



Leatrice (Vetere) Martorelli

May 29, 1926 - October 3, 2020

Leatrice (Vetere) Martorelli, 94, of Syracuse, passed away peacefully on October 3, 2020 at Upstate University Hospital surrounded by her loving family. Leatrice was born in Brooklyn, NY to the late Salvatore and Alice (Mancuso) Vetere. She worked many years for the Syracuse City School District and loved spending time with family and friends. Leatrice was a longtime member of the Red Hat Society and enjoyed traveling, especially to visit family throughout the US.

Besides her parents, she is predeceased by her husband of 51 years, Frank and her sister, Helen Serrao.

Leatrice is survived by her daughters, Ellen Martorelli, Cathy (Jim) Johnson and Liz (Joe) Stethers; sons, Jim (Layne) Martorelli, Ernest Martorelli and Frank Martorelli; four grandchildren, Luke, Brianne, Sarah and Michael; six great-grandchildren; a brother, Sonny (Barbara) Vetere; along with several nieces, nephews and cousins.

Calling hours will be held on Thursday, October 8, 2020 from 10 am – 12 pm immediately followed by a funeral service at 12 pm at the THOMAS J. PIRRO JR. FUNERAL HOME, 3401 Vickery Road (corner of Buckley Road) North Syracuse. Those wishing to attend the funeral service remotely may do so by using the link on Leatrice's tribute page at tjpfuneralhome.com at 12 pm on Thursday. Entombment will follow in Woodlawn Cemetery Mausoleum.

In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to Our Lady of Pompei/St. Peter Church Building Fund, 301 Ash Street, Syracuse, NY 13208.

Cemetery

Woodlawn Cemetery & Mausoleum

800 Grant Boulevard
Woodlawn Cemetery & Mausoleum, NY, 13203

Events

OCT 8 Visitation 10:00AM - 12:00PM
Thomas J. Pirro Jr. Funeral Home
3401 Vickery Rd, North Syracuse, NY, US, 13212

OCT 8 Funeral Service 12:00PM
Thomas J. Pirro Jr. Funeral Home
3401 Vickery Rd, North Syracuse, NY, US, 13212

OCT 8 Entombment 12:30PM
Woodlawn Cemetery & Mausoleum
800 Grant Boulevard, Woodlawn Cemetery & Mausoleum, NY, US, 13203

Comments



“ A tribute video has been added.



Thomas J. Pirro Jr. Funeral Home - October 07, 2020 at 02:48 PM



“ Leigh is in GOD's hands now. Please know that you and your family are in our thought and prayers. May GOD comfort you and keep you well. All our LOVE always, Chris, John, Charlene, & Trisha. Xoxo

E Chris Limon - October 08, 2020 at 06:33 AM



“ Dear Ellen, Jim, Ernie, Frank, Cathy and Elizabeth, I was so very sorry to hear of your Mom, Lea's, passing. She was a wonderful neighbor and very kind person and a great friend to our Mom, Ruth. She was always so proud of each of you and loved to share news of your many accomplishments over the years. I am grateful to have known her and am deeply sorry for your loss.

Barbara Coleman

PS I loved the video tribute and all of the beautiful photos of happy times!

Barbara Coleman - October 13, 2020 at 02:25 PM



“ Thanks Barbara. I was just told about his webpage by my sister Cathy. I will always remember your friendly family too! (I think they let me paint their home once). Lots of treasured moments we had together with friends and school, including your diving so well in the Schiller Park pool! Hope you are well. Thanks for the memories. Jim

Jim Martorelli - September 02, 2021 at 10:08 AM



“ Martorelli Family

Mrs. Martorelli was a wonderful person and always a pleasure to interact with in person. The pictures of your Mom and Dad brought back some very fond memories. May she rest in peace and God Bless the entire Martorelli family through these grieving times.

