



Robert Earl Slay

September 11, 1951 - September 14, 2025

Robert Earl Slay was born on September 11, 1951, to Lena Mae Amerson (Slay) and Sylvester Slay Sr. in Belzoni, Mississippi. Robert was the 5th child of 13 children born into this union. Robert spent the first few years of living in the south before packing up with his older siblings and parents to come to Chicago.

Robert graduated from Morgan Park High School in 1970 and went on to study Electrical Engineering at Illinois Technical College. Right before graduation, Robert started his first job with Ball Corporation as an Electrician Technical Specialist which kicked off a long-standing career that spanned almost 30 years retiring in 2001.

It all kicked off in 1976, at a birthday bash thrown by sister and Pastor Brenda Bush. While Robert and Barbara had technically been in the same orbit thanks to their friend Ronald Canty, that party was the moment the universe decided enough was enough. They struck up a conversation that evening, and things escalated quickly: they were on their first date the very next day, sharing a romantic meal at Ponderosa Steakhouse. Over the next few whirlwind months, a relationship blossomed. They sealed the deal with a daughter, Andrea, in 1983, then finally made it official and got married in 1988. Just two years into wedded bliss, they welcomed their son, Robert Jr., in 1990, completing the beautiful family that started with a party and a steak.

Robert was the educational cornerstone of his family, driven by a deep love of learning and an intellectual curiosity that never waned. Education was not just a pursuit for him—it was a passion that set the tone for his entire family. He loved to share that intellectual fire, armed with a disarming wit and a gift for conversation. Robert could, and would, talk to anyone, anywhere, drawing people in with his infectious personality and leaving them smarter than when they started the conversation. Once he started, you needed a calendar, not a clock, to measure how long he would be talking.

Outside of his professional duties at Ball, Robert's true world was computing. It was not just a casual interest; it was a consuming, lifelong passion. His evenings were frequently spent either immersed in building or maintaining systems at home, or, more often, serving as the family and friends' indispensable IT guru. If a loved one had a frustrating technical glitch, Robert was the one on the other end of the line, patiently and expertly troubleshooting until the problem was solved. For him, the digital domain was a constant source of fascination and a selfless opportunity to help.

In Robert's later years of life, he devoted much of his time to his children and grandchildren, cooking his pot roast, casserole and waking everybody up early Saturday morning with the smell of bacon and eggs.

Because he believed so strongly in the power of education, Robert devoted substantial time to his children and grandchildren, personally mentoring them on the lifelong significance of education. He was often in the front row, and center at school assemblies, award ceremonies, graduations, and football games, even in the rain, sleet, and snow, he was present; their success

mattered enough for him to show up, every single time. That enduring commitment sent a powerful message: his family's learning and achievement

were the most momentous events in his own life.

On the morning of September 14, 2025, surrounded by his wife and children, their hands clasped firmly in his, Robert peacefully ascended into heaven. He was preceded in death by his mother, Lena Mae, father, Sylvester Sr, his sister Albertha and his brothers Aleric, Willie, and Johnnie.

Robert is survived by his wife: Barbara Slay; Son: Robert Jr; Daughter: Andrea; 3 grandchildren: Marvin, Marquise and Lailah; 3 sisters: Lavern, Linda and Vernita (Terry); 6 brothers: Lee, Jessie, Sylvester Jr. (Georgetta), Jeffery, Karl and Gregory; and a host of nieces, nephews, cousins and friends.

Robert was preceded in death by his parents, Lena Mae and Sylvester Sr, his eldest sister, Albertha, his brothers, Aleric, Willie, and Johnnie.

Cemetery Details

Lincoln Cemetery

12300 South Kedzie Avenue
Blue Island, IL 60406

Previous Events

Public Viewing

OCT 11. 3:00 PM - 5:00 PM (CT)

Calahan Funeral Home - Legacy Center
7046 S. Halsted
Chicago, IL 60621

Visitation

OCT 12. 9:30 AM - 10:00 AM (CT)

Calahan Funeral Home - Legacy Center
7046 S. Halsted
Chicago, IL 60621

Funeral Service

OCT 12. 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM (CT)

Calahan Funeral Home - Legacy Center
7046 S. Halsted
Chicago, IL 60621

Burial/Interment

OCT **12**. 1:00 PM - 1:30 PM (CT)

Lincoln Cemetery
12300 South Kedzie Avenue
Blue Island, IL 60406

Tribute Wall

KS

“ Kyle and Shane planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Robert Earl Slay.

Kyle and Shane - October 12, 2025 at 01:09 AM

KS

“ Kyle and Shane purchased the Beautiful Dreams for the family of Robert Earl Slay.



Kyle and Shane - October 12, 2025 at 01:09 AM

BH

“ Blanca H. planted a grove of 3 [Memorial Trees](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Robert Earl Slay.

Blanca H. - October 09, 2025 at 09:21 PM

HE

“ Hershey sent a virtual gift in memory of Robert Earl Slay



Hershey - October 07, 2025 at 07:55 PM

HE

“ *Hershey lit a candle in memory of Robert Earl Slay*



Hershey - October 07, 2025 at 07:50 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Robert Earl Slay.

September 25, 2025 at 07:57 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Robert Earl Slay.

September 19, 2025 at 08:04 PM



“ *Sentiments of Serenity Spray* was purchased for the family of Robert Earl Slay.



September 19, 2025 at 08:04 PM