



## Edward Rudolph Tamayo

November 6, 1929 - February 25, 2016

Ed Tamayo, Mexican-American Leader and Korean War Veteran Known for Casita Loans and Community Service, Dies at 86

One of Harlingen's most beloved community members, Mr. Ed Tamayo was a maverick and went his own way, whether making loans to single mothers, wearing white shoes in the middle of winter, or campaigning for his wife, former County Commissioner Edna Tamayo. A Renaissance man, Mr. Tamayo was humble and never tooted his own horn.

Born in Lockhart TX, Mr. Tamayo was almost kept from public school. The school district informed his mother that because her son did not speak English, he could not attend public school. His mother had deliberately not taught him Spanish because she foresaw this turn of events. Fighting for her son before the School Board, she was able to gain him entrance into public school after he took two separate IQ tests to prove he could attend.

Eventually, she moved the family to Austin, TX so her children could have access to the public schools there. Mr. Tamayo eventually attended University of Texas at Austin before serving in the Korean War as a Marine. Such experiences shaped Mr. Tamayo, making him a tireless champion of public education, access to education for underrepresented populations, and led him to boost and encourage everyone, poor or rich, unknown, or well-known.

From 1962 on, Mr. Tamayo worked in banking, eventually becoming the first Mexican-American bank president in Harlingen at Plaza National Bank and ending his career at First Community Bank of Harlingen.

Even during his last stay in the hospital while Mr. Tamayo was in the amazing hospice center at Valley Baptist Hospital, nurses and nurses' aides all had stories about how Mr. Tamayo had loaned them money or their parents or grandparents money that had given them the boost they needed to start a business, build a home, add a bedroom for a new child, or start a business selling tamales.

A key-note in his life, access to education for himself and others continued to shape him and his choices. After graduating from St. Mary's University in San Antonio, TX in 1956, he made his way to the Rio Grande Valley and made Harlingen his home for the rest of his life except for a brief three years in Eagle Pass TX during which time he earned his Masters at the Southwestern Graduate School of Banking at Southern Methodist University in 1976. After retirement, he completed the program for Master Gardener and Master Naturalist and he took graduate courses at UT Pan American in Brownsville. His community involvement reflected his commitment to education as a pathway to advancement. His service ranged from Tech Prep of the Rio Grande Valley (chairman) to Harlingen Boys and Girls Club (board member) to Childs' Advocacy of Cameron County (director). Throughout the years, he served the Catholic Church in various capacities from being president of the St. Anthony's Men's Club in the 70's, serving the former Bishop as a finance committee member in the 2000's, to his most recent service as a lector at St. Anthony's.

However, his biggest contribution was not the clubs or organizations he served, but his warm and generous personal mentoring of youth who needed a father-figure who cared and who could serve as a non-judgmental role model. He advised them, loved them, stuck by them, and encouraged them, sometimes using his own money to buy their college books or helping them with a deposit for an apartment.

However, his favorite role was as Edna Tamayo's husband. As a supporter of women in leadership roles, Mr. Tamayo tirelessly supported his wife in whatever she wanted. Whether it was helping her with Drop-Out Prevention

Programs grilling hamburgers for former gang members, campaigning for her run for County Commissioner or advising her many nieces and nephews, Mr. Tamayo stood by his wife and adored her for 53 and a half years of marriage. Supported whole-heartedly by Mr. Tamayo, his children also went into education. Sarita Tamayo-Moraga is Senior Lecturer at Santa Clara University in CA where she is also Faculty Director of the Unity Residential Learning Community which is focused on diversity and civic engagement and Rico Tamayo is an elementary school teacher in the Los Angeles area, currently serving as President of the Early Childhood/K-12 Council for the California Federation of Teachers.

Survived by his wife and children, numerous beloved nieces and nephews, his sisters Mary-Esther and Betty and his brother Jimmy, Mr. Tamayo departed this life peacefully on February 25th, 2016 surrounded by his loving family. The family would like to thank Dr. Todd Shenkenberg, M.D. for his tireless and generous care of Mr. Tamayo.

Visitation will be on Sunday, February 28, 2016 from 2 p.m. to 7 p.m. with the Rosary immediately following at 7 p.m. Funeral Services will be held at St. Anthony's Catholic Church on Monday, February 29 at 11 a.m. Interment will follow at Mont Meta Memorial Park.

Pallbearers will be Rene Montalvo Jr., D.J. Gracia, Homer Gonzales, Meme Gonzales, Henry Perez, Clayton and Brett Moraga, and Justin Cruz. Honorary pallbearers will be Rolando Nunez, Bob Dunkin, Rosalio Pena, Joe Fernandez, and Hector Gutierrez.

Funeral arrangements are under the direction of Rudy Garza Funeral Home in Harlingen.

# Previous Events

## Visitation

FEB **28**. 2:00 PM - 9:00 PM (CT)

Rudy Garza Funeral Home - Harlingen  
1702 E Harrison Ave  
Harlingen, TX 78550  
(956) 425-8200  
rgfhtx@aol.com  
<https://www.rudygarzafunerals.com>

## Rosary

FEB **28**. 7:00 PM (CT)

Rudy Garza Funeral Home - Harlingen  
1702 E Harrison Ave  
Harlingen, TX 78550  
(956) 425-8200  
rgfhtx@aol.com  
<https://www.rudygarzafunerals.com>

## Funeral

FEB **29**. 11:00 AM (CT)

St. Anthony Catholic Church  
209 S 10th St.  
Harlingen, TX 78550  
(956) 428-6111

# Tribute Wall

CK

“ *Claudia Kerens lit a candle in memory of Edward Rudolph Tamayo*



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**Claudia Kerens** - February 29, 2016 at 07:39 AM

CK

*It was with great sadness to hear of Ed's passing. He was a man who prized and loved his family, friends, faith, and the community he loved and supported by showing people how to achieve and be happy in life. He was a great man. Condolences to you, Edna, Sarita, Rico, and his family and friends. Prayers for you and yours.*

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**Claudia Kerens** - February 29, 2016 at 07:43 AM

FM

“ *The Morris family never expressed the deep appreciation for the void the Tamayo family (Ed, Edna, Sarita, and Rico) filled living next door on Whitehouse Circle to Marion and Wintress Welles in the absence of my family while I was serving in the Air Force stationed at various locations stateside and overseas.*

*They loved you dearly and considered you all a second family. The joy you gave them both. My deep sympathy to you Edna and to your lovely children. God Bless. Frank Morris*

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**Frank Morris** - February 28, 2016 at 08:48 PM



“ *A New Sunrise Spray was purchased for the family of Edward Rudolph Tamayo.*



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February 28, 2016 at 09:36 AM



“ *Country Basket Blooms was purchased for the family of Edward Rudolph Tamayo.*



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February 27, 2016 at 11:14 AM



“ *Thank you Tio, for the many gifts you gave me. Gifts that no one can take away, that will never grow old. You taught me so much about nature, and that inspiration led to a beautiful journey. Your kindness never went unnoticed. I would look forward to your visits when I was just a child at the ranch. We loved your voice, and we were all so happy when you decided to marry Aunt Edna. Thank you for always welcoming me into your home with open arms. Thank you for giving me the love of my life...Cosmo.*



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**Cosmo Tamayo** - February 26, 2016 at 10:39 AM