

Public Works

In Tribute

Story and photos courtesy Public Works/LA Sanitation

Javi Polanco, Sanitation pioneer and innovator, Club Member, passes away at 49.

Javier Polanco

1965-2015



Javier Lazaro Polanco, passed away suddenly on Jan. 15.

A Division Manager, Solid Resources Support Services, Public Works/LA Sanitation and a City pioneer, he is credited with launching the City's Clean Fuel Program, the Clean Streets Program, its first yard waste composting program, and a number of initiatives; and he had received numerous City awards and recognitions.

He was 49.

"I am saddened to inform you that our LA Sanitation family has lost one of its members," wrote Enrique Zaldivar, Director, Public Works/LA Sanitation, Club Member, in an email to staff. "Our beloved Javier Polanco, Division Manager of the Solid Resources Support Services Division, passed away last night. As he was heading home after work, and after playing a game of indoor soccer with other members of our LA Sanitation family, he experienced a heart attack but managed to pull off to the side of the road. He was taken to Holy Cross Hospital in Mission Hills in the Valley.

"Javi was passionate about his work from day one of his career with the City,

which started in 1989 at Lopez Canyon Landfill. Many of us know that the 'fire in his belly' was unstoppable. Every one of us who worked with him can recount a recent instance this very week about Javi making a strong case for a project, a strategy, etc.; or being a strong advocate for his staff. Yet we will also remember Javi for that fraternal, kind, compassionate, and endearing effect he had on all of us. I miss Javi.

"Let us offer our prayers and support to Javi's family.

"May Javi rest in peace."

Javier leaves a legacy of passionate advocacy for projects, strategies, and his staff. And also, he leaves a legacy of kindness and compassion. Javier will be remembered.

Javier was a dedicated husband, father, son and brother. He is survived by his wife, Sylvia Polanco; his daughters, Danielle Polanco and Raquel Polanco; his father, Lazaro Polanco; his mother, Nildy Polanco; and his sister, Jeanette Alsabab.

"Javi is really missed at LA Sanitation," said Erin Knight, LA Sanitation, Club Member. "He was very close to his staff, his boss, the other Solids managers, and the Executive Director."

Javi Polanco was a City star, dedicating his life to innovation and service to the citizens of Los Angeles, while drawing attention to his staff and to others, but rarely to himself.

The Club offers its condolences to Javier's family, friends and coworkers. May he rest in peace.

The Club thanks Regina Gallegos, Acting Secretary, Solid Resources Support Services; Jose Lozano, Video Tech II; Erin Knight, Secretary to Division Manager; Cynthia Perez; and Marisela Reyes for their contributions to this article.



Career Highlights

Javier Lazaro Polanco was born May 23, 1965 on a U.S. Naval Base in Seville, Spain. His family moved to Florida, where he spent his childhood. Javier attended the University of Florida and graduated with a degree in civil engineering. In 1989, Javier was recruited by the City and moved to California to begin his career. In 1991, Javier married Sylvia, starting a family together shortly thereafter.

Javier was passionate about his work from day one of his career with the City, which started at the Lopez Canyon Landfill. He dedicated more than two decades of his life to the City and to LA Sanitation, leading award-winning programs and motivating staff.

Some of Javier's career highlights include:

1991: Javier's hard work and passion for achieving success were vital to the completion of the expansion of Lopez Canyon Landfill and its permits. His accomplishments were critical to the continued disposal operation and management of the City's solid waste.

2000: Javier was instrumental in leading the efforts for the development of LA Sanitation's first yard trimmings processing and composting facility.

2003: Javier worked tirelessly (even after hours and on week-ends) to complete the City's Disposal RFP and BFI Sunshine Canyon Landfill contract renewal option, responding to

request for information and preparing detailed analysis to the Board of Public Works, CLA, CAO and Council. His efforts were invaluable and resulted in adding another disposal site in addition to Sunshine to better manage the City's solid waste.

2004: Javier was instrumental in the acquisition and later management of the City's Central Los Angeles Recycling and Transfer Station (CLARTS).

2008: Javier was a critical member of LA Sanitation team that fought a lawsuit filed by BFI and LA County, helping the City reach a favorable settlement.

2010: Javier became the Division Manager for the Solid Resources Support Services Division (SRSSD) at LA Sanitation. He launched the Clean Fuel Program, which significantly reduced pollution in the City. He also oversaw Fleet Management, contract management of all solid waste, green material and recycling contracts for the City's curbside collection program, the Ambassador Program, the CNG/LNG Fueling operation, the Call Center, Container Services group, Geographic Information Systems group, Community Services Group, Facilities Planning group, Solid Waste Integrated Resources

Planning group, the Alternative Technology Project to reduce reliance on landfills, and the Clean Streets Program. Javier also provided environmental and other technical assistance to other city departments in achieving Zero Waste by 2025 by implementing sustainable closed loop projects that emphasize local management of solid resources.

2014: Mayor Eric Garcetti presented the very first Mayor's Civic Innovation Award (CIA) to the LA Sanitation Star team. Javier was fundamental to the success of that team.