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# South Florida basketball great Cesar Odio dies at 58 from leukemia

## HIGHLIGHTS

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He was 58 and had been battling leukemia for about nine years

Odio is survived by his wife, Mary Kay, and their children, Emily and Eddie



BY WALTER VILLA  
*Special to the Miami Herald*

Cesar Odio, who won more games than anyone in the history of Barry University men's basketball, died Wednesday.

He was 58 and had been battling leukemia for about nine years. He had been in remission twice before succumbing to the deadly disease.

"It's a tough loss," said Bill Sullivan, who is Barry's women's basketball coach and a close friend. "He was a great coach and an even better person.

"If I had to pick one word to describe him, it would be 'warrior.' As a player and as a coach, he was as tough a competitor as you will ever find."

A native of Havana, Odio was a star player in his day. As a 6-5 power forward for Columbus, he led Miami-Dade high schools in scoring as a senior in 1976-77. He was also named first-team All-County by the Miami Herald.

Odio was just as good in college, leading Florida Southern to an NCAA Division II national title in 1981. Odio was the team captain that season.

As a coach, he got his start at Lakeland's Santa Fe High School and was an assistant at Florida Southern. He served as a head coach for seven years at Miami Dade College (Kendall Campus), putting together a 128-84 record. He led the program in wins at the time of his departure, including a 26-9 mark in 1988-89.

Odio took over at Barry for the 1994-95 season and compiled a 266-218 record in 17 years. He was twice named the Sunshine State Conference's Coach of the Year.

He joined Barry's administrative staff in 2013-2014, serving as assistant director of athletics.

Like their father, both Emily and Eddie made first-team All-Dade.

"Cesar," Sullivan said, "was completely devoted to his family."

Odio is survived by his wife, Mary Kay, and their children, Emily and Eddie, in addition to his father, Cesar, a former Miami city manager. Emily played volleyball at Killian High and at Wingate University. Eddie, a 6-8 forward, played basketball at Columbus and Boston College.

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