



## **DON JULIO BARREDA**

**1919 – 2006**

*Alonso Burgos of Grupo Inca, Peru, marks the passing of an alpaca breeder whose influence will continue to be felt throughout the world for many years to come.*

It must have been around 1988 or 1989 when we bought some 30 Huacayo males from Don Julio Barrera's farm, Accoyo. At that time most of the Southern Andean region of Peru was under the siege of "The Shining Path", a terrorist movement that caused thousands of deaths in the country over a 12-year period.

It was not safe in those years to travel to the highlands, and Accoyo was past the most dangerous areas. That meant that one could not be sure to come back home if a trip had to be taken to the vicinity of Accoyo. That was perhaps the reason why Don Julio came to us, after the selection of those thirty males had been completed (at that time Don Julio would allow us to select freely from his whole herd) and made us a bizarre proposition: He offered us the entire Accoyo herd, around 2,500 animals, for a price of US\$ 200.00 a head!

Of course, we did not accept. There was no way for anybody to travel frequently to the area without running a great risk. So we took our 30 animals and brought them to a closer, safer area where we could run our breeding program. So we thought. But destiny had some other plans for both of us. A few years later the little known Sabancaya volcano, at whose foot hills our Sallalli farm and its 30 Accoyo males thrived, erupted furiously and ruined every inch of pasture in many, many miles around. At that same time, the terrorist movement ended, exportation of Alpacas was legalized and the Americans came to Peru to take the first Alpacas from Don Julio to the US and start the legend of Accoyo.

The rest is common history. The stubborn Alpaca breeder who had tenaciously created a breed of Alpacas with notorious characteristics for over 45 years became recognized and praised around the world. Everywhere, except in his own country. In Peru Don Julio was not as popular as he was abroad, and the Accoyo name is just one more of many high Andean remote locations.

Don Julio was a man of firm ideas and vast knowledge when it came to talk about Alpacas. That is why many of his fellow Alpaca breeders, university professors and government bureaucrats in Peru did not like him. He spoke always openly and directly about his breeding program and I never heard him accepting anybody else's contrary opinion. Very early in his Alpaca breeding career he had decided the course of action and he never changed it. His main concern had always been the creation of a dense, heavy and very productive animal. In doing so, he always emphasized the fact that in over 40 years he had never introduced foreign blood to his herd, a fact that was criticized by many and praised by others.

Don Julio became rich and famous at the end of his life. Nevertheless, his lifestyle and his firm ideas never changed a bit. His legacy will stay around the world and in his own country where we wish he could some day receive the recognition he deserves. His herd is one of Peru's many precious treasures and we only hope it remains as such for the generations to come.