



Vincent Paul Zarlenga

September 6, 1957 - April 11, 2026

Glen Gardner - Vincent Paul Zarlenga, age 68 passed away on Saturday, April 11, 2026 at his residence. Born in Oak Park, Illinois to the late Charles Zarlenga and Carol Fiorda, Vincent was raised in Chicago and graduated from Taft High School in 1975. After high school, he enlisted in the United States Marine Corps, serving his country for six years. Vincent received his Associates Degree in Fitness and Nutrition in 1987 from UCNJ Union College of Union County, New Jersey and received his Master personal trainer certifications in Fitness and Nutrition from Cooper Institute in 2004.

Vincent served as the Postmaster for the Dunellen Post Office from 1988 to 1991 and then started his career as a Master Certified Personal Trainer, owning and operating Elite Fitness since 1991. He was a man whose passion for fitness, discipline, and helping others defined his life. As a master certified personal trainer and lifelong student of the human body, he built an extraordinary career rooted in both knowledge and achievement. From 1984 to 1995, he stood undefeated in competitive bodybuilding in New Jersey, earning a reputation for excellence, consistency, and unmatched dedication to his craft. His many titles included Mr. Garden State (1984), Mr. Jersey Shore (1987), Mr. New Jersey (1988, overall champion), Mr. USA (1989), Mr. East Coast USA (1994), and Mr. Muscle Beach (1995). On the national and international stage, he placed 4th in Mr. Universe (1988) and 6th in Mr. America (1988), solidifying his status among the sport's elite.

Beyond competition, his true calling was guiding others. After winning the Mr.

New Jersey title, he began training clients in 1988—a path he would follow for decades. With expert-level understanding of muscle function and performance across a wide range of sports, he worked with individuals of all ages and abilities. He took great pride in helping people not only reach but exceed their personal fitness goals, always emphasizing proper technique, discipline, and confidence. His passion extended to writing, where he contributed fitness articles to the Newark Star-Ledger's weekly columns, sharing his knowledge and inspiring a broader community to pursue healthier lives. He will be remembered not only for his remarkable accomplishments, but for his generosity, mentorship, and the lasting impact he made on everyone he trained and encouraged.

Besides his parents, he was predeceased by his sister, Janet. Vincent is survived by his son, Vincent Daniel Zarlenga of Hackettstown; his daughters, April Zarlenga of New Jersey and Crystal Astorga of Winter Park, Florida; his grandchildren, Kaylani and Kayden Astorga; and his sister, Nancy and her children, Brian and his wife Jodi and Nicole.

Funeral services will be held at 11:30 a.m. on Saturday, May 2, 2026 at the Pinkel Funeral Home, 31 Bank Street (Route 23), Sussex. Interment and military honors will immediately follow at the Northern NJ Veterans Memorial Cemetery in Sparta. Friends may pay their respects to the family on Saturday prior to the service from 10:30 a.m. to 11:30 am at the funeral home. Online condolences may be offered to the family at www.pinkelfuneralhome.com.

Cemetery Details

Northern New Jersey Veterans Memorial Cemetery

75 North Church Road
Sparta, NJ 07871

Previous Events

Visitation

MAY 2. 10:30 AM - 11:30 AM (ET)

Pinkel Funeral Home, Inc.
31 Bank Street (Route 23)
Sussex, NJ 07461
(973) 875-3272
alexis@pinkelfuneralhome.com
<https://www.pinkelfuneralhome.com/>

Service

MAY 2. 11:30 AM (ET)

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Tribute Wall

CA

“ *Carolyn.burdi73@gmail.com lit a candle in memory of Vincent Paul Zarlenga*



Carolyn.burdi73@gmail.com - May 02 at 08:30 PM



“ *Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Vincent Paul Zarlenga.*



April 30 at 03:46 PM



“ *A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Vincent Paul Zarlenga.*

April 30 at 03:46 PM

TB

“ *T Kirby, M Calabrese, P Caputo, B Loutos, M Seryczek, N Berg purchased the Peaceful White Lilies Basket for the family of Vincent Paul Zarlenga.*



T Kirby, M Calabrese, P Caputo, B Loutos, M Seryczek, N Berg - April 28 at 10:55 AM

CM

“ 2 files added to the tribute wall



carla Mitchell - April 27 at 06:31 PM

CM

“ Vincent Zarlenga gave me one of the greatest gifts of my life our beautiful daughter, Crystal Astorga, his youngest and his pride & Joy. For that alone, I will always hold love and gratitude in my heart for him.

Even from miles away, he was a devoted father. I will never forget how he called her every morning when she was little, making sure she started her day with his voice, his love “good morning” and “have a good day.” It was a simple act, but it meant everything, and I admired him deeply for it. My heart is heavy knowing he is gone, but he will never truly leave us. He lives on in Crystal, in his grandchildren, and in all of his children. The memories we shared, especially the day our daughter was born will always be among the most meaningful moments of my life.

Not many know this, but Vince is now with one of his children in heaven. After our firstborn, I became pregnant again, and due to medical complications, we lost the baby very early on. I find comfort in believing he is now with Crystal’s sibling—together, watching over us with love.

Please take a moment to listen to a song made especially for Crystal and her father, created by Elias Soto, the father of Vince’s granddaughter, a beautiful tribute that captures their bond and the love that will always remain.

I am grateful for his service as a Marine, something he carried with pride. “Once a Marine, always a Marine.”

Rest in peace, Vince. You will be missed, remembered, and loved always.



carla Mitchell - April 27 at 06:00 PM

TK

Vince was such a good friend in high school and just after he joined the Marines. He was a legend even back then. Great guy. One of the very best. He will be missed.

Tim Kirby - April 27 at 09:52 PM



He was a fun guy in high school, lots of good times and memories...Bless you, Vince and your family. Kerry Knapp (Probst)

Kerry Knapp - April 29 at 02:46 AM

RW

Great man who ALWAYS talked about his children. He was a stern fella but proud of his accomplishments, especially his family. You will be missed by many! RIP.

Robert D Warnock - April 30 at 04:18 PM

MF

Vince and I were grade school classmates. After 8th grade, we lost touch as went to different high schools. I reconnected with Vince about 10 years ago and, when we did so, we picked up right where we left off. He was a fantastic athlete. I will miss Vince's kind words and thoughtful gestures toward me and each member of my family. He knew each of my children's names and always asked about them. He loved his children so much and was always proud to talk about them to me. My good friend Vince, I will miss you.

Mike Foltz - April 30 at 09:27 PM