. He was "intubated" upon admission and placed in the Intensive Care Unit at 3am Friday.

He was described as "toxic" during the early hours of Friday, the Inquirer sources said.

Doctors still managed to administer chemotherapy on Magalona. He expired before a bone marrow transplant could be scheduled, they said.

Magalona had been undergoing several chemotherapy sessions since he was diagnosed with leukemia in August last year but was too weak to fight the infection, sources said.

Magalona is the son of popular 1950s movie tandem Pancho Magalona and Tita Duran.

"I don't want a media circus. I want privacy with my family," Francis said in a phone interview with the Philippine Daily Inquirer, after reports of his illness broke out.

"What I'd rather talk about is how we can solicit blood donations to replace the supply that I have consumed in the hospital," said Magalona, the father of eight children.

Francis' wife, Pia Arroyo-Magalona, said her husband started exhibiting symptoms in March this year. "It was very gradual, hindi siya biglaang lumabas lit didn't manifest right away."

Magalona was supposed to perform *Superprox* with the Eraserheads in the band's reunion concert, *The Final Set* at the SM Mall of Asia grounds in Pasay City on Saturday.

He had been in collaboration with Eraserheads and Pupil frontman Ely Buendia for an album to be released this year.

Telecommunications giant PLDT also scheduled in

April a golf tournament fund-raiser for Magalona.

Magalona is survived by his wife Pia, and children Maxene, Saab, Unna, Nicolo, Francis Jr., Elmo, Arkin, and Clara.

Magalona started his career as a break dancer in the early 1980s before appearing in several movies, including a lead role in Viva Films *Bagets 2*. He then worked as a disc jockey for the defunct radio station DMZ in the late 80s and then ventured into TV hosting, as a regular of the noontime show *Eat...Bulaga!* and a VJ for *MTV Asia*. He was also a judge in *Philippine Idol* the original local franchise of the international Fremantle reality singing talent search.

At the same time, he took the musical route as the well-known rapper-songwriter, with his ground breaking hit *Mga Kababayan Ko* in his debut 1990 album *Yo* that also spawned the hit ballad *Cold Summer Nights*. Several albums followed, *Rap is FrancisM*, *Meron Akong Ano?*, and *Freeman* that further proved his mastery of the genre.

Magalona's remains lie in state at the Christ the King church in Greenmeadows, Quezon City. According to wife Pia, Magalona's wake will be open to the public starting at 6am, Saturday. (With Pocholo Concepcion and Marinel Cruz)



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