



Samuel S. Raia

March 19, 2026

Samuel S. Raia, 77, of Saddle River, NJ and Palm Beach, FL, passed away on March 19, 2026 after a courageous battle with pancreatic cancer. Born on August 25, 1948, in Garfield, NJ, Samuel grew up to be a natural leader whose impact was felt across the worlds of business, public service and community life.

Samuel built a distinguished career in construction that began with his father Joseph Raia and his brothers Joseph and Lawrence producing ready mix concrete at Raia Industries. Before the sale of this company in 1987, Raia Industries was the largest producer and seller of ready mix concrete in NJ with 11 plants, a quarry and over 150 concrete mixers and other heavy equipment. Next, Samuel and his brothers founded Raia Self Storage and then Raia Properties, Corp. which today owns and manages 11 residential real estate complexes throughout the Southeast.

Samuel's commitment to public service began when he was a young man. He served on the Montville Board of Education beginning in 1982 and realized that he loved giving back to the community that helped him achieve his success in business. After moving to Saddle River, he soon became an active participant in local government, serving on the Planning Board and ultimately as the town's Mayor from 2009-2017. His public service continued, though, and he was one of Governor Chris Christie's most successful fundraisers. Sam went on to become Chairman of the New Jersey Republican State Committee from 2011-2017. He served on the Board of Hackensack Meridian Health from 2003 to present; most recently as the Chairman of the HUMC Foundation. These are a few of his well known contributions to his community but there were so many more that he never told people about, members of the community he helped without looking for accolades or recognition.

Sam was a devoted Roman Catholic, seeking out Mass wherever he was in the world. Most often, he attended St Gabriel's in Saddle River for over 40 years and St Edward's in Palm Beach. He served as a lector and as an active member of the Finance Council at St. Gabriel's. He was promoted to a Knight of the Holy Sepulchre in 2017 in

St.

Patricks Cathedral, surrounded by his family. He loved to travel, golf and enjoyed Bonanza and Gunsmoke reruns.

Sam was known to so many as the proud and devoted head of the Raia Family, a role

he cherished above all. He is survived by his beloved wife Joan, his children Kimberly

Raia Nardone, Tina Raia Trainor, Samuel A. Raia and Andrew Raia and their spouses

Chris, William, Benita and Erin. Sam is also survived by his brothers, Joseph and

Lawrence and his sister Nina, with whom he shared a lifelong bond. Nothing brought

Sam greater happiness than his role as "Grandpa." He was a proud and loving grandfather to twelve grandchildren, Christopher, Luke, Nicole, Zoe, Tina, Gabriella,

Olivia, Samantha, Gianna, Alexandra, Ella, and Andrew, each of whom held a special

place in his heart. He was preceded in death by his first wife, Tina, whom he carried in

his heart always.

Visitation will be Wednesday, March 25, 3:00-7:00 pm at St. Gabriel's Church, 88 E.

Saddle River Road in Saddle River, NJ.

Mass of Christian Burial will be Thursday, March 26, 10:00 am, also at St. Gabriel's

Church. Interment to follow at St. Mary's cemetery Saddle Brook, NJ.

In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation to Hackensack Meridian Health,
John Theurer Cancer Center.

Previous Events

Visitation

MAR **25**. 3:00 PM - 7:00 PM (ET)

Saint Gabriel's Roman Catholic Church
88 East Saddle River Rd.
Saddle River , NJ
<http://stgabrielsr.org>

Mass of Christian Burial

MAR **26**. 10:00 AM (ET)

Saint Gabriel's Roman Catholic Church
88 East Saddle River Rd.
Saddle River , NJ
<http://stgabrielsr.org>

Tribute Wall

GC

“ *My deepest deepest sympathy. Sam was very special to myself and my father Nino Caldarone. We had great respect for him and he had mpeccable standards. He was a formidable man and will be greatly missed. All my love. Greg Caldarone*

Gregory Caldarone - March 31 at 07:52 PM

GP

“ *To the Raia Family...I am so very sorry to learn of Mr. Raia's passing. I had the pleasure of assisting him at the Saddle River Post Office for over forty years. I will remember him as a caring, kind man who cared deeply about his family and his community. Mr. Raia always had time for everyone, he put people first. Wishing you all peace and comfort now and always.*

Gene Platt - March 26 at 01:22 PM

“ It was with great sadness that I learned of Sam Raia’s passing, and I felt compelled to share a few thoughts about the lasting impact he had on my life and on my family.

I first came to know Sam in 1988, when I was in fourth grade at Saddle River Day School with his son Andrew. I met him at one of Andrew’s birthday parties, a sleepover as I recall, and even then, what stood out to me was that he was an involved and caring father.

As the years went on, I would see Sam from time to time. As a child, I remember seeing his concrete trucks on the road with the Raia name proudly displayed on them. Eventually, I learned that he had sold the company and later moved to Florida. We would occasionally hear about a hole in one or some other triumph of his, but it was not until he moved back to Saddle River that I really came to know him.

It was during that time that he began taking a serious interest in politics. As we all know, Sam was a consummate Republican. He genuinely loved the party, believed in its ideals, and cared deeply about playing a role in governance, both locally and at the state level.

What was so remarkable about Sam was that there were many phases to his life, and each one was distinct. He seemed to master one phase and then move on to the next challenge, always striving for something greater. In many ways, that was the story of his life.

