



Sylvia Taylor Zampa

MAR 2, 1937 - JAN 24, 2026



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Sylvia Taylor Zampa

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Sylvia Taylor Zampa was born on March 2, 1937, in Olean, western New York State, to Arthur Beverly Taylor and Margaret Loftis Taylor. Growing up in Fillmore and Houghton, she treasured her close-knit, small-town communities but also seized life's opportunities. Sylvia distinguished herself academically, graduating as valedictorian of her high school class in Fillmore. After earning a dental hygiene degree from Temple University in Philadelphia, her ambitions then took her to Ann Arbor, where she completed a master's degree at the University of Michigan School of Public Health and worked as an assistant professor at the University of Michigan School of Dentistry. While in Ann Arbor, she met Victor, a young architect. They married in 1968 and had two daughters, Kerry and Julie. A family vacation to the west coast unexpectedly inspired a new, lifelong adventure: Sylvia and Victor left Michigan and moved to San Diego in 1978, settling in the sunny foothills of Cowles Mountain in the eastern area of the city.

Sylvia reveled in motherhood, nurturing and championing her daughters at every opportunity, never missing a performance or award ceremony. As the girls grew, Sylvia found time to rediscover her own interests. She taught adult education classes for the local community college, food handling safety and health care classes for the city of San Diego, was active in community musical theater with her entire family, and was a committed member of her Catholic parish. In her 70s, she found new purpose, proudly working with the San Diego Police as a Retired Senior Volunteer Patrol (RSVP) officer.

Around 1990, Sylvia and Victor became members of the Newman Center Catholic Community at UCSD, where they especially enjoyed interacting with the students in various activities, focusing primarily on the choirs. Just over two years ago, they relocated from the eastern foothills of San Diego to their friendly and cherished retirement community near UCSD, the Pacific Regent.



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Sylvia's sense of adventure endured throughout her life and was passed on to her daughters. Julie married Stuart Dwyer, a U.S. diplomat, and Sylvia visited them and her two beloved grandsons, Evan and Cameron, at every foreign post. Her world travels took her to the cobblestone streets of northern Europe, the boulangeries of Paris, the churches of Moscow, Victor's birthplace of Malta, and her own mother's ancestral county in Ireland, among other memorable places. Domestically, Sylvia enjoyed traveling where Kerry's career took her, experiencing the hills of San Francisco, time with her extended family in Long Island, New York, the beauty of Washington, D.C., and most recently, she was happy to have Kerry nearby again in sunny San Diego. The opportunity to travel and be together as a family was a blessing, and often Sylvia, Victor, Kerry, and Julie's family traveled and spent holidays together, creating truly special memories.

Sylvia's enthusiastic spirit was mirrored by Victor, who not only took her to new places and together created new experiences, but also was capable of taking on any challenge with her as a truly committed teammate – any obstacle she came across, he also took on as his own, their 57 years of marriage modeling what it means and really takes to be long term partners.

Sylvia found community wherever she went and will be missed by her many friends and neighbors. She is survived by her devoted husband, Victor, her daughters Kerry Zampa and Julie Dwyer, her son-in-law Stuart Dwyer, and her grandsons Evan and Cameron Dwyer.

Service Information for Thursday, February 19:

9:00am-10:00am PT: A funeral mass will be held at the Newman Center Catholic Community at UCSD, 4321 Eastgate Mall, San Diego, 92121 (parking is free). In honor of Sylvia, we invite guests to wear a touch of purple, her favorite color.

10:00am-12:00pm PT: A reception and luncheon celebrating Sylvia's life will immediately follow at the adjacent Roetter Hall.

Alternatively, a live stream link will be published at <https://www.tritoncatholic.org> on the morning of February 19.

Travelers: If you are traveling from out of town, there are several hotels nearby in the 92121, 92122, and 92037 zip codes.

In lieu of flowers, please consider donating to your favorite charity in Sylvia's name.





Events


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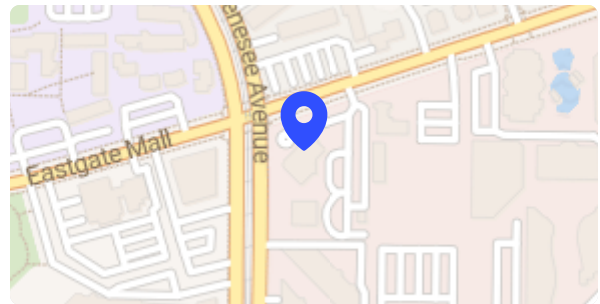
Funeral Mass

 **Thursday**, February 19, 2026

 9:00 AM - 10:00 AM PT

 **Newman Center Catholic Community at UCSD**
4321 Eastgate Mall, San Diego CA 92121

 Funeral Mass - 9am. Reception to follow at 10am-12pm (Roetter Hall).



Cemetery Details

 **Sylvia will be laid to rest in a private family ceremony.**
CA



Tribute Wall

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Kerry Zampa shared 2 photos to the **Tribute Wall** album.

I love you, mom, I miss you. Some of my favorite memories from your 50th wedding anniversary trip, together as a family. ❤️

February 4 at 1:09 PM



Anonymous sent a Full Of Love Bouquet to the Zampa family.

January 31 at 5:41 PM



Kerry Zampa February 1 at 12:27 AM

Thank you, that is very kind.



Michael Vennari planted a Memorial Tree in honor of Sylvia.

January 31 at 5:41 PM



Kerry Zampa February 1 at 12:27 AM

Thank you, we are so touched and grateful.



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Eleanor Charchut posted:

Thank you for posting this beautiful obituary. I just had lengthy back and forth emails with Sylvia on January 10th. She sounded upbeat and sharp. I am so surprised and saddened to learn of Sylvia's passing. I met Sylvia at a U of M Dental School convention (I think it was in San Francisco) before she was married. We instantly became friends and when I returned to Ann Arbor, while my husband was in his orthodontic residency, we reconnected as she and Vic were living in the Detroit area. Len and I and our entire church family prayed continually for her and her unborn baby during her cancer treatment. I remember seeing her a few weeks after the birth (I think it was Kerry) and thought that she was the most beautiful baby I had ever seen - like she had come straight from Heaven! It was a very emotional experience. We have kept in contact now for almost 60 years! She was a real friend, who had a kind, sweet, welcoming manner but also with a wink to fun. My heart goes out to Vic and all of her family and we send you our love, prayers and deepest sympathy for your loss. Eleanor and Len Charchut

January 31 at 2:46 PM



Julie D. February 18 at 12:14 PM

A beautiful memory, thank you for sharing. We will treasure this window you've given us into her early motherhood. God bless you.



Kerry Zampa February 1 at 12:51 AM

This is beautiful, thank you, we are so touched and appreciate you sharing this memory. Thank you for supporting our mom for 60 years! Wow.



Jill Ellul shared a photo to the **Tribute Wall** album.

The family's tribute to Sylvia is so beautiful and it captures her perfectly: adventurous, devoted to her family, and full of warmth. I'll always treasure the days we shared in Malta with her and our families. This photo says it all: Sylvia smiling, taking it all in, and loving being together. Even when getting into the horse and buggy took a bit of help from several kind Maltese men, she never gave up just smiled and carried on. That was Sylvia. Sending love to Victor, Kerry, Julie and all who loved her. ❤️



January 31 at 7:17 AM



Julie D. February 18 at 12:16 PM

Wonderful memories with you all there. Thank you so much.



Kerry Zampa February 1 at 12:49 AM

Thank you, Jill, one of the BEST memories of that trip :)



Media

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February 4 at 1:09 PM





Media

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Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Sylvia by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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