



Victor Plana

August 24, 1955 - November 30, 2025

Victor Plana was born in Havana, Cuba on August 24th, 1955. The second of the three sons of José Vicente Plana and Concepción Ester Plana, Victor was a very plump baby with arm rolls and beautiful green eyes, much to his mother's encantamiento!

The Plana family spent happy years in Cuba; living in their downtown Havana home; riding horses and working on their ranch outside of the city; enjoying the white sand and clear, warm water of la Playa Varadero; and experiencing the rich cultural traditions of Cuban music, dance, food and familia.

Regime change in 1960 upended the family's life in Cuba and they abruptly fled with only the clothes on their backs. Victor vividly remembered he and his older brother Tony being rushed out of their classrooms at Christian Brothers La Salle school in Havana, and taken to the airport, where they were strip-searched, then put on a plane. Upon landing in Miami, the family was processed as refugiados, having left their home, ranch, employment, friends and many relatives behind in the hopes of beginning a new life in the United States.

During their year in Miami, Victor's younger brother Oscar was born, and the family was complete. Eventually, they received an invitation from Julio De Puzo to move across the country to Culver City, CA. The Plana family has been forever grateful to the De Puzo family for that oportunidad increíble. Growing up in an apartment on Overland Ave. in Saint Augustine's parish, Culver City, Victor's parents worked every day, and his Abuelita Adelaida

managed the home, cooking the boys' favorite meals. Victor and his brothers Tony and Oscar, experienced the 'free-range' childhood common to the 1960's. Victor vividly remembered riding his 'sting-ray' bike to and from St. Augustine's school (sometimes against Overland traffic), playing sandlot baseball until dinner time, and trying to out-pedal the guards at nearby MGM studios when he and his friends decided to by-pass the gates and 'take a tour'.

Victor followed Tony's lead and attended Loyola High School, graduating in 1973 as a proud Cub.

In the fall of 1983, Victor accepted an opportunity facilitated by Oscar to manage a ranch in the Santa Ynez Valley. There he would live in the manager's apartment with adjoining stables, work with horses, care for the native oak trees, control the resident boar population, and keep the main house and grounds in readiness for the ranch owners' visits.

Four years later, Victor noticed new renters moving 'next door' into an A-frame cabin on ten adjacent acres. Soon, Victor was leaving packed lunches and treats for Jen and two-year-old Emilie every morning and successfully caring for Jen's notoriously man-hating mustang while Jen and Em were away during the day at work and day-care. And so began their 37-year aventura together. In 1990, Victor and Jen were married, and after a memorable Cuban-food potluck wedding, they set off on their honeymoon surf trip to San Jose del Cabo. In 1992, six months after son Torrey was born, the family of four left the rural ranch to begin a new chapter in Santa Barbara, which continues to this day.

Victor Plana (saint's name: John) was a man of vibrant energy, who embraced every millisecond of every day with vigor, enthusiasm, and Cubanismo. He was a man's man, a family man, an accomplished horseman, a true Renaissance man: if he had the ganas he could do anything.

Over the course of his remarkable life Victor was: a carpenter, short-order cook, waiter, solar-panel salesman, motivational speaker, DIY expert, jazz aficionado, adopter of rescue pets, saxophone player, raconteur, home re-

habber, avid surfer, cyclist, sprinter, and superb athlete.

Victor had an exceptional 35-year career as a Realtor®; he was one of the top producing agents in the Montecito/Santa Barbara Coldwell Banker brokerage, achieving the highest tier designations of International President's Elite and Premiere year after year. He was incredibly driven and dedicated to his profession and his clients. He especially loved using his creative financing skills to assist clients in achieving the homeownership that some thought was beyond their means.

