

Oscar Edward Gonzales, devoted father, grandfather, brother, and Vietnam War veteran, peacefully joined our Heavenly Father on February 17, 2026, after a courageous battle with cancer. Known as “Kokie” to family and close friends, he was born on February 4, 1947, to Julian and Estella (Salazar) Gonzales. He attended Mary Carroll High School and Del Mar College before enlisting in the U.S. Army.

Kokie served two tours in Vietnam as a Specialist Fourth Class. He was assigned to the 1st Cavalry Division’s 1st Brigade (Airborne) and Company B, 2nd Battalion (Airborne), 8th Cavalry, and stateside with the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division. For his honorable service and heroism, Kokie was awarded the Purple Heart for saving a fellow soldier despite being wounded himself. Kokie also received the Bronze Star Medal with “V” Device for valor in recognition of his courageous actions during combat operations.

Born and raised in Corpus Christi, family was at the heart of everything he did. Kokie had a deep love for family and the simple joys of life. One of his greatest pleasures was spending time fishing with his cousin, Buddy, whose family owned and operated a fishing business. Being part of that tradition brought him peace and happiness. It was during these trips that his fascination with dolphins began, a passion that lasted a lifetime. Over the years, he commemorated that special bond with three dolphin tattoos. He created countless family memories with his children in tow, often stopping for a soda before making visits across town to grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins, sometimes spending hours in the car simply to nurture those cherished relationships. Family meant everything to him, and he always made time to stay connected, creating memories that will endure for generations.

He devoted much of his life to coaching and mentoring young athletes, sharing not only his knowledge of sports but also his values of discipline, teamwork, and perseverance. He coached both the girls’ and boys’ soccer teams at Incarnate Word Academy and later founded the boys’ soccer program at Mary Carroll High School, establishing a program that continues to impact students today. His love of athletics extended into his home, where he encouraged his children to pursue sports with dedication and integrity. He introduced them to long-distance running at an early age, and their accomplishments led to sponsorship recognition from Andrews Distributing. His legacy lives on through the many young athletes he mentored and the family he inspired.

He is survived by his sister, Anna Estella Roach. Kokie is lovingly remembered by his daughters, Janice Gonzales and Anita (Retired CDR Michael, U.S. Navy) McKelvey, and his son, Richard (Flavia). Known as “Koko” to his grandchildren, he is survived by granddaughters, from oldest to youngest: Bailey (Jesse) Brown, MA, LPC; 2nd Lt.

Jacqueline (U.S. Air Force); Marissa (M.Ed. – Sport Mgmt., UT Austin); Roxanne; and Sophia “Aramis”; as well as his grandson, Justin. He will also remain in the hearts of many cousins, relatives, and friends who knew and loved him.

There is no doubt he is now among the dolphins.

A memorial service to honor Oscar’s life will be held at Funeraria del Angel - Cage Mills Funeral Home on March 7, 2026. Visitation will begin at 10:00 a.m., with Military Honors and a Celebration of Life beginning at 4:00pm.