



Edward Romero Zamora

November 23, 1939 - February 6, 2026

EDWARD (EDDIE) R. ZAMORA OBITUARY

February 2026

An extraordinary human being, teacher, family leader, musician and more, Edward (Eddie) R. Zamora passed into transition on February 6, 2026, at the age of 86. He was born in Elsa, Texas in the Rio Grande Valley. His parents were Ben and Tila Zamora, widely known and respected for their tireless and ground-breaking efforts to eliminate racial discrimination in the public education system, including for their own children.

Eddie graduated from the Edcouch-Elsa public schools where he was a recognized musical prodigy and trumpet player. As a young boy, he knew he wanted to be a musical conductor and would stand at home in front of the radio on Tuesday nights conducting the sounds of The NBC Symphony Orchestra. His favorite conductor was Arturo Toscanini, and he loved The Band of America television show. While still a junior high school student, he was the sole recruit picked to march with the high school band during half-time football shows. At that time Little Eddie, as he was affectionately called, needed to take extra-long marching steps to keep up with the high schoolers.

While working nearly full-time, including as a soda fountain counter cook and performing in various dance bands, Eddie did undergraduate work at Del Mar

College in Corpus Christi, The University of Texas at Austin, and Pan American University in Edinburg where he received a Bachelor of Arts degree. He received a Master of Science degree from Texas A&I University in Kingsville.

Eddie was known professionally as Mr. Z. His journey as an award-winning band director was nothing short of remarkable and will never be forgotten. He opened doors for people of all ages, in gratitude and recognition to those who opened doors for him. He always believed every student could reach his/her dreams and full potential, and that his job was to help make those dreams come true. His passion for music was infectious and his dedication to the music profession was unparalleled.

Mr. Z. began his career as a band director at La Joya ISD, San Diego High School, and Hebbronville High School. In 1973, the Hebbronville band was named Class AA State Honor Band, perhaps the most prestigious award in band circles. The Band performed at the Texas Music Educators Association (TMEA), receiving a standing ovation from nearly 2,000 attendees. He then moved to Port Lavaca where he was the band director at Calhoun High School and Supervisor of Music. Under Eddie's leadership, The Calhoun band was awarded Sweepstakes ratings every year. In 1978, Eddie moved to Bedichek Middle School in Austin where he taught for 17 years with the Bedichek Band receiving Sweepstakes Awards every single year. Throughout Eddie's career, many of his students made the All-District, All-Region and All-State Bands. His bands received 32 consecutive Superior ratings in regional concert competitions, and 27 Sweepstakes Awards. In addition, they received many Superior ratings at Six Flags Over Texas and Buccaneer Music festivals.

Eddie's professional affiliations included Texas Bandmasters Association (TBA), TMEA as a charter member, National Band Association, Phi Beta MU,

and the Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia. He proudly served as Regional and Band Chairperson, on various Texas Music Adjudicators Association (TMAA) committees, and as a member of the State Prescribed Music List and the State Marching Band Advisory Committees. He received the TMEA Leadership and Achievement Award, TBA Lifetime Meritorious Achievement Award, and was inducted into the Phi Beta Mu Hall of Fame.

For over 45 years, Mr. Z. was a sought-after band adjudicator and clinician throughout Texas and Hawaii. While at Bedichek Middle School, Eddie was named a Teacher of the Year finalist by the Austin Independent School District (AISD). He came out of retirement at AISD's request to serve as Coordinator of Fine Arts. Forever bleeding burnt orange, Eddie was a proud member of The University of Texas Longhorn Alumni Band, marching in numerous half-time shows wearing his orange vest, holding his beloved trumpet, and periodically catching the eyes of his daughters marching nearby.

Beyond the conductor's podium, Eddie was a worldly soul, a curious traveler whose adventurous spirit and love of nature and new sites knew no bounds. He was extremely proud of the fact that he and Melody visited every continent in the world. Among his favorite places and travel highlights were seeing the Vienna Philharmonic's New Year's Eve concert in Austria, hiking a large part of The Camino de Santiago in Spain, visiting the Sydney Opera House in Australia, experiencing the magical wonder of Antarctica and the wilds of South Africa, seeing many parts of Europe over the years, visiting Melody's extended family in Brazil, and much more.

