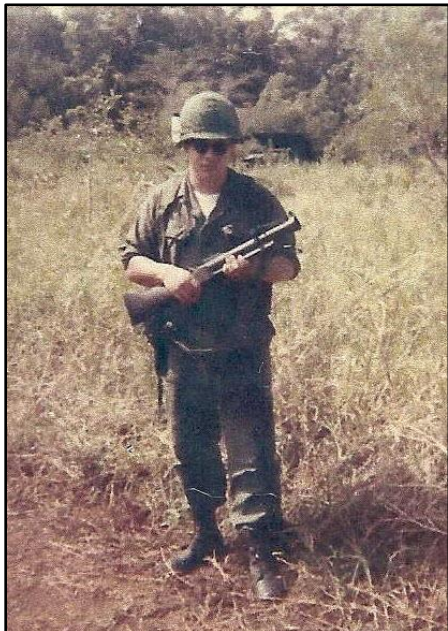


Jose Miguel Talavera-Toso III

Veteran, Advocate, and Career Census Bureau Employee

The U.S. Census Bureau continually strives to ensure an accurate count of the people of the United States. For this reason, it has always embraced the hiring of a diverse workforce representative of the local communities. In the middle of the 19th century, the United States expanded west into areas formerly governed by Spain and Mexico. Since many of the citizens and local officials only spoke Spanish, the Census Office quickly realized that it needed to employ workers fluent in the language. The establishment of a permanent Census Bureau in 1903 and increased immigration from the Caribbean, Central and South America expanded the need for Spanish-speaking employees both in the field and at headquarters.



Jose in Vietnam.

Courtesy of the Talavera family.

Jose Miquel Talavera-Toso III was born in Lima, Peru, on April 27, 1948, to Miguel Eusebio Talavera Reinaldi, a Peruvian military officer, and Diana Leonor Toso-O'Connor. Following his parents' divorce, Jose moved to the United States as a teenager with his mother. As the Vietnam war began to escalate in the 1960s, Jose enlisted in the United States Army at the age of 17. Jose would end up serving three tours in Vietnam, where he served in the infantry and as an interpreter. He received multiple Purple Hearts for wounds sustained in combat. In addition, he was awarded the Bronze Star for Valor, along with many other decorations, prior to receiving his honorable discharge in 1972.

Following the completion of his military service, Jose returned to the Maryland suburbs, where his family lived outside of Washington, DC. His first job after the military was at the White House as part of President Richard Nixon's Cabinet Committee on Opportunities for Spanish-speaking People. He then began working with the Census Bureau, headquartered in Suitland, MD, as a GS-2 messenger. Then Jose trained as a computer programmer and worked as a clerk in the Associate Directorate for Demographic Programs. He also taught programming to Latin American students sent to the Census Bureau from their home countries. Jose quickly worked his way up the census ranks and by 1980, he had earned a position in the Field Division as head of the District Office in the East Bronx.



Jose outside of his District Office, 1980.

Courtesy of the Talavera family.

This census also will try harder than ever not to miss anybody. On March 20-21, during a 24-hour period known as "S" Night, enumerators will visit shelters, soup kitchens, storefront churches and other organizations frequented by homeless people.

A second operation, "T" Night, will take place here to identify and survey transients — primarily people who move around to different hotels and motels, like salesmen, Staimer said.

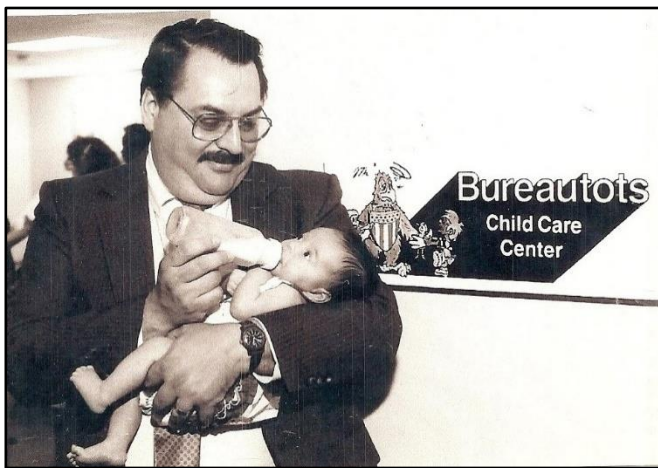
This census also marks the first time that all district offices will have computers, reducing the likelihood that one homeless person could visit two different shelters on "S" Night and be counted twice. As recently as 1980, said Jose Talavera-Toso III, chief census recruiter for the five Northern Jersey district offices, all census data collected here had to be sent to the regional office in Philadelphia, where they were computerized.

