



Stojian Peter Vilencia

October 14, 1948 - October 26, 2017

Stojian Peter Vilencia ("Pete"), of AZ passed away on Thursday, October 26, 2017 at the age of 69 in Phoenix, AZ.

Pete was born to parents Michael and Mary Vilencia on October 14, 1948 in Ironwood, MI. He grew up the third child of six, was called Lonnie by his older brother and friends and graduated from AD Johnston High School in Bessemer, Michigan. At the age of 18 he moved to Southern California where he had two daughters, Nicole Marie Vilencia and Rachel Kristina Vilencia, with his wife Delores Ann Vilencia (nee Burnett).

Pete began selling RV's in 1978 in La Palma, California and eventually moved on to selling cars throughout Orange and Riverside Counties in Southern California. In the mid 1990's he moved to Las Vegas, Nevada where he began working as a Bail Bondsman, Fugitive Recovery Agent and Private Investigator until the mid 2000's when he relocated to Arizona.

Pete was a prolific storyteller, who loved with a fierce and generous heart. He had been there and done that, or if he hadn't he was sure to make you want to believe he had.

Pete is survived by his daughter Nicole Vilencia Hazard and her daughter Laurel Rain Vilencia, his daughter Rachel Kristina Vilencia and her daughter Hannah Marie Zachary, his siblings Michael Vilencia, Lynn Vilencia, Jeff Vilencia and Rod Vilencia as well as three nephews, three nieces, two grand nephews, three grand nieces, and his girlfriend Isabel Salgado..

He is preceded in death by his sons, Walter Peter Vilencia, and Michael Walter Vilencia, his parents Michael and Mary Vilencia, his sister Kathryn Vilencia Redfoot, his niece Stella Redfoot and his niece Cindy Vilencia.

Pete preferred no service. His body will be cremated and his ashes scattered in the Colorado River. The family declines flowers and donations but is grateful for your

condolences and good wishes for all who have loved and will miss him. Please tell us your favorite story about Pete in the comment section, we would love to read them.

Comments



“ When I was growing up there was one thing that happened every July 4th and New Year's Eve that I can remember. My dad pulled his old Hawken's Rifle off the gun rack above the fireplace, loaded it with black gunpowder and pellets and rang in the New Year or celebrated his freedom with a loud BANG! in the front yard. I never considered where those pellets landed, it seemed to me that if my dad was shooting it, it would most certainly puncture the moon or get pulled into the orbit of a passing comet. Such was the legend of my dad in my young mind.

I don't know where he got the Hawken's, only that he built it himself. In researching, there were some Hawken's kits that were pretty popular in the late 60's/early 70's and that gun was always a fixture in our home, so I imagine he bought it before I was born and assembled it and it just became a recurring thread that ran through the fabric of my childhood.

My dad loved his guns. I spent long hours in hot garages with him reloading shells. I believe that I could still sit down and know how to reload shells on my own, unprompted, if faced with the task. He spent a lot of time hunting jackrabbit, rattlesnakes, pheasant, quail and doves when I was young, transitioning to deer and elk in his later years. He told me that he donated the meat from those kills to local food banks.

I grew up knowing his Colt .45 was in the bright orange zipper case next to his bed. Over the fireplace was the gun rack with the Hawken's and the AR-15 semi-automatic rifle he converted to fully automatic with a simple fix among other rifles. As he grew older he acquired more, collected more, bought a safe and stored his personal arsenal. Eventually he became a certified concealed handgun permit instructor.

There is a stark contrast of the life my father lived as it compares to my own, where I have chosen to not live with guns in a household where I am bringing up curious children. I don't support the NRA. I can hit a target well with every shot but I know that women are 12x more likely to be murdered by their own gun so I have chosen not to possess one. My dad took possession of my last few guns after I became a mother and I have never killed an animal with a gun or eaten something I killed.

Dad grew up very poor. Hunting was one way his father could feed his family when there was rarely enough. I imagine this began his love of guns but I never knew him to hunt to eat. He hunted for sport. He hunted for rattlesnake hat bands. He hunted for rabbit furs to set under lamps. He hunted for camaraderie and bragging rights. He hunted for long hours outdoors with his dogs. In some ways I think he was hunting for a path from his childhood forward into being in a man in a John Wayne revered era where America elected rough and tough Hollywood actors President.