Two destinations closer to home held the most special places in his heart: his favorite beach in the world, South Padre Island, where the waves and sand soothed his soul, and Pine Valley Ranch near Smithville, Texas. At Pine Valley Ranch, Eddie found solace in nature and ways to recharge amongst the

grandeur of his beloved dancing pines. At Pine Valley Ranch Eddie also loved cooking fajitas for the family and watching the golf cart whiz by filled with happy grandkids. Another special place of nature for Eddie was in The Courtyard neighborhood in Austin with the surprise naming of a 100 plus-year-old majestic tree The Eddie Zamora Live Oak.

One of Eddie's lesser-known roles began during his adventuresome world-travel days. During these years he became known as the Original Photobomber, long before the word photobomber was even known. His playful spirit, mischievous grin, and blue travel chapeau often found their way into the backgrounds of countless vacation photos, much to the delight of unsuspecting travelers. His zest for life was infectious, and his laughter and smile could fill up a room like nothing else.

Eddie's professional and personal motto, which influenced everyone around him, was only your very best is good enough. For the Zamora clan, Little Eddie grew up to be a fun-loving giant for all the generations, including being the official turkey carver and carrier of turkey bone stories and antics. Always wanting to stay active, Eddie was a proud 40-year veteran runner and participant in the Capitol 10,000, enjoyed weekly fitness workouts, and was forever a team captain at the annual Zamora clan post-Thanksgiving lunch football game.

Eddie will be profoundly missed and never forgotten by many. He was always supported by his large and remarkable family known as the Zamora clan, including his treasured wife of 43 years who loved him deeply and always, Melody Chatelle; children and their spouses of whom he was very proud: Melodie and Bob Summersett of Austin, Debbie Dawdy (deceased), Edward Jr. and Soraya Zamora of Edinburg, and Cindy and Robbie Huttenhower of Austin; beloved grandchildren and their spouses with whom he had the best of times at all ages of their lives; great-grandchildren who gave him hope; and

cherished and extremely supportive siblings and spouses and their families: Rosie Zamora, Art and Michele Guss Zamora, and Richard Zamora (deceased). He is also survived by numerous nieces, nephews, cousins, and their families; extended Zamora and Chatelle family members; the mother of his children, Dalia Gronbach; fellow band directors and school personnel; friends; former students whose lives he changed immensely for the better; and many more, each with their own cherished memories of this remarkable human being.

Members of the Zamora/Chatelle family express their sincerest gratitude to team members with huge hearts and loving spirit for their care of Eddie in recent months, including from Longhorn Village, The Lighthouse at Riverbend Church, and Hospice Austin. Your above-and-beyond care and support will never be forgotten.

Eddie was a proud member of University United Methodist Church in Austin and a longtime Rosicrucian (AMORC). A Celebration of Life will be held at 1 pm on Saturday, February 21, at University United Methodist Church, 2409 Guadalupe Street. Parking will be available in the church lot on 25th and Guadalupe and the Platinum Parking Lot at 2438 Guadalupe Street. Paid parking is available on the streets near the church and at the UT San Antonio garage at 2420 San Antonio Street. Attendees are asked to wear bright celebratory colors and/or burnt orange in honor of Eddie's love for the Texas Longhorns.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations are suggested to the Tila Zamora and Edward (Eddie) R. Zamora Texas Interscholastic League Foundation (TILF) Endowed Scholarship Fund (www.tilfoundation.org) or the Edward (Eddie) R. Zamora and Debbie Zamora Dawdy Endowed Scholarship in support of undergraduate students in The University of Texas Longhorn Band (<https://give.utexas.edu/?menu=OGPZAMORA-BAND>).

For more pictorial information about Eddie's life, visit www.forevermissed.com.