



## Olga Rose Giovanacci

July 23, 1922 - December 10, 2012

Olga Giovanacci, beloved mother, grandmother, great grandmother, aunt, cousin, and locally renowned restaurateur, passed away peacefully at home surrounded by her loving family on December 10, 2012 at the age of 90. Olga was born Olga Rose Signor to Prima (Mom) and Frank (Pop) Signor on July 23, 1922 In Santa Barbara and attended local schools.

As a young woman she enjoyed sports such as basketball and softball, playing for Santa Barbara High School and Local Girls Softball clubs. She loved bragging about her athletic ability and talent, often telling stories of her time as a young softball and basketball player to her children and grandchildren.

At the age of 14, Olga was thrust into the restaurant business as a waitress and cocktail server by her mother Prima at a local café on Cota Street which was to become Mom's Italian Village. Although her mother was historically and locally known as "Mom", it was Olga herself that made the moniker her own as she worked tirelessly 6 days a week, 12 to 14 hours a day as a waitress, hostess, bartender, banquet manager, general manager, and owner for 60 years until the restaurant's closing in 1995.

In 1946 Olga married the love of her life Wilson F Giovanacci and together they lived on the Mesa for almost 50 years. They gave birth to 3 Children – Cheryl, Alan, and Tricia.

Olga was involved in various groups such as Las Madronas, The Italian American Boot Club, The Italian Catholic Federation, Native Daughters, and

was one of the last surviving members of the Santa Barbara Athletic Round Table's own "Recycled Teenagers". After her retirement in 1995, she volunteered her time at Saint Francis Hospital and also Fall River Valley Health Center in Northern California when she would visit her daughter, Cheryl. And as a proud breast cancer survivor, she was involved in the "Think Pink" Breast Cancer Awareness organization in Fall River Mills also.

Olga was hospitable, caring, compassionate, and charismatic. Those traits were what drove the reputation of Mom's Italian Village and the family atmosphere that made Mom's Italian Village one of the most well known restaurants in the history of Santa Barbara. There is not a person she met personally that she didn't make feel comfortable, welcome, or taken care of. Her charisma, humor, selflessness, and personality were evident even through her final years. Strangers, nurses, family, friends, and business associates alike equally got a glimpse of her spunk and sass that she exhibited anytime they spent any amount time with her. She was an avid bowler, loved to laugh, dance, read romance novels, watch classic movies, cook for her family, and spend time with her grandchildren and great-grandchildren who affectionately called her their Nona. She was a hard worker, an unselfish giver, and the matriarch of her family. She had a zest for life, for laughter and was the youngest 90 year old woman you could ever meet. Along with dozens of loving family members, she had many friends throughout Santa Barbara County, California, The United States, and the World. She will be greatly missed.

Olga is reunited in death with her parents, Prima and Frank Signor, her loving husband of 49 years Wilson Giovanacci, her brother Ugo Signor, cousins Rosita Gallina, Marissa Ricketts, Ugo Melchiori, Olga Hagen, her closest cousin and adopted brother Enrico Melchoiri and son-in-law Dennis Riley. She is survived by her children Cheryl Riley, Alan Giovanacci, Tricia Johnson and her beloved grandchildren Anthony and Marissa Giovanacci, Kymberly Vasquez (Joel), Eric Johnson, Brian Riley, Kristi Shriner (Brandt), and Kerri West (Mike) as well as her great-grandchildren Elijah, Rian, Ragan, Renna,

Riley, Maddie, and Liam. Olga also leaves behind many cousins, nieces and nephews that will miss her dearly.

One of Olga's favorite sayings in her later years after she retired from the restaurant business was "che bella vita che avere, mangiare e bere, e non trabarare" (what a beautiful life we can have - eat and drink and not have to work.)

What a beautiful life indeed.