Mike Toia

Mike Toia - October 12, 2020 at 09:50 AM



“ Joanne Fiacchi lit a candle in memory of Leatrice (Vetere) Martorelli



Joanne Fiacchi - October 08, 2020 at 08:48 PM



“ What a lady! I'm sure there wasn't a time I saw her that she wasn't smiling! And, she was so sharp! She never forgot to ask about my sister Anne! I know my mother in law Marylou Fiacchi valued her friendship and always looked forward to seeing the Martorelli Family Christmas card come in the mail!!! Mrs. Martorelli, Rest In Peace! You will be missed.
Joanne Pelletier Fiacchi

Joanne Fiacchi - October 08, 2020 at 08:46 PM



“ Marty Nave lit a candle in memory of Leatrice (Vetere) Martorelli



Marty Nave - October 08, 2020 at 01:00 PM



“ One of my favorite stories about Mom happened about four years ago, when she was turning 90. We were having one of our cross-country phone talks, me in Seattle and her in Syracuse. Somewhere in the middle of our conversation, I became curious about her turning 90. I asked her a simple question.

“Do you still drive, Mom?”

“Yes,” she responded quietly, without elaborating. Simple question. Simple answer. A slight concern arose in me. I asked another simple question. “Have you thought that you might want to stop driving now that you’re turning 90?”

“No,” she said calmly. Another simple answer.

I took a breath, not sure how to continue the conversation. But then something else came out of my mouth, something I hadn’t thought or expected to ask, that gently shifted things in a slightly different direction.

“When did you learn to drive, Mom? Can you tell me about that?”

She opened up right away, no hesitation, and took me back to an earlier time in her life, a time when it was very unusual for women to drive at all. She was 32 years old, with a loving husband and six small children (the oldest only 9; the youngest less than a year), and understandably overwhelmed with the challenges of motherhood.

“Your father was responsible for driving us everywhere,” she said. “To the food store, running errands, going to church. If there was something I needed to do, we all had to go together.”

“Then, one day, everything changed,” she told me. “The whole family was in the car driving across the state to Gloversville to visit your father’s sister who was in the hospital. I don’t know what came over me, but I turned to your dad and asked him if he would teach me how to drive.”

“I just wanted to give him a break so he wouldn’t have to come with us all the time, driving me and the kids everywhere,” she said.

My heart went out to her, but even as I listened I could see the bigger picture of what she was saying. Yes, Mom wanted to learn to drive, but it wasn’t because of some need she had for herself or the family. She did it because she loved my father and wanted to help him. She wanted to take away some of his burden. She may not have thought about it that way, but for me, listening to her in that moment, I saw it as a simple act of true love for my dad. It told me a lot about who my mom really is.

But more than just giving my dad a break, I learned something else about my mom. Once she learned to drive, she also discovered something deeper and more personally important to her. Driving gave her a sense of freedom. She could move about and do all the things she needed to do without being dependent on anyone else. So she was not about to give it up easily, and surely not because she was turning 90 years old.

My curiosity got the best of me again and I asked the one question I think she hoped I wouldn’t ask.

“Where do you drive, Mom?”

She paused. “To the hairdresser every week.”

I imagined this was the same hairdresser she had always gone to when she was younger, which was on the other side of the city. Then I realized this person had died several years earlier.

“How far away is your hairdresser?” I asked.

“A block and a half,” she replied, without missing a beat.

There was a brief moment of silence as we both realized her “ruse” was up. We both

burst out laughing. Yes, indeed, Mom did still drive at the age of 90. It just wasn't quite as often or as far as she wanted everyone to believe.

But it was more than that, of course. Just beneath the surface of her once-a-week drives to the hairdresser a block and a half away lay the real reason she didn't want to stop driving. She cherished her freedom far too much to give it up so easily. And she still is.

Mom, I hope you're enjoying your newfound freedom right now. I will surely miss you. And I will always love you.

