



John Joseph Mendez

February 25, 1943 - December 16, 2023

John Joseph Mendez, 80, of Kansas City, Kansas passed away Saturday, December 16th after battling Alzheimers for several years. John was born on February 25th, 1943 to John and Soledad (Sally) nee Garcia Mendez in Kansas City, Kansas. He was the oldest of four sons. He was preceded in death by both parents, his late wife and mother of his two daughters Sylvia, his son John Joseph, and his brother Richard "00" Mendez. John had two daughters Elizabeth (JP) Mendez-Gilmore and Felicia (Alex) Mendez. He and Mary Gonzales were married on December 20th, 2003. They were just a few days shy of celebrating their 20th wedding anniversary. He had three step-sons David (Barbra), Nathan and Colin Gonzales, six grand-children and one great grandchild. He is also survived by his two brothers, Raymond and Albert Mendez both of Kansas City, Kansas.

Upon graduating from Argentine High School in 1961 he enlisted in the Army where he served until 1964. He was honorably discharged in 1970. Upon returning from the Army, he briefly worked for Santa Fe Railroad before embarking on his lifelong career in public service by joining the city of Kansas City Kansas. He served as the Director of Neighborhood Services from 1975-1984. While in that capacity, he earned his Associates Degree from Donnelly College in 1974 and then a Bachelor of Science in Public Administration from St. Mary's College in 1976. In 1984 he was promoted to Assistant City Administrator from 1984 to 1996. During that time he earned his Masters

Degree in Liberal Arts from Baker University/Southern Methodist University in 1986. He then served as Deputy City Administrator of Kansas City, Kansas and then Deputy County Administrator when the City of Kansas City, Kansas and Wyandotte County merged to become the Unified Government of Wyandotte County and Kansas City, Kansas. He was instrumental in helping Wyandotte County and the City of Kansas City, Kansas merge into one form of government in 1997. He then served in the capacity of Director of Neighborhood & Regional Affairs for the Unified Government from 1998 until 2001. He then retired and served as a Wyandotte County Commissioner, District 3 from January 2001 until 2007. He was then elected as the At Large Unified Government 2nd District County Commissioner in 2009. He served in that capacity until 2013. In both 2002 and 2004 he was awarded the Cesar Chavez Community Service Award by the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) He was also awarded a fellowship to Harvard University John F. Kennedy School of Government and was an Adjunct Professor of Government and History at Donnelly College. Throughout his lifetime he was a member of and served on the board of many organizations. He was the first Chairman of the Board of Directors for El Centro, Inc. He served as Chairman of the Donnelly College Board of Trustees, the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors, Good Samaritan Project Board of Directors, Kansas Association of City/County Management (KACM), the International City/County Management Association (ICMA), the National League of Cities Hispanic Elected Local Officials (NLC HELO), Mid-America Regional Council (MARC), the Hispanic Economic Development Council (HEDC) and served as a Chairman of the American Red Cross fundraising campaign in March 2008.

John was an avid sports lover. His first and foremost love was for the Kansas City Chiefs. The first year he had season tickets was in 1967 in the old Municipal Stadium. He was a member of the original Wolfpack. The Mendez - Gilmore families have been season ticket holders now for 56 years. His love of sports also included the Kansas Jayhawks. He played basketball for a few

years growing up. Even after his playing days were over he found a way to stay connected to the game of basketball as a referee in the men's recreational basketball league at the old Parish House in Argentine. He also played men's softball for a time at the American Legion Post 213, Argentine Eagles Nest. Upon completion of his softball playing days, he discovered a love for the game of golf which has since been passed down to his granddaughter. He was a proud member of the Kansas City Chapter of the Pan American Golf Association. He loved to golf with his fellow coworkers, commissioners, friends and family. He was never one to turn down a charity golf tournament. As his daughters got older and pursued participating in softball and basketball his focus turned to helping coach their various teams, going so far as to create a softball diamond in the backyard of the family home.

He was a pillar of the Kansas City, Kansas Latino community and as such made it his mission to help others. He often encouraged young people to pursue higher education and would use his life as an example of how it had changed his life for the better. Oftentimes he would help encourage young men and women to also apply for jobs at the city of Kansas City, Kansas and to use him as a personal reference. He was contacted by numerous corporations in the metro area when they had job vacancies to fill and were wanting to diversify their workforce. He took great joy in helping connect Latinos to good paying jobs and careers. One of his most humanitarian gestures he and his late wife Sylvia did was to open their home up to two young Latino children who were in need of a foster home. He made sure that the home he raised his family in was always filled with extended family and friends as well as numerous dogs and cats.

The family would like to thank Claudia Larkin for the loving and compassionate care she gave to John during the later years of his battle with

Alzheimers. The next time you have a shot of a good tequila, raise a toast to John. A mass and burial will be scheduled for sometime in early January 2024..

