

Immigration Activist Juan Carlos Ruiz Dead at 53

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Milwaukee, WI - Juan Carlos Ruiz, a prominent activist that helped organized one of the key immigration reform marches in Washington DC, died on March 3rd in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. According to family members, he died of natural causes. Mr. Ruiz worked mainly with the immigrant community throughout the nation, and his work and activism took him all over the country, helping organize those communities. In 1996 he attended the first national march in Washington for equal rights for immigrants, and later helped organized a subsequent march. He was a fixture on the immigration front, appearing at local and [national TV](#) and radio programs advocating for immigrant rights. At the local level, he organized groups, founded organizations, and trained new leaders. He was particularly critical of increasing Latino voter turnout in places where the Latino population was growing, working closely with national groups, like LULAC, and NCLR.

For a few years, Mr. Ruiz moved to Washington DC, where he worked with the Council of Latino Agencies, and was the Executive Director of the DC Latino Action Coalition, an organization he helped establish with the late Angel Luis Irene. In recent years, he had settled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, where he founded the [Latino Carnaval Parade and Street Festival](#).

Juan Carlos Ruiz was originally from Huancayo, Peru and studied Psychology at the National University of Federico Villarreal. In his native Peru, he headed efforts against the communist guerilla insurgent organization Shining Path (Sendero Luminoso). With mounting death threats for the work he was doing in Peru, he sought political asylum in the US in the early 1990's. In the US, he continued his activism, and in 1999, then Wisconsin [Congressman Thomas M. Barrett recognized him](#) in the US House of Representatives for having earned the nation's most distinguished citation for community health leadership: the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's Community Health Leadership Award.

Mr. Ruiz was preceded in death by his former wife, and lives behind two children, Roberto and Paulina Ruiz-Maki. A [gofundme](#) page has been set up to help with his funeral arrangements.

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