

Village People Frontman Victor Willis Dies at 74: The Surprising Church Roots Behind His Iconic Voice

Victor Willis, the founding lead singer of the disco group Village People, whose unmistakable vocals helped define an era of popular music, has died. He was 74.

Willis died on June 30 after what his family described as a “short but aggressive illness,” according to statements shared by his wife, Karen Huff-Willis, and the band. His death came one day before his 75th birthday.

“We are profoundly sad to announce the death of Victor Willis, lead singer of Village People,” the group wrote in a statement. “Privacy is requested.” Karen Huff-Willis echoed that request in a separate message to supporters.

Although generations of fans knew Willis as the voice behind enduring hits including “.,” “Macho Man,” “In the Navy” and “Go West,” his musical journey began far from the disco stage.

According to JubileeCast, Willis was born to a Baptist preacher and first discovered his love for music while singing in church. Those early experiences helped shape the powerful voice that would later propel him to international fame.



To order Jonathan Cahn's new book, The Altar of Pergamon, visit .

Before joining Village People, Willis pursued acting and musical theater, eventually appearing in Broadway productions, including The Wiz. His career took a dramatic turn when French

producer Jacques Morali recruited him to help launch Village People, a group that would become one of the defining acts of the disco era. As the band's lead vocalist and a co-writer of many of its biggest songs, Willis helped create music that has endured for nearly five decades.

Willis left the group during the height of its popularity but returned years later after successfully regaining rights to many of the songs he helped write. He resumed touring with Village People in 2017 and remained the only original member actively performing with the band in recent years.

His passing comes after a late-career resurgence that introduced Village People's music to a new generation. "." once again became a fixture at public events, sporting venues and political rallies, bringing renewed attention to one of the most recognizable songs in American music.

During this time, lift up those closest to Willis in prayer as they grieve.

Prepared by Charisma Media Staff.