When he first ran for council and won, Sam was proud as a peacock. After serving on the council, Sam decided to run for mayor. He was excited, energized, and deeply committed. Around that time, through the Republican Club and other community efforts, he reached out to me. I still remember the night he won. He called me and said, “Jon, we did it.” It was the first time a politician had ever called me to celebrate a victory, and it meant a great deal to me.

As mayor, he drew me even more deeply into public life. He gave me one of the great honors of my life by appointing me borough historian, along with entrusting me with other responsibilities.

At the same time, he formed what would become a lifelong friendship with my mother and father. Somehow, he convinced my father, who had always told me he would never go into politics, to begin serving. One committee led to another, one role led to something more, and before long, Sam had my father serving as council president as his right hand man.

When Sam eventually decided to step aside, he was instrumental in helping my father understand that he could, and should, become the next mayor of Saddle River, an honor and distinction that can never be replaced. It can honestly be said that Sam played a pivotal role in that life changing event for my family.

When my father became mayor, Sam became Chairman of the State Republican party. And while he was the pinnacle of NJ politics, he entered a calmer phase of life. He knew how to offer constructive criticism, how to give praise, and just as importantly, when not to get involved. But he always made it clear that he was there and that he was a friend first. He never stopped expressing how much he cared about Saddle River, its people, and the good things happening in the community.

Of course, one of the most difficult times in his life was the loss of his wife Tina. He was profoundly affected by that loss. A few years later, it was wonderful to learn that he had met someone new, I believe through church, with whom he found companionship, friendship, and love that he may have once thought he would never experience again. And to Joan, you made Sam immensely happy and he loved you with all his heart.

During that time, he spoke often about his bothers, sister, children and grandchildren. Sam, like my own father, was not always the type to say directly to his children how impressed he was or how

proud he was, but he certainly made sure everyone else knew. So to Sam's children and all those he loved, there was never a time I spoke with him when he was not saying something wonderful about all of you, and saying it with enormous pride.

In more recent years, my interactions with Sam took on a simpler but deeply meaningful rhythm. Over the last year or so, we would routinely see each other at the deli in town, and those encounters became one of the highlights of my week. I always looked forward to seeing Sam and Joan, and talking with him, and hearing what he had to say about life, about Palm Beach, about what I could do better, about what my father was doing right, and about so many other things.

I am truly heartbroken that I will not have those moments anymore.

Over the course of nearly forty years, I experienced Sam in so many ways, first as a friend's father, then as a businessman, then as a politician, then as an elected official, then as a state chairman, and ultimately as a friend.

And that final role, Sam as a friend, was the most meaningful of all, and something for which I will be forever grateful.

To Sam's family, and to everyone who loved him, I share in your sorrow over this loss. But even more than that, I am deeply grateful for everything he did for me, for my family, and for this community. And I am proud that I had the privilege of calling him my friend.

God Bless you Mayor Raia. You will be truly missed.

Jon Kurpis - March 25 at 04:54 PM

KB

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Kevin Bernhardt - March 25 at 04:54 PM

TL

“ I'm so grateful to have known Sam. He was truly an exceptional human being. A man among men! God bless you and the Raia family!

Tom Lefebvre - March 25 at 01:02 PM

DD

“ Sam and Tina will always be in my heart. A more generous, caring and giving couple I cannot think of. Love you Sam.



Donald Diorio - March 25 at 12:08 PM

CJ

“ Nothing will ever beat the OG 7 ❤️🙏 We will miss you forever ❤️



Chris Jr. - March 23 at 09:24 PM

DC

“ *My deepest condolences to the family and friends of Samuel. May you rest in peace.* ”



Dennis Cappello - March 23 at 08:53 PM

MF

“ *Our deepest condolences to the entire Raia Family. He was a remarkable man. He will be missed.* ”



Manigault Family - March 23 at 05:13 PM

AL

“ *2 files added to the tribute wall* ”



Allie - March 23 at 04:03 PM

GI

“ *1 file added to the tribute wall* ”



Gianna - March 23 at 01:29 PM

RM

“ Still remember him with his Owen’s boat and 60 hp Johnson when he was a teenager. Was a great neighbor and friend in upper greenwood lake.

Rene Manzo



Rene Manzo - March 23 at 01:06 PM

DH

“ Our deepest condolences to the entire family and friends. Our hope is that fond memories can help during this difficult time. Dave and Susan Hollenbeck along with the entire Hollenbeck Family.

Dave Hollenbeck - March 23 at 11:32 AM

JR

“ I will always love him and miss him. He was my little brother

Joseph S Raia - March 23 at 09:57 AM

CH

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Carol Hanzo - March 22 at 07:25 PM

CH

Dear Nina & Family--My Sympathy to you and your family on the passing of your Brother Sam--He is now back with his love.. Carol

Carol Hanzo - March 23 at 11:54 AM

CS

Dear Joan and to the Family:

I just learned about Sam's passing and am deeply saddened by your loss. It was a honor to know Sam. He was truly an exceptional human being and will be deeply missed by everyone who knew him. He had a tremendous sense of human and loved by everyone.

Sam, rest in peace. Casey Stengel, Maus and Hoffman

Cas;ey Stemge;` - Yesterday at 09:35 AM

JS

“*Joe Santos lit a candle in memory of Samuel Raia*



Joe Santos - March 22 at 10:56 AM

AK

Sam was an extremely, rare, caring person we were all so very blessed to meet in our lifetime. He always was to greet us, check on our wellbeing and be sure we were well! He always made our day when we met him at Mass at St. G over the past 25 years!

Aurora and Ken Kelly - March 25 at 12:02 PM