–Frank

Frank Martorelli - October 08, 2020 at 11:19 AM



“ Reading this brings to me a big smile and delicate laughter to my heart as I hear Lea's voice in conversation with Frank. What a beautiful tribute.

susan rogers - October 08, 2020 at 11:47 AM



“ Frank, My sincere condolences on your Mothers passing. I would see her at Sunday morning mass.I remember your father serving Holy Communion. God blessed you and your siblings with a loving parents. Take Care, Marty Nave

Marty Nave - October 08, 2020 at 01:06 PM



“ I remember Mom, with Dad in the passenger seat and all of us in the back onetime. We were at a stop sign with others waiting for Mom to go. she was learning the stick shift and it took a few times to get started without stalling. just a fun time watching dad coach her through it.

Jim Martorelli - September 02, 2021 at 10:12 AM



“ The Martorelli Family,

Was so very sorry to hear about the loss of Mrs. Martorelli. She was always such a wonderful person and a pleasure to talk with at church. Always smiling and happy. Sorry I'm not there to give my sympathy in person, but my thoughts and prayers are with you all of you at this difficult time. With deep sympathy!

Dina (Toia) and Bob Gerardi

Dina (Toia) Gerardi - October 08, 2020 at 07:32 AM



“ Ernie,

My condolences to you and your family during this difficult time. May you find peace in the memories you have of your mother/grandmother/sister/friend.

John Ferrante

John Ferrante - October 07, 2020 at 07:09 PM



“ Mrs. Martorelli, what a wonderful person. A great smile and her accent are some things things you don't forget. To all of the family, please know that she will always be looking out for you as she reunites with and holds the hand of your father together in heaven. Please accept my sincere condolences. Ernie Campagna

Ernie Campagna - October 07, 2020 at 04:57 PM



“ Starbucks Coffee Condolences was purchased for the family of Leatrice (Vetere) Martorelli.



October 07, 2020 at 04:37 PM



“ 72 files added to the album LifeTributes



Thomas J. Pirro Jr. Funeral Home - October 07, 2020 at 02:44 PM



“ To Ellen, Jimmy, Ernie, Kathy, Frankie and Liz and the extended Martorelli families,

I was saddened to hear of Lea's passing. She was a wonderful person and always had that big smile to share with anyone and everyone. The memories of my childhood would be somewhat empty without the Martorelli family. Our neighborhood was our universe and the people in it were the stars. We didn't have a lot, but our parents and friends made it the best. I was lucky enough to see Ernie and mom out and about over the years having breakfast or lunch as me and my mom were doing the same. You can never forget kind, loving people therefore Lea will be remembered by everyone she touched. I'm sure dad was there waiting with open arms .

Rest in Peace Lea , forever missed
John Angotti and family

john angotti - October 07, 2020 at 12:07 PM



“ Thanks for the memory John! Your family was always funny and friendly. Remember your Dad coming over after we just got a new multicolored kitchen floor and he said we could now spill any color cool aid and not see it! we had a lot of laughs. All the best to you your family too.

Jim Martorelli - September 02, 2021 at 10:17 AM



“ I will always remember my grandma’s voice when she’d call, “Sarah, it’s Grandma,” with her NY accent. I will always smile when I recall how she asked Chris, my husband, before we were even dating, “when are you gonna marry my granddaughter?” I will cherish the time I sat on the back porch of the house I grew up in with her as she told me the stories of her childhood and how she met and proposed to my grandfather. She and I would sit and watch her soap operas after I’d get home from school when she would visit. She would send birthday and Christmas cards every year, and for the last few I would save every one not knowing when it would be the last. She was a strong willed, short, Italian, passionate woman who loved each person in her own way. I get a lot of who I am from her because she passed on her legacy to my Dad and because of the time she spent with me, even if it was rare.

It’s odd to look back at the relationships I had as a kid with my 4 grandparents and to see who became the one that would become part of my adulthood. I fully expected her stubbornness to make her my last remaining grandparent and that she would meet and know my kids. They didn’t have a lot of time with her, or experience her painful pinch on the cheeks when she’d say hello, but they did meet her and knew they had a great grandma.

