



Edwin Cruz

June 6, 1949 - January 26, 2026

In Loving Memory of Edwin Manuel “Eddie” Cruz

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Edwin Manuel Cruz—known to most of us as Papa, Eddie, Mr. Edwin, or Coach—was the kind

of man who filled a room without ever trying too hard. A man of strong character, always carried

charisma in his walk and had a rare way of making people feel seen, valued, and protected. On

January 26, 2026, at the age of 76, Edwin was received by our Lord and Savior. But long before

that day, he had already left an unforgettable mark on his family, his friends, and everyone

fortunate enough to know his laugh, his loyalty, and his big heart.

Edwin was born on June 6, 1949, in Brooklyn, New York, to Herminio Cruz Rivera and Analidia

Cruz Vélez. He grew up surrounded by family, especially alongside his siblings Herman Cruz

and Evelyn Cruz whom he was always very protective of. Brooklyn shaped his humor, his grit,

his storytelling, and his personality. His first job was at a drugstore on Cooper Street in

Brooklyn, working alongside his brother. Like many young boys, he was full of

personality. He

later attended an aviation trade school, showing early on his desire to learn a skill and build a future.

At just 18 years old, Edwin enlisted in the United States Army during the Vietnam War. His

older brother, Herman, did not agree with the decision. However, out of deep love and loyalty,

Herman ultimately enlisted as well, determined that his younger brother Edwin would not face

such a journey alone. He traveled the world but spent most of his time in the service stationed in

Germany where he made many friends and had so many amazing stories to tell.

After his military service, Edwin got married for the first time at the young age of 25 and

welcomed his first daughter Eileen who she saw as her hero, protector and guide, a father whose

love was unmistakable. He showed a perfect balance of being a strict father figure but also

loving, tender, and apologetic when needed. This balance defined him. He held various jobs and

position through these years but was most proud of working for UPS in New York City for many

years. There he made some of his lifelong best friendships.

Life brought change and he was always willing to face them. When Eileen moved to North

Carolina at 13, Edwin later decided to relocate to Humacao, Puerto Rico and start a new chapter

of life and family. There he met his late wife, Milagros (Spanish for Miracle) and her 3 year old

daughter Erika, and fell in love with her. Together, they chose to marry and begin building a life and family rooted in love. They were blessed with two more children, Edwin and Eric, to whom they dedicated themselves completely to make sure they grew up with strong morals, character, and family values.

During this time, our heavenly Father was introduced to this family which began their journey guided by faith. Here they faithfully served God and devoted themselves wholeheartedly to the Lord, finding purpose, strength, and peace in their shared devotion. Together, he and his wife founded the Christian Basketball League in Puerto Rico (Liga de Baloncesto Cristiana), a ministry created with a powerful purpose: to reach underprivileged youth through sports while teaching them about Jesus and faith. Through this league, they sought to guide young people toward positive paths, encouraging them to focus on education, family, strong values, and a life grounded in faith in Christ. Their dedication touched countless lives and left a lasting legacy within the community.

Later, he and his wife Milagros made the difficult decision to move to Ocala, leaving behind their family and friends in search of a better life and greater opportunities for their son, Edwin. It was a sacrifice made out of love, guided by hope for the future and devotion to their family. In

their new home, they built more lasting friendships and shared countless amazing experiences.

The final years of Edwin's life were marked by hardship, as illness and medical challenges made daily life increasingly difficult. Yet through it all, he remained strong and resilient, overcoming more than many could imagine. With the unwavering love and support of his wife and family, he faced each day with courage, perseverance, and dignity. He was carried by the love of his wife and family, until the unexpected the loss of his wife, just 2 months ago, which brought a profound change to his final days. Her absence during the last months of his life brought deep sorrow and an emptiness that could never be filled. His family remained faithfully by his side, caring for him with devotion without fail, providing constant care and support until his final breath. He passed peacefully, surrounded by the people who loved him deeply.

Edwin's life was a testament to faith, love, sacrifice, and devotion to his family. His legacy will live on through the lives he touched, the values he thought, and the love he gave so freely.

Though he leaves a great void, his memory will remain forever in our hearts. We take comfort in knowing he now rests in God's eternal peace.

Previous Events

Funeral Service

JAN 31. 3:00 PM - 6:00 PM (ET)

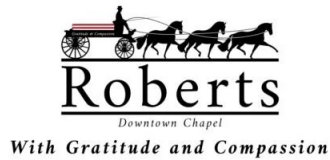
Roberts of Ocala East Chapel
2739 SE Maricamp Rd.
Ocala, FL 34471
(352) 732-9944

Military honors will be performed by the Marion County Memorial Honor Guard

Tribute Wall



“ *Roberts of Ocala Funerals and Cremations created a Webcast in memory of Edwin Cruz*



Roberts of Ocala Funerals and Cremations - January 30 at 11:14 AM

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“ *Ivette Gomez purchased the Sentiments of Serenity Spray for the family of Edwin Cruz.*



Ivette Gomez - January 31 at 07:18 AM