# Cemetery Details

## Calvary Cemetery

199 North Hope Ave  
Santa Barbara, CA 93110  
(805) 687-8811  
[http://www.archdiocese.la/directories/cemeteries/info.php?cemetery\\_id=3](http://www.archdiocese.la/directories/cemeteries/info.php?cemetery_id=3)

# Previous Events

## Visitation

DEC **20**. 9:00 AM - 8:00 PM (PT)

Welch-Ryce-Haider - Downtown  
15 E. Sola St.  
Santa Barbara, CA 93101  
(805) 965-5145  
[info@wrhsb.com](mailto:info@wrhsb.com)  
<https://www.wrhsb.com>

## Funeral Mass

DEC **21**. 10:00 AM (PT)

Holy Cross Catholic Church  
1740 Cliff Drive  
Santa Barbara, CA 93109  
(805) 962-0411

# Tribute Wall

LM

“ Dear Alan and family,  
Four years later and I'm just learning about your dear moms passing. I'm not sure if you will even see this now, but I wanted to let you know how much I loved your mom. She was always a great friend and mentor. She was always so gracious and so much fun to be around. Love to all of you.  
Linda (Gennari) McCallion

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Linda McCallion - June 26, 2016 at 08:28 AM

SS

“ I remember first coming to Santa Barbara in July 1959 and missing the good Pizza of a local shop in Inglewood, until my neighbor, Donna Heiser introduced me to Cheryl and Alan Giovanacci's Mom, Olga and her wonderful restaurant. From then on it was Petrini's vs., Mom's for me. But though my Dad was friends with the Petrini brother, I enjoyed Mom's more. I especially remember when we kids would party at the Giovanacci Mesa home in 1959 and we ate through about 5 pizzas and they made this "transplant" feel so welcome. Mrs. Giovanacci was a wonderful woman and years later, I was fortunate to have the "Village" as both a customer of my company and as a wonderful place for me to eat at and entertain my friends. I am so sorry to see them BOTH gone. Steve Schlah

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steve schlah - February 11, 2014 at 11:47 PM

LD

“ Cheryl, Alan, Tricia. I wanted to let you know how wonderful your mom was. She had a great sense of humor, she had a big heart. The memories she shared with us late after a night when we worked were priceless. For all the people thru the years that went to Mom's Italian Village wonderful memories too. My prayers are with you and your family now.  
Lori Davison (Bortolazzo)

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**Lori Davison** - December 20, 2012 at 09:19 AM

PM

“ Dear Cheryl, Alan and Tricia. I read with sadness the passing of your Mom, Olga.  
My childhood -with best friend Cheryl, leaves fond memories of Olga, at Mom's Italian Village where she allowed us to custom make pizzas to sideline "coaching" for every Dolores School sporting event to the best birthday parties ever.  
I remember also being included in the family's New Year's Day party at Mom's house.  
Your Mom was always a wonderful support and joy to be around. I send all of you strength to get through this sad period and loss. Cheryl, I'm still in town and working in same place. Would love to see you again.  
Peggy Vizzolini Mueting

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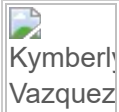
**Peg (Peggy) Mueting** - December 19, 2012 at 05:57 PM

EO

“ Dear Family and Friends of Olga,  
I am so sorry to read of the loss of Olga - a delightful, warm and loving woman. I knew Olga as one of the "recycled teenagers" and always looked forward to chatting with her at the SBART annual events. I got to know her wonderful spirit when she came to watch Kym (her granddaughter) play basketball on the SBCC Women's team. Olga was always a supportive presence even in her comments to officials! I feel fortunate to have had the pleasure to know Olga and witness her bright light. Kym, you and our family are in my thoughts and prayers. I'm sure that all the fond memories of Olga and her smiling face are a comfort. All my love, Ellen O'Connor

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**Ellen O'Connor** - December 19, 2012 at 12:30 PM



Ellen,  
Myself and my family are so touched by your comment, thank you for reaching out. Her warmth and smiling face and the people whose lives she touched are definitely a comfort. I know I myself will forever strive to be the person she was.

Thank you again

Love,  
Kym

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**KyMBERly Vazquez** - December 27, 2012 at 05:01 PM

MR

“ Alan: I'm so sorry to read about your mother. She is with the Lord and you and your family are in my prayers. Many blessings, Gary's mom, Marilyn

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**Marilyn Royal** - December 17, 2012 at 12:26 AM

JP

*We were saddened to hear about Olga's passing. She was a wonderful person.*

*Sincere condolences to the Giovanacci and Signor families. The Perreault family*

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**Joey Perreault** - December 17, 2012 at 11:27 AM