



## Rafael DeLeon Jr.

August 26, 1938 - April 2, 2026

Rafael (Ralph) DeLeon, Jr. was born on August 26, 1938, in San Antonio, Texas, to Rafael and Lucia DeLeon. He was a native son of this city in the fullest sense — born on the West Side, raised on the South Side, shaped by its streets, its people, and its faith. He attended Sacred Heart Elementary School and went on to Burbank High School, graduating in 1956. From his earliest years, Ralph was a worker. At eight years old he was already on the job at Dragon Bottling Company, his grandfather's business on Guadalupe Street — at the time one of the most celebrated Mexican-American owned enterprises in all of Texas — picking up nails and cleaning bottles for twenty-five cents a day. He ran a paper route. At fifteen he was an usher at the Texas Theater. During his senior year he and a classmate ran a radio shop out of Adames' Garage on Martin Street. This was a boy who was always building something, always moving toward the next thing.

That forward momentum was tested in his senior year when his father, Rafael DeLeon Sr., passed away at the age of 45. Ralph was seventeen years old. Without hesitation he stepped forward to help provide for his mother Lucia, his brother Benny, and his sisters Sylvia and Lucy. That decision — made quietly, without complaint, before he was old enough to fully understand its weight — revealed the man he would spend the rest of his life becoming. He had always been curious about the world; he once dreamed of working for National Geographic. But when his family needed him, Ralph chose responsibility. He

chose to stay. He chose to build.

Following graduation, Ralph served in the United States Navy from 1956 to 1959, deployed aboard the USS Forrestal in the Caribbean. Upon his honorable discharge he returned to San Antonio and, on June 8, 1959, began his banking career at Main Bank & Trust. The following year, his mentor and trusted friend Joe Potts — then opening Brooks Field National Bank — recognized Ralph’s talent and personally asked him to come along. It was an invitation that would define the next thirty years of his career. Ralph rose through every level of the institution — cashier, loan officer, vice president — before retiring in 1989 as Executive Vice President. The belief Joe Potts placed in Ralph mirrored exactly what Ralph would spend his career extending to others.

In May of 1981, the San Antonio Sunday Express-News featured Ralph in a prominent profile as part of its “Dedication Rewarded” series — a recurring feature spotlighting Hispanic leaders in San Antonio. Reporter Veronica Salazar wrote about a self-made banker who had built his career entirely through hard work, relationships, and an unshakeable belief in people. The article documented that Ralph was one of only a handful of Mexican-American bank officers in San Antonio when he first achieved that rank — a quiet but significant distinction in a city and an industry where that barrier still existed. He was direct about his philosophy:

“I listen to everybody that comes in. I never judge people by their looks, by the clothes they wear, or by the color of their skin. What matters is how you treat people.”

That was not a policy. It was a practice. And it defined not just his banking career but the whole of his life.

In 1994, Ralph began a second chapter of service as the first employee of Accion Texas — now the LiftFund — dedicating twenty more years to providing microfinance loans to small business owners who needed someone to believe in them. He gave people a hand-up, not a hand-out. He was named the Small Business Administration's Financial Advocate of the Year. He served on the Board of Managers of the Bexar County Hospital District and was the first president of the East Central School District Foundation Board. Fifty years in financial services. A lifetime of showing up.

In 1959, Ralph met the love of his life, Gloria Y. Lozano. They married in November 1962 and were together for 57 years. Together they raised three sons in the Catholic faith, ensuring each attended Catholic school — a commitment that reflected not obligation but deep conviction. Ralph was a devoted husband, a steady and present father, and a man whose faith was the quiet foundation beneath everything he did. Family was never just the five of them. Every summer from the 1960s through the 1980s, Ralph and Gloria loaded up and headed to the mountains of New Mexico and Colorado — camping trips that often included their parents, the grandparents of their boys, and the friends of their sons, making those journeys a joyful gathering of three generations beneath open skies. Ralph hunted and fished and made the wilderness feel like home. As the years went on the family's travels widened — close friends joining them on memorable trips to Mexico City and Acapulco, cruises to Alaska, and travels across the United States. He believed the world was worth seeing and that the people you love are worth taking along.

Ralph DeLeon Jr. was a man who never met a stranger. He was a storyteller, a talker, a connector — genuinely curious about every person he encountered. It was the Catrín Social Club that first anchored Ralph among the men who would become his closest friends — a brotherhood forged in youth and deepened over a lifetime. From that circle grew the Dirty Dozen, a

beloved group of friends who gathered, hunted, and laughed together for more than forty years. Their regular trips to land in South Texas — rifles in hand, stories at the ready — were among the great constants of Ralph's life, a ritual that spoke to his love of the outdoors and his even deeper love of the men beside him. He was as much at home in the field as he was behind a desk. In his later years, Ralph looked forward each month to his breakfast club — a gathering of longtime friends, most in their seventies and eighties, men who had known each other since Sacred Heart Elementary and the Catrín Club days, and who still showed up for one another without fail. Those mornings were not habit. They were devotion.

His Catholic faith was never a Sunday obligation. It was the architecture of his life — present in how he raised his sons, how he treated his clients, how he loved his wife, and how he faced the end of his life. Those who were with him say he was not afraid. He had buried his father young, outlived his brother and sister, and carried on after fifty-seven years with Gloria came to a close. He had walked through grief more than most. And still, he was not afraid. He believed. And that belief steadied everyone around him, as it always had.

In 1981, a reporter asked Ralph about the man who had shaped him most. He spoke about his father, who had little formal education but an abundance of common sense, and who had taught him to work and shown him by example what a man could be. Then he said:

“If I can be half the father with my children that he was with us, I will be satisfied.”