So this brings me full circle to this evening as I hear folks in the neighborhood firing their guns to ring in the New Year. It makes me think of my dad and look back at my first season without him. My birthday, Thanksgiving, Christmas and now ringing in the New Year. I cannot tell you the last time I rang in the New Year with my father but I can tell you this is the first of many New Years I will meet without him.



“ My name is Debbe Olson Maki I live in Ramsay I remember growing up when ur dad was the lifeguard for Ramsay park his sister Marylynn went to school with me He was good looking had lots of girls he charmed bragged in front of all the guys that hung around him showed off had a girl friend then the family move to California I also went to grandma n grampas store lots they were great people grew up going to their store my brothers got hair cuts from Rady loved them

Debra Maki - December 29, 2018 at 03:31 PM



“ 12 files added to the tribute wall



Nicole Hazard - December 16, 2017 at 09:57 PM



“ 7 files added to the tribute wall



Nicole Hazard - December 14, 2017 at 08:01 PM



“ I was 16 years old the first time I met Pete. He was a larger than life person for me at that age and I hadn't ever met anyone like him! I was so influenced by the life that Kathy and Pete lived that it drove me to my own success. I remember, not long after that first meeting, we went skiing up in Big Bear. It was my first time ever skiing and Pete told me to go to the top and ski down my first time, 'because that was how everyone learned.' After giving me a few pointers, I went up the hill and I will tell you, I cursed that man for the 5 hours it took me to get down (Thank you Sue for staying with me) and I swore I would NEVER ski again. I did ski again and have been ever since, but only after a few lessons. Pete was funny, and he really loved his family! Making people laugh and story telling were his gifts and this planet is less fun without him on it! Peace to Pete, his children and for anyone who ever laughed so hard they may or may not have peed their pants! May your light shine brighter in heaven!

Tracey Rendinelli - November 26, 2017 at 09:17 AM



“ That's pretty similar to how I learned to swim, thank you Tracey, you were always a bright spot in my childhood.

Nicole - November 28, 2017 at 11:10 PM



“ I (Tanya) met Pete for the first time at his Moreno Valley home when he was married to Kathy back in 1986! It was the first time I had met them both since I was David's "new" girlfriend! I remember going to their home and we played trivia pursuit and had Strawberry Margaritas! Since the first time I met him Pete he always made me laugh with his humor and tall tales!! He always made me happy to be around him! Dave and I have a very funny story about when we played a little joke on him while we were out at one of our River vacations in Lake Havasu.

Here is the story! (please excuse the way its pasted....I am too lazy to redo it!!! Ha!)

So everyone who knew Pete also knew that he loved to go fishing and like all true fishermen he was known to stretch the truth a tiny bit, OH what the Hell am I thinking he was totally blowing smoke up our asses about there being “Fresh Water Lobster” in Lake Havasu on the Colorado River. So during one of our many trips to the river Pete was adamant about there being Lobster in the River and he was going to catch one, so me and one of our dear friends Boyd Blanchard wanted to make sure that Pete was not disappointed. So me and Boyd went to the local Safeway Supermarket and bought a live lobster and brought it to the lake with us that day. Once we were on the lake for a day of fun in the sun we found a nice beach to hang out at for a while, so the first thing Pete did was to rig up his fishing pole for “Fresh Water Lobster”, he then caste out his line and anchored his pole to the ground. While his bait was soaking at the bottom of the lake Pete decided to take a boat ride which provided the perfect opportunity for me and Boyd to affix the live lobster on to Pete’s line and put it back into the lake, when Pete returned from his boat ride the first thing he did was go over to his pole in the ground and check for a hook up. Low and behold he had something on his line, he said “I have something” we were all excited for him and encouraging him to reel it in which he did only to reveal a “Live Fresh Water Lobster” we were all shocked!!! Pete was right there really was such a thing, he was so excited to prove he was right about Fresh Water Lobster, he fell for it Hook Line and Sinker and by the way we still to this day have the event on video tape. The only regret I have about the whole thing is that I felt so bad for Pete knowing that we Punked him I let the cat out of the bag within a few minutes after he reeled it in,

believe me if I never said anything to Pete about what me and Boyd did he would have told that story a million times how he caught a Fresh Water Lobster. I had many memorable times with Pete and I will never forget him, he was my Brother in Law for 13 years and he will always have a very special place in my heart.

