



Ray Rivera Santini

August 31, 1940 - December 2, 2025

Jose Ramon “Ray” Rivera, 85, of Ocala, Florida, passed away peacefully on December 2, 2025.

Ray was born in Orocovis, Puerto Rico, on August 31, 1940, to Mariano Rivera Santini and Amalia Rivera Alvarado. The next-to-youngest in a large and lively family, Ray grew up surrounded by the warmth, humor, and deep cultural roots that shaped him throughout his life. He was raised in the Catholic faith and attended Colegio Valbanera in Coamo, where his spirited personality and occasional mischief became part of his enduring charm. He continued his education at the university level in Puerto Rico before proudly serving in the United States Army from 1960 to 1962.

A natural entrepreneur, Ray built a life and legacy in Chicago, where he lived for more than 40 years. His dedication to the Puerto Rican community was evident in everything he did. He founded the first Puerto Rican driving school in the city and was a founding member of the Spanish American Businessmen Association (SABA). Ray was also an active member of the Lions Club, embracing the organization’s mission of service.

During the 1980s and 1990s, Ray served as President of both the Puerto Rican Chamber of Commerce and the Puerto Rican Parade Committee. Through these roles, he became a key figure in strengthening community ties

and celebrating Puerto Rican culture. He worked tirelessly to ensure that new generations could remain connected to their heritage and the island he loved so deeply.

Ray is survived by his beloved wife, Mayra Ramos-Piazza of Ocala; his children, Jose Ramon Rivera Jr., Magda Cardona, and Mayte Masini; his grandchildren; his sister, Ana Teresa Santiago; and many cherished nieces and nephews. He was preceded in death by his parents, Amalia and Mariano, and his siblings.

A burial with military honors will take place on Friday, December 12, 2025, at Florida National Cemetery, 6502 SW 102nd Ave., Bushnell, Florida.

Ray will be remembered for his leadership, his devotion to community, his unwavering pride in his heritage, and the love he shared with his family. His legacy lives on in all who knew him.

Previous Events

Graveside Service with Military Honors

DEC **12**. 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM (ET)

Florida National Cemetery
6502 SW 102nd Ave
Bushnell, FL 33513-8914
(352) 793-7740

Services start promptly at 1pm

Tribute Wall

FN

“ From Mario Rivera and Family in NC planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Ray Rivera Santini.

From Mario Rivera and Family in NC - December 11, 2025 at 09:48 AM

FN

“ From Mario Rivera and Family in NC purchased the Strength & Solace Spray for the family of Ray Rivera Santini.



From Mario Rivera and Family in NC - December 11, 2025 at 09:48 AM

RR

“ Ramon and Susan Rivera planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Ray Rivera Santini.

Ramon and Susan Rivera - December 09, 2025 at 07:20 PM

RR

“ Ramon and Susan Rivera purchased the Lavender Reflections Spray for the family of Ray Rivera Santini.



Ramon and Susan Rivera - December 09, 2025 at 07:20 PM



“ *Tio Ramon a beloved man of faith and family. Here he honored us by attending our wedding in 2010. I'll miss you Tio give an embrace to my Pop and Abuelo Mariano. Thank you for being a role model to us all 🙏 Ramoncito Rivera and Susan Diamond Rivera*



Ramon Rivera - December 09, 2025 at 07:11 PM