He said that forty-five years ago. His sons are here to say: he was more than half. He was everything.

Ralph DeLeon Jr. is preceded in death by his beloved wife, Gloria Y. DeLeon;

his parents, Rafael and Lucia DeLeon; his brother, Benito (Benny) DeLeon; and his sister, Lucy Gonzales.

He is survived by his sons Rafael Eric DeLeon, Rick DeLeon, and Chris DeLeon (wife Kristen); his sister Sylvia Herrera; his grandchildren Matthew, Tristan, Brooke, Chase, and Bailey; and his great-grandchildren Sebastian and Zelda.

Ralph DeLeon Jr. will be greatly missed by all who were blessed to know him.

Mass of Christian Burial information included in Upcoming Events.

# Cemetery Details

## Mission Burial Park South

1700 SE Military Dr.  
San Antonio, TX 78214  
<http://www.missionparks.com>

# Previous Events

## Visitation

APR 13. 5:00 PM - 8:00 PM (CT)

Mission Park Funeral Chapels South, Cemeteries & Crematories  
1700 SE Military Dr  
San Antonio, TX 78214  
(210) 924-4242  
<https://www.missionparks.com/>

## Rosary and Eulogy

APR 13. 6:30 PM (CT)

Mission Park Funeral Chapels South, Cemeteries & Crematories  
1700 SE Military Dr  
San Antonio, TX 78214  
(210) 924-4242  
<https://www.missionparks.com/>

## Funeral Mass

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APR 14. 10:00 AM (CT)

Holy Name Catholic Church  
3814 Nash Blvd  
San Antonio, TX 78223

# Tribute Wall

TR

“ *Ralphie (my sweet lil' bro 🍷 )  
My heart hurts for you and your family. So sad I can't be there to hug your neck, but know that I'm there with you in prayer. May our Lord shine perpetual light on your Dad's soul and grant him eternal peace. ❤️ 🙏*

Trish - April 13 at 07:13 PM

RD

*Thank you, Sis!*

Rafael E DeLeon - May 04 at 08:49 AM



“ *Lavender Reflections Spray was purchased for the family of Rafael DeLeon Jr..*



April 13 at 09:47 AM



“ *Beautiful Dreams was purchased for the family of Rafael DeLeon Jr..*



April 12 at 09:45 PM

JB

“ *Mr D, I was so blessed to spend most of my childhood with you & Gloria, your loving family, and so many wonderful relatives. Whether it was in your home in San Antonio, or on the many trips to Colorado, you all made me feel like one of your own. These are some of my most cherished memories of growing up. God Bless you and keep you close. Love John Binder*

John Binder - April 12 at 11:27 AM



“ *Gracious Lavender Basket was purchased for the family of Rafael DeLeon Jr..*



April 12 at 11:18 AM



“ *In Heaven's Arms Bouquet was purchased for the family of Rafael DeLeon Jr..*



April 09 at 09:00 PM

YB

“ *Your Friends at MainStreet Bank purchased the Peaceful White Lilies Basket for the family of Rafael DeLeon Jr..*



Your Friends at MainStreet Bank - April 09 at 02:56 PM

LF

“ Love Richard, Dorothy Perez and Family purchased the *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum* for the family of Rafael DeLeon Jr..



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**Love Richard, Dorothy Perez and Family** - April 09 at 11:17 AM



“ Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Rafael DeLeon Jr..



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April 09 at 10:25 AM



“ Arrive in Style was purchased for the family of Rafael DeLeon Jr..



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April 08 at 07:04 PM



“ Gracious Lavender Basket was purchased for the family of Rafael DeLeon Jr..



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April 08 at 11:51 AM

TF

“ *The Fontenot's purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Rafael DeLeon Jr..*



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**The Fontenot's** - April 07 at 09:41 PM

CD

“ *Chad, Lesley, and Danny purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Rafael DeLeon Jr..*



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**Chad, Lesley, and Danny** - April 07 at 06:41 PM

MB

“ *Michael Berman purchased the Lavender Reflections Spray for the family of Rafael DeLeon Jr..*



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**Michael Berman** - April 07 at 12:00 PM

BH

“ *Bryan & Cecy Herrera purchased the Divine Peace Bouquet for the family of Rafael DeLeon Jr..*



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**Bryan & Cecy Herrera** - April 07 at 11:33 AM

LS

“ Love, Danny Schneider purchased the Arrive in Style for the family of Rafael DeLeon Jr..



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**Love, Danny Schneider** - April 07 at 10:07 AM

MJ

“ Thanks for everything Mr D. I feel so blessed for the time spent with you and your amazing family. The ski trips to Ruidoso with you guys were the best! We will really miss you, but I'm so glad that you are finally home with the Lord, your wonderful wife, and family. Please give Mrs D a big hug for me.

Love,  
Marty (El Camino) Jones

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**Marty Jones** - April 06 at 11:41 PM

DR

“ I loved your dad because he was so good to my sister and loved her so much! We always had a great time laughing and reminising. All our kids loved their uncle because he and your mom loved them dearly, had wonderful times together and they respected their Uncle Ralph very much.He will be greatly missed and never forgotten.

May he and Gloria be together for eternity. ❤️ 🙏🙏🙏

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**Diana Rivas** - April 06 at 08:25 PM

LC

“ Love, Dixie Claybrook purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Rafael DeLeon Jr..



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**Love, Dixie Claybrook** - April 06 at 06:12 PM

JO

“ Jovonté purchased the Peaceful White Lilies Basket for the family of Rafael DeLeon Jr..



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**Jovonté** - April 06 at 03:56 PM