David and Tanya Guarino

David and Tanya - November 20, 2017 at 01:24 PM



“ I love this story! Thank you.

Nicole - November 21, 2017 at 03:46 AM



“ 5 files added to the tribute wall



Nicole Hazard - November 18, 2017 at 11:43 AM



“ I met "Big Pete" my husband of almost 13 years back in 1978, we were married in 1979 I was 20 years young at the time. Pete, Nicole and myself lived in Chino Hills for a few years before purchasing our first home in Moreno Valley where we lived until 1991 when we separated. We had lots of fun during those years boating, Jet skiing, snow skiing and yes much to my surprise Pete was a great Ice Skater. Pete was a larger than life kind of guy he was a legend in his own mind and that was ok. I once heard him telling our neighbors that he spoke 7 different languages as I was cringing in the background. Now that I look back maybe he did? I guess you could say hi or bye in 7 different languages he never said he spoke them fluently :). I think many of you have heard the poem "The Dash" The dash is the beginning date (Birthdate) and the end date (passing date) and in-between is the dash, all the years you loved and touched others it represents your life! The dash takes many forms when carved on headstones I think the dash on Pete's headstone should be extra bold representing his bold presence on this earth. 13 years I could write a lot but keeping it simple Pete loved the best he could and had a big heart. He never understood that he did not need to impress because just being Pete was enough. My condolences to Nicole and Rachel and the rest of the family that I never had the opportunity to meet. Rest in Peace Big Pete.



Kathryn Guarino - November 14, 2017 at 11:16 PM



“ Big Pete, I met him at Center Chevrolet in 1984. I had just moved here from New York. He was actually the first friend that I had met in California. I trusted Pete with a \$50,000 check, my friends told me I was crazy, but as it turned out he was a good character. I bought my first house from his then-wife Kathy and so the relationship began for many years. He loved to have fun, loved to laugh, always ready to help out. You get what you give in life... never had any issues with Pete, he always gave good. Condolences to the family, rest in peace Pete.

John vernieu - November 16, 2017 at 01:50 PM



“ I recieved this email about Dad last week,

“I am heartbroken to hear about your father’s passing. He was a great man and one of my most favorite people, I have ever had the pleasure of knowing. He was my friend for over 13 years and I always looked up to him. He taught me a lot about life. How to stand up for myself. How to be a man. How to not take shit from anyone. How to laugh. How to shoot a gun and carry one properly. Most importantly, your father taught me that it is ok to be me. There was a point in my life where I was so worried about what other people thought about me. It was important to me that everyone loved me and thought I was this amazing person. This sounds so silly to say now, but it would bother me terribly if a stranger did not like me. Your dad made me realize that I am an amazing person regardless of what anyone thinks, as long as I am true to myself. That my thoughts are what count the most and that those who love me and care for me are the opinions that should matter most. I could go on and on about how much I learned from the man and how much I looked up to him. He will always hold a very special place in my heart, my thoughts and my prayers. Your father will be forever missed...

If there is ever anything I can do for you and your family, please let me know and I will always do my best to make it happen. Stay strong and think of the good times. Your father’s memory will always live on and he will always be with you... with us...

Warm regards and my deepest sympathies,”

Nicole Hazard - November 14, 2017 at 10:08 PM



“ Dad and his first wife Kay Salo. They married in 1966, he was 17, she was 16. Yu can see her simple wedding ring in the picture under the Christmas tree. My uncle said he thinks this was their first home together. He still had his fingers in these photos which is fascinating to me. They gave birth to two sons, one stillborn and the other died shortly after birth. It was determined they were genetically incompatible and they eventually divorced. Kay called me about 5 years ago, trying to get in touch with Dad. She told me she had prayed for him every day and thought of him, loved him still. It was very sweet to think someone’s had loved him as a young man and loved him still.



Nicole Hazard - November 14, 2017 at 10:04 PM



“ How is it 2 weeks already? I thought of you a lot today. The funeral home told me today your cremation is completed. It is surreal. You're not supposed to be gone. I still can't wrap my head around it completely. I keep peeking here to see if people will share their "Big Pete" stories but so far not so much. Your life touched a lot of people. I'm sure they'll show up.

