



Mike Mendez Cortez

January 8, 1946 - June 27, 2025

Mike Mendez Cortez, age 79, of Lake Station, Indiana, passed away on June 27, 2025.

Born in Nuevo Laredo, Tamaulipas, Mike moved to the United States as a young man and graduated from Washington High School. He became a naturalized U.S. citizen in 1970 and served honorably in the United States Army — a proud moment in a life marked by perseverance and quiet strength. He shared many cherished moments with his beloved wife, Virginia — from quiet breakfasts out together to enjoying a glass of wine on their back patio, taking in the peaceful beauty of wildlife and the river. Mike was a devoted husband and a true gentleman. He made it a point to drive Virginia to and from work each day — a small but constant act of love that reflected the depth of his care. He was her sweetheart, never shy about expressing his affection, and always made her feel treasured.

He loved working on home improvement projects, collecting antiques, and unwinding with classic films or World War II documentaries. Some of his favorite memories were made out on the river, piloting his pontoon boat with a smile and a calm hand.

Mike was a devoted family man and a loving father. His children, nieces, and nephews have fond memories of camping trips and family outings — joy-filled moments that have become treasured stories for generations. His home on Willow Drive became the backdrop for years of holiday family gatherings, backyard cookouts, and laughter-filled nights on the patio overlooking the

river.

He was also known for his warm laugh, handyman know-how, and dependable presence. Mike had a sharp and playful sense of humor and was a favorite brother and uncle to many who adored his jokes and joyful spirit. He held a special bond with his nieces Rena (Tony) Navarro and Belen (fiancé Dario Pantoja) Garza, whose regular visits brought him great joy and connection.

Mike shared a deep and loving connection with his sisters. He greatly admired his younger sister, Esther Whitaker, and was proud of her. Esther kept in close contact, regularly calling and checking in — a relationship Mike deeply cherished. He was also very close to his sister Cheli Cortez. Cheli often invited him over and made him home-cooked meals, giving him comfort and companionship that meant the world to him.

Mike was a man of many trades. He began and ended his career as a welder — a craft that reflected both his skill and resilience. Over the years, he also worked for the Indiana Bell phone company and WorldCom Telecommunications. After retiring from his primary career, Mike continued to stay active in the workforce as a tax preparer for H&R Block and served with the Lake County Board of Elections and Registration, maintaining ballot machines. There wasn't a tool he didn't know how to use.

Among his children, Mike shared a particularly close bond with his son Michael. The two spent countless hours together camping at Indiana Beach, fishing, riding his Harley Davidson to motorcycle rallies, going horseback riding, and taking road trips to Texas and Mexico. Mike passed down a wealth of knowledge — from home maintenance and woodworking to electrical, plumbing, and vehicle repair. During Michael's high school years, the two lived together in the house on Willow Drive, working side by side on home improvement projects like building the fireplace, painting the house, installing insulation, outdoor lighting, and constructing a backyard fence. Their time together created a foundation of skills, memories, and love that Michael will carry forward for the rest of his life.

He was preceded in death by his daughter, Veronica April Cortez; his brothers, Reynaldo "Guero" Cortez and Robert Cortez; his sister, Cheli Cortez; his parents, Miguel Cortez Sanchez and Consuelo Cortez Mendez; and his grandson, Ethan Zayne Kalberer.

Mike is survived by his devoted wife, Virginia Cortez; his sister, Esther (Andrew) Whitaker; his brother, Omero (Cynthia) Cortez; his children, Ruben (Tina) Cortez, Dina (fiancé Brian Rushing) Cortez, Michael (Amber) Cortez, and Eric (Jlysa) Cortez; his sister-in-law, Gloria (Robert) Cortez; and his grandchildren, Devon (fiancé Baylee Eaton) Cortez, Karsen Cortez, Michaelene Flores, Breyonna Kalberer, Sydnee Kalberer, Mackenzie Koby, Nicholas Funes, Andriana (Michael) Jackson, Davis Cortez; and six great grandchildren.

