



## Donald Sanchez

May 2, 1937 - March 20, 2026

Donald (Don) Sanchez, 88, of Windsor, Colorado passed away peacefully at his home on March 20, 2026.

Don was born on May 2, 1937 to Henry and Rosa Sanchez in Fort Collins, Colorado. He graduated from Fort Collins High School in 1955. He joined the Navy in 1956 and served on the USS Leary DD-879 for three and a half years as a Gunners Mate 3rd Class. After returning home from the Navy, he met his wife Emilia "Millie" Gavaldon through a mutual friend. They eloped to Denver in January of 1961 and renewed their commitment to each other in the Catholic Church in July of that same year. They settled in South Denver where they raised their daughter Melicia Sanchez. Don worked at Dalco as a truck driver for 30 years prior to retirement. After retiring, Don and Millie moved to Windsor, Colorado in 2003 and lived there the remainder of his life.

He is survived by his wife, Emilia (Millie) Sanchez; brothers Joe Sanchez, and Bill (Virginia) Sanchez, and numerous nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by Melicia Sanchez (daughter), Henry and Rosa Sanchez (parents), Alex Sanchez (brother), Mike Sanchez (brother), Lee Sanchez (brother), Doris Suniga (sister), Tillie Salas (sister), Mary Ellen Valdez (sister), Dorothy Solis (sister) and lifelong friends Frank & Rachael Garcia.

Don was truly loved by all. He was a great husband, father, uncle, brother and friend. He was an avid golfer and swimmer. He enjoyed dancing, playing cards, and socializing with family and friends and was known for his great sense of humor. He was an enthusiastic fan of the Denver Broncos and Denver Nuggets. Sundays in the fall were always dedicated to watching or attending Bronco games. He was a proud Bronco season ticket holder for over

50 years. He loved playing (and betting on) Yahtzee with his wife and hardly ever missed an episode of Wheel of Fortune and Jeopardy.

Don was a good man who provided for his family and brought joy to all he encountered. He will be greatly missed, but his family and friends are now blessed with another guardian angel.

Rosary on Thursday, April 9, 2026 at 6pm, Bohlender Funeral Chapel, 121 W. Olive Street, Fort Collins.

Funeral Mass will be held Friday April 10, 2026 at 11am, Our Lady of the Valley Catholic Church, 1250 7th Street, Windsor.

Committal on Tuesday, April 14, 2026 from 12:15pm-12:45pm Staging Area-White at Fort Logan National Cemetery, 3698 S. Sheridan Boulevard, Denver.

# Previous Events

## Rosary

APR 9. 6:00 PM - 6:30 PM (MT)

Bohlender Funeral Chapel  
121 W. Olive Street  
Fort Collins, CO 80524

## Memorial Mass

APR 10. 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM (MT)

Our Lady of the Valley Catholic Church  
1250 7th Street  
Windsor, CO 80550-6217

## Burial

APR 14. 12:15 PM (MT)

Fort Logan National Cemetery  
3698 South Sheridan Boulevard  
Denver, CO 80235

# Tribute Wall

JC

“ *Juliet Romero Chavez lit a candle in memory of Donald Sanchez*



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**Juliet Romero Chavez** - April 10 at 11:39 PM

RS

“ *My Uncle Don, I'm going to miss our talks! You always made me laugh or smile! You were the referee for our volleyball games, who cheated both sides of the net, making us laugh till we cried. You were a good man and a great uncle! I will always love and pray for you! Rest in heavenly peace...*

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**Rita Soliz-Marin** - April 09 at 04:34 PM

DI

“*Don was the definition of strength, but not in the way most people think. While his body endured more pain than most of us could ever imagine through his battle with cancer, you would have never known it sitting with him. He didn't carry himself like someone suffering. He carried himself like someone who cared deeply about others.*

*Every conversation with Don was never about him, it was about you. He wanted to know how you were doing. He wanted to talk, to listen, to help. He was the kind of person you could sit with for hours and never feel like time was passing. I still hear his laugh, clear as day, from those long conversations about life, the military, loss, the Broncos, religion, and of course golf and basketball.*

*I will always be grateful for the time I got to spend with Don, especially riding around the golf course with him during the annual Don and Victor tournament each May at Collindale. Going hole to hole, stopping to see family and friends, watching people light up when “Don Juan” pulled up, it was something special. The laughter, the conversations, the connection he created with everyone around him, that's what made him unforgettable.*

*Don never made his battle the focus. In fact, he rarely spoke about his treatments or what he was physically going through. During some of the hardest moments in our own lives, when Mila was in the NICU, Don was right there with us. Sitting in the living room, present, steady, and supportive. In many ways, he felt like a guardian angel during those first two years of her life.*

*Don, I truly believe your presence is still with us. I am forever grateful to have known you, and I pray you continue to watch over Mila and our family alongside God and the Holy Spirit.*

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Dillion - April 08 at 01:33 AM

VG

“ Uncle Don was the reason I became a Denver Broncos fan, he gave me some of my most cherished memories. I will always remember spending time with him in his RV and the excitement of meeting Mike Shanahan and Vance Johnson. He was always so generous, passing down Broncos gear that made me the envy of all my friends.

*As I got older, Uncle Don split his season tickets with me. At the time, it meant attending games separately, but looking back, I rather have gone to every game alongside him and Aunt Millie. Spending time with them was the joy of the Broncos.*

*Uncle Don had a remarkable energy that made every moment more enjoyable. He brought laughter, warmth, and a sense of fun wherever he went.*

*I am deeply grateful for those memories and the joy he brought into my life.*

*I love you Uncle.*

— Vincent Gavaldon

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**Vincent Gavaldon** - April 01 at 09:23 PM

ES

“ Eddie & Carey Sanchez lit a candle in memory of Donald Sanchez



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**Eddie & Carey Sanchez** - March 25 at 02:21 PM

JZ

“ *Jon Zimmerman lit a candle in memory of Donald Sanchez* ”



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**Jon Zimmerman** - March 25 at 12:12 PM