Nicole Hazard - November 10, 2017 at 03:01 AM



“ This was another piece I wrote about dad, it helped me really understand things about him that baffled me.

Nicole Vilencia Hazard
January 18, 2009 ·

Understanding the Violin

This year, just before traveling to see my father for the Holidays, my daughter decided that she desperately needed a violin. Her desire for this instrument was critical and at 4 years old she knew the only place to have this need met was the source of all spoiling: her grandfather. The phone call went something like this:

"Hello"

"Hello Grandpa, it's Lolli"

"Hi baby! How's Grandpa's girl?"

"Fine. But Grandpa, I really need a violin for Christmas."

"A violin?"

"Yes Grandpa, a violin."

"If Grandpa's girl wants a violin, Grandpa will get you a violin."

And so it came to pass in Jerusalem.....oops, wrong diety.....Of course my father, in typical fashion not only bought her the violin, but completely researched what kind of violin a 4 year old child needs to have. He found out what size, what she needed to do with it and everything about the violin he purchased and when his granddaughter opened the case she squealed in delight and gave him big kisses.

Reminiscing later....I remember thinking how indulgent he was with the purchase of a violin for a 4 year old child with no musical background. However, when I thought deeper I understood more about my father. My father does not say no to her and he has never said no to me.

My entire life, anything I have been bold enough to request, my father has provided. He has never been one to not come through for me and he is doing the same for my daughter. I haven't asked for much from him through the years because I've always been independent but thinking back to my childhood I remember things....

...a kitten at 3

...a dog at 6

...tarantulas at 7

...a violin of my own in 4th grade

...a flute in 5th grade

...the day in 7th grade a girl beat me unconscious and he came to school to rescue me

...dungeons & dragons in 8th grade

...a safe place to be at 25 when I was a mess

...a couple of loans when I straightened out the mess and decided to be a grown up (all paid back!)

...an entire car full of baby supplies when he found out he was going to be a grandfather

...gift cards for the brake job I requested for Christmas in the violin conversation

My father loves in the ways he can. He meets needs. He gives seemingly extravagant gifts. He hands over cash with an uncomfortable hug and a "we" love you. I am fortunate to have him and my daughter is fortunate to have an incredible and imperfect grandfather.

Sometimes learning the violin is easier than one expects.

Nicole Hazard - November 08, 2017 at 02:45 PM



“ Through the years I wrote a few things about my dad...this was one of them

Nicole Vilencia Hazard

August 27, 2011 ·

Oh Dad!

I got really good news yesterday. My dad is coming for a visit. It's only a couple of days, but he *never* comes to where I live. And in typical dad fashion, I offered him my guest room and instead he opts for a hotel. He will be horrifically put off by my communal living, my old house, my "bohemian" life. He will grumble about my lack of gun ownership, He will growl about my liberal leanings. He will gripe about a million things.

but...

He will LOVE the woods. He will LOVE the salmon fishing trip Bart from Noah's is arranging for us. He will LOVE the rivers, lakes and streams. He will LOVE going panning for gold. He will LOVE the clean water from the tap. He will LOVE the fresh pears. He will LOVE the restaurants. He will LOVE seeing his granddaughter in her natural environment. He will LOVE our dog. He will LOVE his daughter being the radio girl and book narrator. He will LOVE every beautiful woman I have befriended and he will mistrust EVERY man.

So, regardless of his gripes, grumbles and growls, this will be an epic visit. He is a bail bonds man, bounty hunter and private investigator. He is 6'3", missing 3 fingers and ALL rough edges. Prejudice, crass, foul mouthed and kind of an instigator. Half of his stories are likely bullshit but when listening one never even minds because they are so well told. He is also funny, generous, loving (in his own fashion) and charming.

I am excited to show him Oregon. I think he will really enjoy his visit. Dinner at Smithfields MUST be on the agenda. As must live music. I doubt I'd get him to a play, he can't be quiet that long!

Nicole Hazard - November 08, 2017 at 02:42 PM



“ 2 files added to the tribute wall



Nicole Hazard - November 08, 2017 at 02:39 PM



“ When I first met my father in law Pete, he came on the heels of his own legend. A powerful father figure shrouded in a legacy of rebelliousness. It was my soon-to-be-stepdaughters 10th birthday party and he had taken lolli shopping, much to the chagrin of my fiance, who didn't want him spoiling all of the other gifts she was about to receive. He arrived as the nexus of his family in a blazing trail of shameless self promotion; a bootstrappin', no-bullshit elder statesman-according to his unwritten autobiography. I don't think he took me very seriously at the time.