Visitation will be held on Saturday, July 12, 2025, from 11:00 AM to 2:00 PM at Burns Funeral Home & Crematory, 701 E 7th St, Hobart, IN 46342, with a funeral service immediately following at 2:00 PM.

In keeping with his wishes, Mike will be cremated. His memory will live on in the hearts and stories of those who loved him.

www.BurnsFuneral.com

Previous Events

Visitation

JUL 12. 11:00 AM - 2:00 PM (CT)

Burns Funeral Home - Hobart
701 E. 7th Street
Hobart, IN 46342
(219) 942-1117
info@burnsfuneral.com
<https://www.burnsfuneral.com/>

Funeral Service

JUL 12. 2:00 PM (CT)

Burns Funeral Home - Hobart
701 E. 7th Street
Hobart, IN 46342
(219) 942-1117
info@burnsfuneral.com
<https://www.burnsfuneral.com/>

Tribute Wall

ST

“ *What a wonderful husband! With knowing you and Mike . What a huge loss for you, keep his memory alive and well with in your heart ❤️!! My heart goes out to you and family .*

star - July 18, 2025 at 08:57 PM

CL

“ My deepest sorrow and condolences to the family of Mike. I got to know Mike very well working many years of elections with him. Mike was my right hand man and very vital with his knowledge as just him and I kept the entire city of Hammond voting every election day and they assigned us there every single election. I really enjoyed spending the many long hours together as our conversations and laughs about everything under the sun really made the time fly between answering and responding to calls for help on election day to repair the electronic voting machines in the many precinct locations all over. One thing was very apparent in our stories to each other was Mike's love for his wife and children and how proud he was of them. Mike was my friend too. I really missed him the last couple of elections he was unable to come work with us as we really needed him. Although I never met Mike's loved ones, just know that you are in my thoughts and prayers. Mike will live on forever in all our hearts, and his love will continue to shine through and guide your path and watch over those closest to him.

With Sympathy,

*Christopher Lincoln
Crown Point*



Chris L - July 11, 2025 at 11:53 PM

RD

“ Virginia, I'm sorry for your loss. What few times I've meet Mike he was funny and nice. He will be missed alot.

Rosie Dvojacki - July 11, 2025 at 04:05 PM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Mike Mendez Cortez.*



July 10, 2025 at 11:53 PM



“ *Sweetest Sunrise Bouquet was purchased for the family of Mike Mendez Cortez.*



July 06, 2025 at 01:43 PM



“ *A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Mike Mendez Cortez.*

July 06, 2025 at 01:43 PM



“ *From Martha Uddin and Shazia Arroyo purchased the Serene Retreat for the family of Mike Mendez Cortez.*



From Martha Uddin and Shazia Arroyo - July 02, 2025 at 12:16 PM

FA

“ From the employees of Agr purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Mike Mendez Cortez.



From the employees of Agr - July 02, 2025 at 11:22 AM

FA

“ From the employees of Agr planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Mike Mendez Cortez.

From the employees of Agr - July 02, 2025 at 11:22 AM

PR

“ My most sincere & heartfelt condolences to the Mike Cortez family & relatives. May our Loving & Merciful GOD give you all the COMFORT, STRENGTH, && PEACE you need. May the precious & cherished memories of your time together bring you comfort, strength, & peace! May our Loving & Merciful GOD grant his loving soul eternal peace! (MATTHEW 5:4 PSALMS 147:3 2CORINTHIANS 5:8) PAQUIN RODRIGUEZ, Norfolk, VA



PAQUIN RODRIGUEZ - July 01, 2025 at 01:17 PM

JH

“ *John, Laura, Holden, and Cole Herendeen purchased the Arrive in Style for the family of Mike Mendez Cortez.*



John, Laura, Holden, and Cole Herendeen - June 30, 2025 at 07:36 PM



“ *Enchanted Cottage was purchased for the family of Mike Mendez Cortez.*



June 30, 2025 at 06:55 PM



“ *A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Mike Mendez Cortez.*

June 30, 2025 at 06:55 PM

MT

“ *My deepest condolences to Gina and family*

Maria Teneyuca - June 30, 2025 at 05:54 PM