"It was all done on paper, and the rate of human error was high," said Talavera-Toso. Now, with computers in the Mountainside office, data from completed census forms can be entered almost as soon as they are received.

The Courier-News (Bridgewater, NJ), February 6, 1990.

As the manager for the East Bronx District Office, Jose's primary focus was identifying all households and increasing the mail-in response rate. Despite working out of Census Bureau Headquarters in Suitland, Jose knew that community involvement and partnership were essential to achieving higher response rates in the Bronx. Jose also knew that many households in the area had additional tenants that were often not identified in mailing lists—which he solved by sliding census forms under doors that did not have mailboxes, but looked as if they housed separate families. In addition to hiring staff that knew the area, he also worked closely with community organizations and achieved an 80 percent mail-in response rate—significantly higher than the 73.8 percent mail-in return rate for all of New York. This high response rate meant that his enumerating staff of 800 had to visit only 9,700 households in order to get a complete count.

Jose continued advancing through the Field Division. He worked in several positions in New Jersey until he became chief of recruiting in northern New Jersey for the 1990 Census. In addition to problems with mail delivery of census forms and reduced funding, Jose also worked to enumerate



Jose and his daughter at the childcare center he helped start.
Courtesy of the Talavera family.

hard-to-count populations, which he felt strongly about. These not only included members of various minorities, he helped by boosting opportunities within the Census Bureau and ensuring accurate representation in census data, but also homeless and transient people. Jose felt especially drawn to this group. Following the Vietnam War and the negative backlash against the soldiers, Marines, sailors, and airmen who fought in the war, the homeless population swelled with former service members. Jose realized that in order to provide services for homeless veterans, organizations needed to know how many there were and where they stayed.

In addition to his work in the field and his work with computers, Jose also contributed to the betterment of the Census Bureau by helping his fellow employees. He served in the American Federation of Government Employees, the largest union responsible for protecting the rights of workers in the federal government, and helped establish a childcare center at Census Bureau Headquarters in Suitland. In 1985, he also received an award for his contributions to the Equal Employment Opportunities Office.

After several decades with the Census Bureau, Jose retired to New Jersey, although he did volunteer for the 2000 Census and fulfill his dream of working in three decennial censuses. In the process, he discovered dozens of previously unreported address in his hometown of Riverton, NJ.

He continued contributing to his community, helping disabled and homeless veterans, and participating in local politics. In addition to his passion for helping others, Jose also enjoyed collecting stamps. Jose passed away on December 6, 2013, survived by his wife of 40 years and their three children. The Census Bureau is thankful for Jose's contributions, and for the contributions of all the members of our diverse workforce throughout the years.

Jersey City Picked for Census Test

JERSEY CITY (UPI) — Postal workers Thursday delivered a census questionnaire to each of the nearly 89,000 residences in Jersey City.

The federal census bureau selected Jersey City and Tampa, Florida for a test census in preparation for the 1990 nationwide census.

Postal workers geared up Wednesday for the extra heavy mail delivery by putting the census form into the mail slots in the post office that correspond with each home in Jersey City.

Census Bureau official Jose Talavera-Toso said the test census will help the bureau check its procedures and enable Jersey City to assess its housing stock.

"Jersey City is going through a tremendous gentrification period," Talavera-Toso said. For that reason, the city is interested in finding out which homes are occupied, which houses are being reconstructed and which buildings are vacant.

Residents are asked to mail in

the completed census forms on Sunday. A census form will be delivered Thursday to every address in the city and locations for which no form is returned will be checked by census officials.

As in 1980, all households will get a short census form and one of every six, chosen on a random basis, will get a longer form with more detailed questions.

In 1980, Jersey City had a population of 223,500 people. The Census estimated in 1982 that Jersey City had lost .3 percent.

The Millville Daily (Millville, NJ), March 21, 1985.



The Census Bureau presented its 1985 Equal Employment Opportunity awards to four employees who have made significant contributions and/or performed in an outstanding manner in the area of EEO in the past year. Awardees (left to right), Genora Birdsong, data preparation division; Jose Talavera-Toso, field division; C. Kemble Worley, field division; and Kirk Wolter, statistical research division. Center, John G. Keane, Census director presented the awards.

Jose, second from left, receiving an award at the Census Bureau, 1985.

Commerce People, November 1985.