When next we met, me and my wife were eloping in Las Vegas. He had arranged a massive honeymoon suite for us at the Hilton. Apparently he was quite the high roller and this was something Pete liked to do to show of his prowess. Fine by me! It was an epic luxury suite that he had on reserve for family anytime he wanted it. He gave us gambling money and we went to town. We made a hundred bucks and had a great time. Then Pete and Laurel went off to book the wedding chapel while we got our certificate. We had one condition; NO ELVIS WEDDING.

He booked us an Elvis wedding. Not only did he book us an Elvis wedding, but he booked us at 'the one and only 'Little White Wedding Chapel', resplendent in all it's pink cadillac Elvis-ness. If you don't know about the little White Wedding Chapel, They were doing Elvis weddings in Vegas before Elvis-It's Iconic. It was quite something. This was followed by dinner at his favorite hibachi grill, which was fantastic. Our wedding simply would not have been the same without him.

The last time I saw Pete Vilencia was on our cross country trip to South Carolina. We all had breakfast at his favorite greasy spoon joint in Arizona. We didn't have much time, but we all had a good breakfast and a good conversation about guns, bravado, marriage, kids, bounty hunting, and politics. We didn't see eye to eye, but it really didn't matter to anybody. As we parted ways, I gave him a 12 gauge shotgun. As I think back, it was a fitting send off for this wandering rebel who lived on the outskirts of the law, this larger than life scoundrel who loved big and was always there for his family. See ya later, Pete. I'm glad I knew ya in this life.

Daniel Hazard - November 08, 2017 at 11:22 AM



“ When I was 12 years old my dad and I were putting a patio over the slab in the back yard of our house on Gamma St. It was the first home my dad ever bought and we did a lot of the work on the house. I told my dad that I wanted to be the first female President. He didn't laugh at me. He didn't tell me I couldn't. He told me that if that was what I wanted I should do it. He empowered me to believe I could have the things I wanted out of life. That idea carried me through many transitions.



Nicole Vilencia Hazard - November 08, 2017 at 12:03 AM



“ Tammy Willett lit a candle in memory of Stojian Peter Vilencia



Tammy Willett - November 07, 2017 at 10:22 PM



“ Grew up on the next block, and remember him as the life guard at the Ramsay Park..Deeders Mortier former Ramsay River Rat.....

Deeders Mortier - November 07, 2017 at 08:50 PM



“ Thank you Deeders. It is nice he is remembered from his home town.

Nicole - November 08, 2017 at 02:07 PM



“ Jeff Vilencia lit a candle in memory of Stojian Peter Vilencia



jeff vilencia - November 07, 2017 at 08:30 PM



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Nicole Vilencia Hazard - November 07, 2017 at 09:01 PM



“ Goodbye my dear brother Stojan
Having lost our own father, I sent Pete's daughter Nicole
the poem by Dylan Thomas "Do not go gentle into that good night"

Do not go gentle into that good night,
Old age should burn and rave at close of day;
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Though wise men at their end know dark is right,
Because their words had forked no lightning they
Do not go gentle into that good night.

Good men, the last wave by, crying how bright
Their frail deeds might have danced in a green bay,
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Wild men who caught and sang the sun in flight,
And learn, too late, they grieved it on its way,
Do not go gentle into that good night.

Grave men, near death, who see with blinding sight
Blind eyes could blaze like meteors and be gay,
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

And you, my father, there on the sad height,
Curse, bless, me now with your fierce tears, I pray.
Do not go gentle into that good night.
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Brother Jeff V

jeff vilencia - November 07, 2017 at 08:27 PM



“ my name is Darlene oberst - rychecky I grew up and went to school with him he was
a different person but a good friend

Darlene Rychecky - November 07, 2017 at 07:47 PM



“ Pete was a good friend of mine in Ramsay school and HS. Great times together.
Sorry to hear this

Doug Miller - November 07, 2017 at 06:29 PM



“ 21 files added to the tribute wall



Nicole Hazard - November 07, 2017 at 05:41 PM