Our cariño Victor was gregarious, vivacious, loquacious, boisterous, and compasivo. He was described in a local publication as 'that dashing Victor Plana' after winning a contest with his luscious Cuban flan. He carved any mountain, rode any horse, handled any fast car (and any car fast) and rooster-tailed any lake or river. He rode the waves from Puerto Escondido to Trés Palmas, from Raglan to the North Shore, from Toes to Rincon, from C-Street to Tahiti reefs, from Hammond's to Jalama. Always, his most-loved epic surf sessions were with his son, followed by an enormous chow-down at the Spot or Esau's.

Above all things, Victor wanted to keep living in order not to miss a moment of his adored children's lives. He faced these last ten years knowing that he had Alzheimer's disease, with tremendous bravery and courage, and he will always be our Victor Valiente. He passed away peacefully, at home, on the night of November 30th, 2025, in the arms of his loving family. El mundo era mejor contigo en él. Te amaremos para siempre, amor de mi vida, y nunca serás olvidado.

Victor is survived by his son, Torrey Michael Victor Plana and fiancé Adria DeStefano; his daughter, Emilie Helen Halbach and her longtime partner Joel Poole; his wife of 35 years, Jen Plana; his two brothers and sisters-in-law, Tony Plana and Ada Maris, and Oscar and Ingrid Plana; his sisters-in-law Susan Bush, Linda Tyler, Pamela Strohmaier, and Pamela's husband Scott Strohmaier; his nephews Alex Plana (Victor's ahijado), Emile Plana, Henry

Tyler, Taylor Strohmaier; his nieces Ana Smith (and husband Jesse Smith), Ava Tyler, Isabel Hafeman, Audrey Plana; his grandnieces Phoenix, Aero, Maria; his grandnephew Lorenzo; his cousins Minerva Sanchez, Alina and Eduardo Añorga, Juan Añorga, Marisa Sálazar, Andre and Katie Añorga; Jorge Plana; Gus, Rini and Nick Valdespino, Lauren and Mike Canchola, Hilda Valdespino, and many Plana, Valdespino, Sanchez, and numerous other cousins around the country, and in Cuba and Spain.

Victor's family is forever grateful to his circle of dearest, longtime friends who safely guided him through continuing his passions of surfing and cycling until it was no longer possible; and those who were regular visitors, making him laugh or make faces, holding his hand, sharing tequila with him, and having lunch by the pond. You know who you are; he loved and valued you all deeply, and so do we.

We have so much gratitude and love in our hearts for Victor's team of caregivers from Home Instead, who provided the highest level of care to him during the last year of his life: Fran, Cryn, Perla, Marta, Yanet, Chloe. You made a significant difference in Victor's life with your skilled professionalism, lovingkindness, engagement, humor, and strength.

And finally, we want to express how thankful we are for Santa Barbara's Visiting Nurse Association (VNA) and at-home Hospice Care. They provided the most excellent nursing, spiritual, palliative, home health, and aftercare support through these past six months. We do not know how we would have navigated this painful and challenging process without them.

A Memorial Mass for Victor will take place at 11:00am, January 24th, at Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Catholic Church, 1300 East Valley Rd, in Montecito; followed by a 1pm Reception Celebrating Victor's Life with food, drink and music at the family's home. Rain or shine. Everyone is welcome to attend either or both events.

Victor's entierro will take place at the Santa Barbara Cemetery at a later date. A Memorial Paddle-Out in his memory will take place at Refugio Cove in the Spring.

For directions, more information, or to be included in Victor's Paddle-Out, please text your name and question/request to 805.895.2112.

If you would like to make a contribution in Victor's memory to the VNA/Hospice Garden please go to vna.health--ways.com to give--memorial and honor gifts, or call (805) 965-5555. Or support your local Hospice or Alzheimer's chapter; the services and support they provide are vital.

Cemetery Details

Santa Barbara Cemetery

901 Channel Drive
Santa Barbara, CA 93108

Previous Events

Memorial Mass

JAN 24. 11:00 AM.

Our Lady Of Mt. Carmel Catholic Church