



Eddie Van Halen

January 26, 1955 - October 6, 2020

Santa Monica, California

Eddie Van Halen, the immigrant kid from Pasadena who made a guitar sound like it had more than six strings and two hands, died on October 6, 2020, at Saint John's Health Center in Santa Monica, California. He was sixty-five. The cause was a stroke after years of fighting cancer, and his wife Janie, his son Wolfgang, his former wife Valerie Bertinelli and his brother Alex were with him.

Edward Lodewijk Van Halen was born in Amsterdam on January 26, 1955, to Jan Van Halen, a Dutch jazz clarinetist and saxophonist, and Eugenia Van Beers, who was of Dutch and Indonesian descent. Tired of the way their mixed marriage was treated, the family sailed for the United States in 1962 and settled in Pasadena, where Jan worked as a janitor and played gigs at night. The boys studied classical piano. Eddie bought a drum kit, Alex kept borrowing it, and the brothers eventually traded instruments for good.

They named their first band the Broken Combs and played lunchtime shows at Hamilton Elementary. In 1972 they founded the group that would carry the family name. On the band's 1978 debut, a minute and forty seconds called Eruption announced two-handed tapping to a generation of teenagers who promptly tried it in their bedrooms. He did not invent the technique, as he was the first to say, but he made it famous.

He built his best-known guitar from spare parts and striped it with tape and paint, and the Frankenstrat became as recognizable as his grin. In 1982 he recorded the solo on Michael Jackson's Beat It and took no fee. He also held a patent for a fold-out support that let a player tap with the guitar lying face up, like a piano.

He blamed his tongue cancer, treated in 2000, on years of holding brass and copper picks in his mouth.

Wolfgang, who played bass in the band's final years, announced afterward that there would be no Van Halen without Eddie.

Services

Died of a stroke at Saint John's Health Center, Santa Monica, California, October 6, 2020, aged 65, with his wife Janie, son Wolfgang, former wife Valerie Bertinelli and brother Alex at his side. Co-founder and guitarist of Van Halen. Portrait: concert photograph by Carl Lender, CC BY 2.0 (via Wikimedia Commons), cropped and hosted by Notice Nearby.

NN-OBIT-2026-H239

<https://noticenearby.com/obituaries/eddie-van-halen-obituary-santa-monica-ca>

Base stores the content hash, publication number, memorial id, and timestamp - not the full obituary text. The complete memorial remains on Notice Nearby. This is not a legal affidavit.

This page is a memorial, not a legal affidavit.