

MOTOROLA MOTOROLA K1M
Music and Video Capable
EXCLUSIVELY FROM
verizonwireless
Buy Now
FREE SHIPPING
FREE ACTIVATION FRI - MON

Print Services: [Subscribe](#) | [Home Delivery](#)

Web: [Sign in](#) | [Register](#) | [Mobile Edition](#) | [RSS](#)

MercuryNews.com

The Mercury News Silicon Valley

Site Web Search powered by **YAHOO!** SEARCH

- [HOME](#)
 - [NEWS](#)
 - [BUSINESS](#)
 - [TECH](#)
 - [SPORTS](#)
 - [ENTERTAINMENT](#)
 - [LIFE & STYLE](#)
 - [OPINION](#)
 - [MY CITY](#)
 - [HELP](#)
 - [JOBS](#)
 - [CARS](#)
 - [REAL ESTATE](#)
 - [CLASSIFIEDS](#)
 - [SHOPPING](#)
 - [PLACE AD](#)
- [breaking news](#)
 - [obituaries](#)
 - [crime](#)
 - [health / science](#)
 - [politics](#)
 - [nation / world](#)
 - [special reports](#)
 - [education](#)
 - [traffic](#)
 - [weather](#)
 - [weird news](#)
 - [corrections](#)

Most Viewed Most Emailed

- del.icio.us
- Digg
- Reddit
- YahooMyWeb
- Google
- Facebook
- What's this?

RePrint Print Email

Advertisement

(From the last 12 hours)

1. [Grass Valley mom facing charges after serving alcohol at sleep-over...](#)
2. [Is this San Jose or Disneyland?](#)
3. [\\$1.3 million will be paid, charges dropped against driver...](#)
4. [Person survives Interstate 880 crash, then dies when hit running...](#)
5. [Fisher: Fry's founder's PGA dream closer to reality](#)
6. [49ers sign RB DeShaun Foster](#)

Top Classifieds

[RENTALS](#) [JOBS](#) [REAL ESTATE](#) [AUTOS](#)

- LOS GATOS**
FURNISHED CONDO
 - MOUNTAIN View 1BR**
Click for Details
 - MILPITAS**
Devries Place Senior Housing
 - Apartments for Rent**
Acrcadia - Cherrywood Apts.
 - Apartments for Rent**
Arcadia- The Woods Apts.
- [ALL LISTINGS](#)

Musician Larry Norman, 60

'FATHER OF CHRISTIAN ROCK' GALVANIZED MANY YOUNG FANS

By Shay Quillen
Mercury News
Article Launched: 02/26/2008 01:33:49 AM PST

Larry Norman, who led a San Jose band into the Top 40 before becoming a revolutionary force in Christian music, died Sunday in Salem, Ore. He was 60.

"He never tried to become the father of Christian rock," says Charles Norman, a guitarist who toured the world with his older brother. "He was just talking about the world as he saw it."

The man who asked the musical question, "Why Should the Devil Have All the Good Music?" moved to San Jose with his family as a child. In 1966, Mr. Norman formed the band People! with Gene Mason, Geoff Levin, Robb Levin, Albert Ribisi and Denny Fridkin.

With the band, Mr. Norman appeared on "American Bandstand" and toured the country with groups such as the Who. But as People! found success with its single "I Love You," which hit No. 14 in Billboard in spring 1968, Mr. Norman left to embark on a solo career.

His first album, "Upon This Rock," virtually defined the new genre of "Jesus Rock." Mr. Norman's rugged appearance and often gritty language appalled some conservative Christians as it galvanized countless young people.

"It was the best example of the fusion of faith and rock 'n' roll," says David DiSabatino, a young fan at the time who is working on a documentary about Mr. Norman. "He was the icon of the Jesus Movement when you're talking music. He's their Bob Dylan character."

Another early fan was Charles Thompson III, who called himself Black Francis when he led the influential rock band the Pixies. Thompson named the band's first album "Come On Pilgrim" after a line of Mr. Norman's.

The two later became friends and collaborators. "People might think of him as a so-called Christian singer or songwriter or whatever," Thompson said in an interview last year, "but he's an individual. He has his own kind of thing going on. He's not all slicko, you know? He's real."

Serious health problems dogged Mr. Norman for decades. A plane crash in 1978 left him with brain damage, and he had his first heart attack in 1992. Yet he kept performing whenever he was able, through diabetes and congestive heart failure and diminishing vision that left him legally blind.

People! drummer Fridkin performed with him last year on a final tour of Europe. "He looked like he could have dropped over at any second, but then I'd get him up on stage, get the guitar on him, and all of a sudden he just came to life," Fridkin says. "He was just filled with so much joy doing the music."

Blog

More from Shay Quillen:
[Remembering Larry Norman, Christian rock pioneer](#)

Related document

Read and sign:
[Guest book in memory of Larry Norman](#)

Video

[Video of Norman performing at the San Jose Rocks Hall of Fame](#)

Advertisement

DirectBuy Click here for your **FREE** Insider's Guide

Pete's Markets
Nine stores to serve you.

Lucas Graduate School of Business
ONE WASHINGTON SQUARE
SAN JOSE

NO DOWN PAYMENT
36 MONTHS NO INTEREST
HAVERTYS

Mr. Norman's final performance occurred in October in San Jose when he reunited with his old bandmates as People! was inducted into the San Jose Rocks Hall of Fame.

"He wasn't in top form vocally, but just the fact that he could even get there and get up on stage was amazing," Fridkin says. "I just can't tell you how great it was."

Larry Norman

Born: April 8, 1947, Corpus Christi, Texas.

Died: Feb. 24, 2008, Salem, Ore.

Survived by: Mother Margaret Norman of Salem, Ore.; brother Charles Norman of Salem; sisters Kristy Norman of Salem and Nancy Norman of Davis; and son Michael Norman of Salem.

Services: A public memorial ceremony will be held at 10 a.m. Saturday at the Church on the Hill, 2707 Maranatha Court, Turner, Ore.

Contact Shay Quillen at squillen@mercurynews.com or (408) 920-2741. Find more of his stories and a link to his blog at www.mercurynews.com/shayquillen.

RePrint Print Email Return to Top

Comments

We are pleased to let readers post comments about an article. Please increase the credibility of your post by including your full name and city in the body of your comment.

[FAQ: Why the changes to article commenting? Why do I need to login? and more about commenting.](#)

Recent Comments

Be the first to post a comment.

Post Your Comment

[Log in to forums](#) to post a comment.

Breaking News

Developer caught in middle of S.J. conversion policy change

Los Gatos school trustees set to put parcel tax on ballot

Spaces and places: Sobrato building in limbo as Oracle, BEA talk merger

Gas prices teeter on record in South Bay; oil hits all-time high

Developer purchases 17-acre HP property in Cupertino

Couple hurt when car crashes into Walnut Creek house

Former Bonsai Nursery to become Trader Joe's in Cupertino

San Jose agrees to remove more litter at riverbanks

Free Credit Report with All 3 Scores

Free 3-bureau Credit Report – includes Transunion, FreeCreditReportsInstantly.com

Fed Cuts Interest Rates Again

Mortgage Rates Hit 26 Month Lows. Calculate Your New www.LowerMyBills.com

Car Insurance Quotes Online

Compare auto insurance quotes from top companies online. www.insurance.com

[Ads by Yahoo!](#)



Get Comcast High-Speed Internet

\$19.99 per month for the first 6 months
Includes PowerBoost™

Get this limited time offer now! 

**Click here for details

Copyright 2008 San Jose Mercury News