



Thomas Paul Lazaneo

September 26, 1948 - April 12, 2024

Our brother Thomas Paul Lazaneo was born in San Francisco's Mission District, the seventh of nine children, to George Joseph Lazaneo and Marija Balovich Lazaneo. In 1958, when Tom was only ten years old, our father died from a heart attack leaving mom a widow with nine children. Tom attended St. Paul's Elementary School and graduated from Riordan High School in 1966 as a 4th year Class Officer and 3rd year Intramurals, Sodality and Spirit Club member.

As boys, Tom & younger brother Nick danced in a Croatian folk group performing in festivals such as the Sveti Vlaho festival in San Francisco's California Hall as well as at other cultural events.

Tom's interest in music began in high school. He taught himself to play guitar and, as a "child of the '60s," played in a band he formed in 1970 called Whiffenpuf with his younger brother Robert. Robert was just learning to play and Tom worked with him very patiently, teaching him chords and different playing styles. They started writing songs together, Tom creating the music and Robert the lyrics. According to Robert, Tom was a "total musician." Tom could sing, play guitar, bass and write songs. He became a mentor to Robert in many ways. They often lived together and he always looked out for Robert as an older brother advising him on music and much more. Robert recalls, "He was very funny. He could always make me laugh."

Like his dad, Tom had a fine tenor voice which, much later, led him to join the Croatian American Cultural Center's folkloric choir Dalmacijo. He performed under directors George Ruzich and later Rajna Klaser Ledoux at CACC events and other venues. One of his proudest moments was when his oldest brother George sponsored him to become a member of the Slavonic Mutual and Benevolent Society, a Croatian Fraternal Society founded in California in 1857.

In later years, Tom lived with and cared for our mother, making possible her last trip to Brač, Croatia by traveling with her. His care enabled her to stay in her San Bruno home until a nursing home

became necessary. After her death, he moved to Hayward with his older brother Mike, a widower. As a Parkinson's-like condition made Mike less able, Tom became his caregiver

until Mike entered a nursing home and died in December 2022.

Tom had been experiencing serious health issues of his own. He moved to Benicia in January 2024 with his sister Lorraine Vallejo and her son Ed, hoping that better care and family support could make a difference. However his serious heart issues could not be overcome and he died of acute heart failure at Vallejo Kaiser hospital.

Even after arthritis kept him from playing his guitars, Tom never stopped making music. He filled notebooks with chords for songs he had played in the past. And a few times in Benicia, his sister heard him singing, still in good voice. He wrote "Let yourself go and rock your blues away" and the title is engraved on his headstone.

Tom is survived by sisters Marilynne Lazaneo Homitz and Lorraine Lazaneo Vallejo and brothers George Ivan and Robert Joseph Lazaneo and by many nieces and nephews. He was predeceased by sister Yvonne Lazaneo Pratt and brothers John, Nick and Mike Lazaneo. Burial later in 2024 at Holy Cross in Colma interred with his brothers John and Nick.

Tribute Wall



“ *Meera Vallejo lit a candle in memory of Thomas Lazaneo* ”



Meera Vallejo - August 20, 2024 at 11:38 AM