Cemetery Details

Maple Hill Cemetery

2301 S 34th St
Kansas City, KS 66106
(913) 262-6610
info@maplehillfuneralhome.com

Previous Events

Visitation

DEC **21**. 4:00 PM - 7:00 PM (CT)

Maple Hill Funeral Home
3300 Shawnee Dr
Kansas City, KS 66106
(913) 831-3345
info@maplehillfuneralhome.com
<https://maplehillfuneralhome.com>

Prayer Service

DEC **21**. 6:00 PM (CT)

Maple Hill Funeral Home
3300 Shawnee Dr
Kansas City, KS 66106
(913) 831-3345
info@maplehillfuneralhome.com
<https://maplehillfuneralhome.com>

Tribute Wall

SB

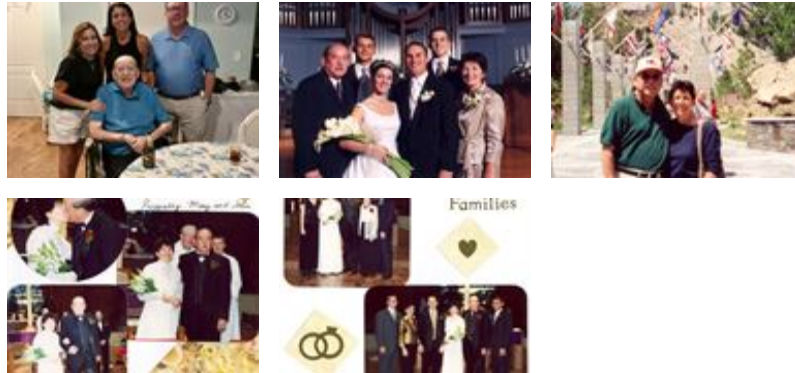
“ *My deepest condolences to his family. He was such a strong, warm and intelligent person very dedicated to the Argentine community. Rest in peace John you will never be forgotten.* ”



Susie Becerra - December 21, 2023 at 04:58 PM



“ 92 files added to the album Life Tributes ”



Maple Hill Funeral Home and Cemetery - December 21, 2023 at 10:51 AM



“ *Enduring Grace was purchased for the family of John Joseph Mendez.* ”



December 20, 2023 at 05:58 PM



“ *Serene Retreat was purchased for the family of John Joseph Mendez.*



December 20, 2023 at 03:12 PM



“ *Love, The Neperuds. planted a </store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518>>Memorial Tree in honor of John Joseph Mendez.*

Love, The Neperuds. - December 20, 2023 at 03:12 PM



“ *Pink Potpourri Bouquet was purchased for the family of John Joseph Mendez.*



December 20, 2023 at 02:25 PM



“ *Your friends at AIG Claims. planted a </store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518>>Memorial Tree in honor of John Joseph Mendez.*

Your friends at AIG Claims. - December 20, 2023 at 02:25 PM

LM

“ 🙏 Prayers for you all. Thank you papa John and mama Sylvia and Liz and Felicia and family for taking us in and caring for us as if we were your own. Thankful

Luis Martinez - December 20, 2023 at 01:27 PM

ME

“ We are so sorry to hear about John passing. Our thoughts and prayers go out to the Mendez family. John was a big contributor of serving the Argentine community and to the Hispanic community. May He Rest In Peace!

Mario & Loretta Escobar - December 20, 2023 at 01:18 PM

LM

“ Papa John, Mama Silvia. Sisters Liz and Felicia. Deepest condolences 🙏 on your loss. As I stated before. I will ALWAYS BE THANKFUL AND GRATEFUL for you all opening your house to my sister and I as kids. You did raise us as your own and never felt like we weren't a part of your family. Thank you for that. You all will always ALWAYS be my family for that! Love and strength for you all and Mary as well.
Love, Luis Martinez.

Luis Martinez - December 20, 2023 at 01:12 PM



“ Crystal Cross Bouquet was purchased for the family of John Joseph Mendez.



December 20, 2023 at 12:20 PM

SW

“ John was a mentor to many. He was a kind hearted man that cared deeply for people. He was strong in his faith and lived his life as such. I cherish the fond memories of John. I can vividly remember his voice and his laugh. Until we meet again my friend...

Scotty Whittington - December 20, 2023 at 12:10 PM



“ Sweet Tranquility Basket was purchased for the family of John Joseph Mendez.



December 19, 2023 at 01:31 PM

DA

“ David Mehlhaff & Lisa Adams planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of John Joseph Mendez.

David Mehlhaff & Lisa Adams - December 19, 2023 at 01:31 PM



“ Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of John Joseph Mendez.



December 19, 2023 at 08:54 AM

PP

“ *John, loved his community and family. He was proud of being from Argentine and he worked hard for our community in his professional career and as a commissioner. He was a great dresser and friend. John, your smile will be missed.*

Pat Pettey - December 19, 2023 at 08:35 AM