



Victor Orlando Di Bella

July 4, 1947 - November 5, 2020

Victor Orlando Di Bella of Santa Barbara, 1947-2020

Source: Regina Di Bella Navia

“Walking forever in the promised land”

Victor Orlando Di Bella passed away on Nov. 5, 2020, of natural causes in his home of 46 years in Santa Barbara. He was 73 years old.

Victor was born on July 4, 1947 in Jersey City, New Jersey. He is survived by his immediate family, younger sister, Regina Navia, her husband, Dr. Bradford Navia of Sudbury Massachusetts, their two sons, Jonathan Navia of Sudbury and Jason Navia, his wife Dr. Ida Bastiaens and their two sons, Julian and Max of Westchester, New York.

Victor is predeceased by his loving mother Gloria Inglese Di Bella, and aunts Ann and Jean English (Inglese), who raised him and his younger sister. He is remembered by his loving large Italian American family and many friends and teammates in his hometown and college.

Locally, Victor is remembered by his many loving and caring friends in Santa Barbara, where he lived most of his adult life, Chuck and Paulana Porter, their

children and grandchildren, Marty and Kate Conoley, Jay and Sally Kosoff, Steve Harwell, Day Yeager, Andrew Gatto, Fred and Amy Sperber, Danny Napoli, Terry Bazylewicz Nancy Fellerman-Yahr, and so many others whose lives he touched in different ways.

Victor had many gifts. He was a star high school athlete in baseball and basketball, voted class athlete and recruited to many colleges. He was an English major and graduated from Montclair State University in New Jersey, and spent a year as an exchange student at Chico State University in California

Sports and books were his passion. While living in Santa Barbara, he continued playing sports, including slow pitch and softball leagues for many years. He coached with Pete MacDougall in the Recreation T-Ball and Coached-Pitch league. He was an avid tennis player and a former member of the Santa Barbara Unitarian Society.

Victor read and wrote extensively on a range of topics, history, neuroscience, philosophy, social psychology, philosophy and religion. He was highly intelligent, thoughtful, soft spoken, kind and gentle — the kind of person you could go up to and strike a conversation about anything.

He would listen as if what you said really mattered, and soon you would find yourself, in spite of yourself, in a world where you felt welcomed. Victor was gifted listener, compassionate and empathetic.

Not surprisingly, Victor's career was in public service. He was an elementary special needs teacher in the U.S. Virgin Islands after which he moved to Santa Barbara in 1975, where he worked as a caseworker for the Santa Barbara County Department of Social Services and the Employment and Training Service (CETA).

He enjoyed the camaraderie of his co-workers, many of whom became lifelong loyal friends. Caring, trusting and calm, he contributed to the quality of life of many residents of Santa Barbara, whether at work or on his many walks through town.

Victor was a lover of many things — cats, sports, the beach, walks into town, Italian food, bi-yearly trips from his sister and family where together they enjoyed the beach, sunsets, restaurants, and wine tasting. These were precious moments to talk, reminisce and laugh.

Victor had a wonderful sense of humor and a great laugh that was genuine, warm and all embracing, as if he had his arms around you so you could enjoy the moment with him.

Victor loved and was loved by his family and friends and anyone who was lucky enough to have met him and to have known the special person he was.

Like the moment when the sun sits low on the horizon over Butterfly Beach on a calm warm evening, its orange glow embracing everything in its path, Victor was and will forever be that moment.

Victor, you will be missed more than you know.

Tribute Wall

JL

“ Victor was such a sweetheart, such a light of laughter and intelligence. I loved hanging with him at my tender age of 21, and he taught me that men can be sweet.

I'm so sorry to hear of his passing. I'm especially glad that we had a long, warm conversation just a few years back when I was visiting my beloved Santa Barbara.

I have a wonderful memory of hanging with Vic and his good friend John Reed back in the early 80's.

We were at the Magic Lantern Theater in Isla Vista, seeing "My Dinner with Andre". We were the only 3 in the theater....except another small group of 3 friends--the center of who was John Travolta. Turns out our Vic was from the same part of Jersey as John T., so of course Vic made no hesitation to approach him in the lobby and strike up a convo as tho they were old friends. And Travolta responded in kind.

That was the way Victor was....unassuming, humble, friendly, and warm-hearted.

RIP dear Victor, your goodness will be missed.

Janine Lindsey - November 15, 2022 at 07:08 PM

JR

Jan, wow, I'd forgotten the Magic Lantern moment. Vic's passing threw me for a bit of a loop; I'd spoken with him on the phone every couple of months but of course when someone goes all you can think of is how thin the thread connecting you with someone you love really was. Hope everything is OK with you; I'm sure it is. John R.

John Reed - June 10, 2025 at 06:58 PM