

In Memory of Javier Antonio Casal Aizpurúa

My Friend, My Brother, and My Partner in Building Nordic Turbine Service

June 5, 1975 – November 29, 2025

Javier and I first met while working together at Cessna. He was the Manufacturing Engineer, and I was the Value Stream Leader. We worked closely to streamline the Mustang final assembly production area, bringing the line from an 80-hour move rate down to a 12-hour move rate in less than six months.

That accomplishment showed us how well we worked together. We challenged each other, solved problems, and took pride in what we could achieve as a team. When we moved on from those projects, the friendship remained.

Over the years, our paths continued to cross. While working for different companies in Mexico, we reconnected over dinner and great conversation. Later, we worked at Apex Engineering on separate projects in the same facility. We eventually went on to other companies, but we kept in touch—during holidays, through an occasional phone call, or simply when one of us wanted to check on the other.

We tremendously enjoyed each other's company. We did not see eye to eye on politics, but we certainly enjoyed debating them. We could disagree, challenge each other, and still look forward to the next conversation. There was always friendship and respect underneath it all.

In November 2022, I started a company as a part-time side business. By February 2023, I decided to leave my full-time job and pursue major J52 engine repair full time. I began in Houston, working out of a friend's facility and using his tools. There was no established operation—just an opportunity, a willingness to work, and a belief that I could build something.

In late June 2023, I had an overwhelming feeling that I needed to contact Javier.

I learned that he had just been laid off from Virgin Galactic and was traveling through Houston on his way to Georgia. He planned to put his car in storage and return home to Panama after roughly 30 years of working in the United States.

We met for dinner. Javier shared what he had been doing over the years, and I shared what was happening in my life. It was one of those wonderful conversations where the time apart seemed to disappear.

During that meal, I felt strongly that I needed to ask whether he would be interested in working from home and helping me build the company.

I did not have all the answers. I did not know exactly where the company was going, what its final name would be, or how we would make everything happen. I shared my thoughts and ideas as honestly as I could. Javier listened, offered feedback, and said he would think about it.

Over the following days and weeks, he continued to Georgia and eventually returned to Panama. Once he had settled in, he called me. He had given our conversation a great deal of thought.

He was in—and he was excited about the possibilities.

We started brainstorming, planning projects, dividing responsibilities, and taking on the enormous task of building a business. Neither of us had done anything quite like this before, but together we began figuring it out.

I focused on the physical work, setting up the shop, and developing the processes and workflow. Javier took on implementing the ERP system, project management, and financials. We brought different strengths, and together we made an amazing team.

We still did not always see eye to eye, and we still enjoyed a good debate. That was part of how we worked. We cared enough to question ideas and trusted each other enough to work through our differences.

Within a year, we had grown from an idea into a facility. Along the way, we performed on-site repairs, developed processes, marketed our services, and worked constantly to bring in more engines. We added team members and kept moving forward through hard work and faith, even when we could not clearly see what came next.

Throughout 2025, Javier faced serious health challenges and periods of hospitalization. He remained dedicated and contributed whenever his health allowed. During that time, his faith grew stronger, and our friendship grew deeper.

We relied on each other for support, comfort, ideas, and comic relief. We could talk about the business, the hard things we were facing, or something that would make us both laugh when we needed it most.

We became brothers. I believe we both needed each other immensely during that chapter of our lives.

During Thanksgiving week in 2025, I took a few days off to visit my son in California. We returned home on Thanksgiving Day. The next day, Friday, Javier and I spoke for about an hour.

We caught up on his recent surgery and my trip. We talked about how he was feeling, how the company had performed over the past year, our team, and the year ahead.

We had so much to look forward to.

We ended that call happy, hopeful, and excited about what the next year might bring.

The following morning, Saturday, I received the news that Javier had passed away.

I was devastated. I still am.

The next day, I was traveling to the test cell. As I walked through the airport looking for a quiet place to be alone, I looked down and saw a small Catholic crucifix beneath a chair.

I was overwhelmed. In my heart, I believe it was there for me to find at that exact moment.

I believe in divine intervention. I believe that reconnecting with Javier in Houston, after all those years and at that particular moment in both our lives, was part of something greater than either of us understood.

Javier was able to return home to Panama, earn a good living, and reconnect with his loving family after so many years away. We were given the opportunity to work together one last time—to build something meaningful, something we hoped would last long after both of us were gone.

When I look at Nordic Turbine Service, I see Javier's contribution throughout it. I see the thought, effort, and care he put into helping build this company. His place in our story is permanent.

But what I miss most is my friend: our conversations, our debates, our laughter, and the comfort of knowing we could count on each other.

I miss Javier and think about him every single day.

Javier, thank you for believing in what we could build together. Thank you for your friendship, your honesty, your faith, and your willingness to take that chance with me.

I will carry your memory with me as we continue the work we began.

You were my friend. You became my brother. I will always be grateful that our paths brought us back together.

**Rest in peace, Javier. Tu luz continúa con nosotros.
Your light continues with us.**

*Daniel "Thor" Thorenson
Nordic Turbine Service*