She never let me wallow in misery, even when my body was dying from an illness when I was a teenager. She would always remind me of St Jude and tell me that there was more to come. I remember she even told me at one point when I told her I was handing the phone to her son, that I “shouldn’t call him that, he’s your dad.” Respect for the relationship was important to her.

I once asked her to record her reading “Charlie Brown Christmas” to my kids and she did. And now, her voice inspires so many characters in the books I read to my kids.

I love you, Gram. Thank you, God, for her 94 years and 4 months on this earth, however sweet and however challenging. She made an impact, she will be missed, and she was loved.



Sarah Kehayias - October 07, 2020 at 12:29 AM



“ Love these pictures! Thanks Sarah! Time flies- make he most of every day!

Jim Martorelli - September 02, 2021 at 10:18 AM



“ 54 files added to the album A Vibrant Life



ellen martorelli - October 06, 2020 at 10:58 PM



“ Wow! I have never seen some of these! She was so pretty with a friendly loving smile. I will miss her every day. Thanks Ellen!

Jim Martorelli - September 02, 2021 at 10:21 AM



“ 1 file added to the album A Vibrant Life



Ellen Martorelli - October 06, 2020 at 10:45 PM



“ 1 file added to the album A Vibrant Life



Ellen Martorelli - October 06, 2020 at 10:44 PM



“ Patty Angotti Parkhurst lit a candle in memory of Leatrice (Vetere) Martorelli



Patty Angotti Parkhurst - October 06, 2020 at 08:29 PM



“ My family lived on the same street.
Lee was a great friend of my Mom Rosalie...
My brothers were older & plyed with the Martorelli children..
Very nice people....My Mom will miss talking to her... RIP Lee...

Patty Angotti Parkhurst - October 06, 2020 at 08:32 PM



“ I'm very sorry for your loss..

Patty Angotti Parkhurst - October 06, 2020 at 08:33 PM



“ Dear Ellen, Cathy, Liz, Jim, Ernie and Frank - Please accept my sympathy on your Mom's passing. She was a wonderful lady and a great friend to my grandmother, Mamie, and my parents, Mary Lou and Angelo. Angela Fiacchi Cummings

Angela Cummings - October 06, 2020 at 03:11 PM



“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Jim&Patricia Serrao - October 06, 2020 at 01:51 PM



“ Thanks for the picture, Jimmy! Layne and I haven't seen you since our 20th anniversary trip through New England. All the best to you and Patty

Jim Martorelli - September 02, 2021 at 10:24 AM



“ 13 files added to the album 90th Birthday



Luke Martorelli - October 06, 2020 at 01:12 PM



“ 21 files added to the album Memories Album



Luke Martorelli - October 06, 2020 at 12:14 PM



“ Jim and family, So very sorry to hear of the loss of your mother. I remember her on your porch as I would walk by, and of the times she came in to Webster School.
Linda Harney Baum

Linda Harney Baum - October 06, 2020 at 09:56 AM



“ Thanks Linda, she would have remembered you and our times at Webster.

Jim Martorelli - September 02, 2021 at 10:28 AM



“ Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Leatrice (Vetere) Martorelli.



October 06, 2020 at 08:39 AM



“ 52 files added to the tribute wall



Ernest - October 06, 2020 at 03:14 AM



“ Lots of great pictures Ernie! Many I have never seen. You are an angel for all your self sacrifice in caring for her over the years. Thanks. She was a special woman with much love surrounding her.

Jim Martorelli - September 02, 2021 at 10:36 AM



“ Divine Peace Bouquet was purchased for the family of Leatrice (Vetere) Martorelli.



October 05, 2020 at 10:33 PM



“ 18 files added to the album Memories Album



James Martorelli - October 05, 2020 at 10:15 PM



“ 3 files added to the album Memories Album



Luke Martorelli - October 05, 2020 at 08:04 PM



“ Sweet Tenderness was purchased for the family of Leatrice (Vetere) Martorelli.



October 05, 2020 at 06:04 PM