

Howard W. Martinez was born December 17, 1938, in Atlanta, Georgia to George and Martha (nee Johnson) Martinez. Howard grew up in the Palm River area hunting doves and shooting snook under the Seddon Island docks in Tampa. He served his country in the US Navy and achieved Master Diver status, a skill that would serve him all his life. After discharge, Howard joined the Tampa Police Department. While working at the TPD, he also earned his degree in Business Finance from the University of Tampa. He served the Police Department for 25 years and attained the rank of Captain. Howard received praise and numerous commendations from every Chief he served under, and was one of the most respected supervisors by the rank and file officers. At his retirement party, he received a five minute standing ovation and was presented with a plaque declaring him a "Cop's Cop." After leaving the department, Howard continued his law enforcement career with the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office, retiring after ten years as a Detective. He was hand picked by the Sheriff to handle special and sensitive projects. Howard was an avid outdoors man who enjoyed diving the wrecks for grouper, scouring honey holes for lobster in the Keys, fishing the backwaters for trout and reds, and taking simple walks holding hands on Cayo Costa. Hunting the Citrus Wildlife Area was also a lifelong passion; be it deer or taking fox squirrels with handmade flu-flu arrows, many a tale was told in camp at the tin shed. Howard fulfilled his lifelong dream by moving to the Englewood/Boca Grande area which he described as one of the most beautiful places on Earth. He would later meet Anna and continue his dream in Punta Gorda. Howard went to be with his Lord on March 7, 2010 at the age of 71. He will be greatly missed by his son, George "Bo" Martinez; daughter, Collette (Rod) Baker; fiancée Anna Jurado; and granddaughter, Ashley Martinez. He is preceded in death by his parents, and his wife and third grade elementary school sweetheart, Helen Martinez. A service in celebration of Howard's life will be at 11:00 am, Friday, March 12, 2010 at Trinity Baptist Church, 11234 Royal Rd, Punta Gorda. Memorial donations may be made to the Humane Society, 4519 Drance St, Port Charlotte, FL 33980. To send condolences to the family, please sign the online guest book. To say Howard will be missed is a gross understatement. From family to friends, Howard was always a leader. If Howard was your friend, you were a friend for life. An era has come to an end.