



Thomas Edward Rivera

February 9, 1964 - September 10, 2025

Thomas Edward Rivera, aged 61 years, of Valparaiso, passed away Wednesday, September 10, 2025, at his home. Thomas was born February 9, 1964, to Juan and Maria Rivera of Gary, Indiana.

He worked for many years in the data storage and data protection industries and was committed to helping set and draft industry standards. Above all, he was a devoted son, brother, husband, father, and grandfather. He believed that the best job he ever had was being a papa.

Thomas will be remembered for his storytelling and for his deep fascination for people. He was perpetually curious and loved asking people questions and to share their stories with him. He was fascinated by all craftsmanship but had a particular interest in woodworking and was a collector of clocks.

He is survived by his wife Lolita Morales-Rivera; daughters Constance (Louis) Donaldson and Mary Morales-Rivera; grandchildren Quentin Edward Alvarado and Ada Grace Donaldson; siblings Carmen Adams, Samuel (Anna) Rivera, Margaret (Terry) Leytham, Elizabeth (Eric) Atkins, Jacqueline (Scott) Shroyer, and Susan (Marco) Molinaro-Rivera; sisters-in-law Sonia Rivera and Lisa Rivera; and many beloved nieces and nephews.

Thomas was preceded in death by his father, Juan, mother, Maria, sisters, Myrta Barriffe and Anna Rivera, brothers, Juan Rivera, Joseph Rivera, Robert Rivera, and Michael Rivera; and niece, Katie Atkins.

Arrangements entrusted to Burns Funeral Home & Crematory. www.BurnsFuneral.com

Tribute Wall

EH

“ Thomas and I first met while we working at Hitachi and we continued to collaborate from that point in security organizations and standards. His passion and commitment to whatever he undertook always impressed me and I sought any excuse to drag him into an assortment of adventures.

Thomas was my wing-man on many of the standards activities we were involved with. He was also my best friend.

I cherish the time we were together. I will miss his counsel, wit, and thoughtfulness.

Eric Hibbard - September 27, 2025 at 05:46 PM

SR

“ I am forever grateful to my Uncle Thomas. He spent countless hours with my father since the auto accident that changed his life forever. Especially when he could no longer stay in his home. He was there most days, after he finished work, just present in the moments with my dad, whether he was awake or not. I'm grateful to my Uncle Thomas for his loyalty and commitment to his brother, my father.

If awake, Uncle Thomas would play cribbage with him. I learned in my last conversation with Uncle Thomas that he taught himself to play the game just to have something to engage my dad's mind and occupy his time with him. He also shared with me and Lana that he had recently purchased a third cribbage board because every time my dad was moved one from place to another, the board would disappear. I'm grateful to my Uncle Thomas for his selflessness.

It was my Uncle Thomas who called me in Baghdad, Iraq at 5am on September 2nd as I was just stirring awake to let me know that he was with my dad, and then he handed his phone to him. That was my last 2-way conversation with my father before he passed, the last time I heard his voice. It was my Uncle Thomas who then linked me to my Aunt Carmen 3 days later, on my birthday, so she could relay to me that I need to get home from Iraq ASAP if there is any chance for me to see and speak (1-way at this point) to my father again before he goes. I'm grateful to my Uncle Thomas for this connection.

For some reason, I've always remembered the day my dad told me that he named me, Steven Thomas Rivera, after his little brother. I am beyond proud and honored to bear the namesake of a man with the character, presence and intellect of my Uncle Thomas. Every time I thanked him, either in person or over the phone for his unending support to my father in his final months/weeks/days, Uncle Thomas would shrug it off and say, "he's my brother." Regardless, Uncle Thomas, Lana and I both say "Thank you" one last time. You are eternally loved and appreciated.

Steven Rivera - September 21, 2025 at 04:02 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Thomas Edward Rivera.

September 17, 2025 at 08:47 PM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum* was purchased for the family of Thomas Edward Rivera.



September 17, 2025 at 08:47 PM



“ *Purple Violet Yellow Wildflower Mix (Silk Cemetery Flowers)* was purchased for the family of Thomas Edward Rivera.



September 17, 2025 at 10:04 AM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Thomas Edward Rivera.

September 17, 2025 at 10:04 AM

LR

“ After Bob’s accident, Thomas drove me many, many times to the U of C and Shirley Ryan Ability Lab downtown. Im very grateful! Also...thank you Thomas for giving the world a great laugh!!! ❤️

Leanne Rivera - September 16, 2025 at 05:10 PM

FI

“ I have nothing but kind memories of Tom. Both sides of my family have always been close to the Riveras, and I grew up with them always close to us. Tom was always someone that took time to make anyone feel important and make it clear that he cared. Even though I was one of the kids at the time, Tom always had time for everyone. Even if you were a kid full of wonder. We all have those people that we remember in that way from growing up. Of course, he was still the kindest man as I became an adult, but that is something that stood out to me the most. He never made you feel like he could have been somewhere else. Tom had a way of making others feel like there was nobody else in the room. It says a lot that he left that mark on me, and I still remember it over 30 years later. Rest in peace, Tommy. We will miss your kind heart and sincerity. You were as special as you made the rest of us feel.

Frank Ortiz II - September 15, 2025 at 07:56 PM

HH

“ If you met Thomas Rivera you couldn't do anything but like him. He was smart,fun and always interested. He made you feel special, and when needed your rock. Love you.

Heather Harer - September 15, 2025 at 04:00 PM

PV

“ *PAQUIN RODRIGUEZ, Norfolk, VA lit a candle in memory of Thomas Edward Rivera*



PAQUIN RODRIGUEZ, Norfolk, VA - September 15, 2025 at 12:42 PM

PV

“ *Mi mas sentido pésame a la familia Thomas Rivera. Oro de todo corazón que nuestro amante DIOS le de toda la FORTALEZA y la PAZ a ustedes y a toda la familia en estos momentos. Mantengan preciosas memorias de sus tiempos juntos para siempre en sus corazones. Oro que nuestro amante DIOS le de su linda alma paz eterna! !QUE DIOS LO TENGA EN SU SANTA GLORIA! (MATTHEW 5:4. PSALMS 147:3. 2CORINTHIANS 5:8)*



PAQUIN RODRIGUEZ, Norfolk, VA - September 15, 2025 at 12:41 PM