



Daniel Alvarez

August 9, 1924 - January 14, 2026

Daniel Alvarez was a fighter. Not for himself and never with violence. Rather he fought the good fight with words and ideas for those who could not fight for themselves. As best he could, Daniel strived to know God's will in the many campaigns and struggles he undertook. Where he fell short the Lord covered for him--repeatedly. To understand his long life, one would need to understand Daniel's deep faith in God and the intimate relationship he had with Jesus Christ, from his earliest years. This relationship was the one he treasured most and for his entire life.

Charismatic, and with his strong Cuban accent, Daniel could be charming or fierce depending on the situation. His laugh was as powerful as his scowl. With a cold stare or a warm smile there was rarely any doubt what he was thinking.

Daniel was born in Cuba in 1924. He was one of nine children. His father was a minister and his mother a professor. His loving grandmother helped raise Daniel and his eight siblings.

Daniel was ordained at a very young age and studied in the United States at a prestigious seminary. Returning to Cuba with his family after seminary he served churches and had a hand in helping the poor and forgotten. Daniel's education and life experience helped him develop a special sensitivity to the

suffering brought on by tyranny. This world view would drive personal and professional decisions throughout his life.

Serving the Cuban national government in the first year of the Castro regime, Daniel was proud that before a permanent bureaucracy set in, he was able to transform youth prisons to group homes with a path to reform for young Cubans. Learning what the new regime was truly about, and thoroughly disgusted by it, he escaped to the United States.

Soon after arriving in the United States, The New York Times published an article in 1961 describing an open letter Daniel wrote to Christians in Cuba warning of tyranny. He later helped his parents and six of his siblings resettle in the United States.

After a transitional time in New York City where he served a church and worked as a social worker in a hospital, Daniel was recruited to Chicago to work as a director in the field of human services. He also served as an assistant to the Governor of Illinois.

For ten years, beginning in 1989 Daniel was honored to serve his longtime friend, Mayor Richard M. Daley as Commissioner of Human Services for the City of Chicago. This was the boss and job he loved the most in his long career. Having previously seen the best and worst in politics and government, Daniel believed deeply in Mayor Daley and the focused agenda the mayor set for Chicago. Streamlining and professionalizing the department were among Daniel's many accomplishments at the City of Chicago.

After retiring from full-time work Daniel devoted time to boards and commissions, volunteer work, and memorable years with his family.

The last six years of his life were much quieter and gave Daniel time he so

obviously enjoyed thoroughly reflecting on his prayer life. His focus turned deeper and with more fervor than ever to his faith. It was remarkable to be around such intensity focused on God. His many professional achievements and friendships never came close to how deeply he loved and enjoyed his family.

On January 14, 2026, Daniel passed away at Presbyterian Homes. He passed away with true humility, dignity, grace and peace, holding hands with his family.

Immediately after he passed away the caregivers (including off duty), cooks, cleaning staff, nurses and nurse's aides, deeply moved by his passing, spontaneously filed in one by one to pay their respects to Daniel. Each one expressed how much he impacted them.

Daniel was predeceased by his beloved wife Ann Alvarez. He was devoted father of Carmen, Sonia (Michael), Daniel (Rae Anne), and Manuel (Lisa). He was the cherished Abuelo to Vanessa, Marisa, Emily, Cristina, Maria, Adam, Luke, and Eric; and Great Abuelo to Sydney, London, Seth, Augusta, Lucy and Ollie.

Funeral services and internment were held on January 16, 2026.

Cemetery Details

Memorial Park Cemetery

9900 Gross Point Road
Skokie, IL 60076