



## Maria Abbonda

August 7, 1907 - October 26, 1988

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My grandmother, Maria Abbonda, will be forever loved and remembered for her kindness, honesty, strength, courage, integrity, compassion, intelligence, sense of humor, loyalty, fortitude and absolutely graceful way of being.

She had many titles within our family....Mamma, MammaNonna, Nonna, Nonni, Nonnina...all terms of endearment for this amazing woman, who was the core of our family and a pillar of strength for so many. She was loved and respected by all who were fortunate enough to have crossed her life's path. She earned that respect by her always generous heart and altruistic way of living.

My grandmother was born in Naples, Italy. She lost her parents at only 2 1/2 years of age with a 6 month old brother, Pasquale. She and her brother were raised by two of their paternal aunts. She was particularly close to Zia (Aunt) Clementina. She and her brother traveled extensively with their aunts throughout their childhoods, adolescent years and early adulthoods. They spent much time journeying throughout Europe and even Egypt and Lebanon. They also attended boarding schools in various places, including Switzerland and Beirut, Lebanon. As such, my grandmother spoke several languages

other than her native Italian, including French and Arabic. She possessed a gentle and lovely singing voice, she was a gifted artist and she was a bright and talented pianist. After her studies in liceo classico ("Classic high school"), she went on to university study, majoring in mathematics and science. Truly a rarity for a young woman of her era. She was a strong and determined young woman and earned her degrees and the respect of many.

By the age of 20, she married Amerigo and by 22 she became a mother to Anna Maria Giovanna (my dear mother). Amerigo was my grandmother's senior by many years. He was a renowned criminal attorney and an esteemed political figure.

As a family, they survived World War II. My grandmother was truly a brave and heroic woman. She helped many families survive the war and the difficult times of post-war Italy with her courageous and generous approach to life. Many families owe their lives and their actual ability to have survived and overcome that very difficult chapter of history to her. In fact, when decades later, I was in Italy and had the pleasure and honor to meet many of these people and their descendants, their gratitude and respect for my grandmother was clear! She was "Zia Maria" (Aunt Maria) to generations of family and friends!

As a mother, she was dedicated and supportive of her daughter and her many endeavors. Her daughter was a prima ballerina in Europe and then went on to study law. They were both women ahead of their times! Truly avant-Garde!

Later in life, when my mother relocated to America, my grandmother visited her often both in Miami and New York City. Once my mother met my father, William Joseph Fuzzi (Bill), my grandmother even joined them for two different cross country trips. Together, they journeyed across America! Once I came along, my grandmother also relocated to America. And the four of us (Mom,

Dad, Nonnina and I) all lived in New York City...Forest Hills, to be exact. It was wonderful to have grown up with her as an everyday part of life. It was like having two mothers. She was more than a grandmother; she was a friend, advisor and confidante. I was truly blessed to have grown up with her as a central part of my life.

Everyone loved coming to our house - family and friends of all ages - because of the wonderful company and, of course, my grandmother's magnificent meals! All homemade and delicious! Generations of family and friends remember our full house....conversation, music and fabulous food! My friends still rave about it to this day! They even still have the many things that my grandmother knit and crocheted for us all. She was quite gifted! She was Nonna (Grandmother) Maria to a new generation!

When my first child was born, she became a great-grandmother. She was thrilled and enjoyed this chapter of life, as well. Like she did with all the many roles she took on in life, she did so with all her heart and devotion. We had all moved to New Jersey and made Foxborough Village in Old Bridge our home. We were all blessed to make many new friends in our new home, including several Italian friends. It was a happy closing chapter.... Family, friends, good conversation, fine food and wonderful memories for us all to cherish! Again, she was everyone's Zia Maria!! Loved and admired by all!! To this day, family and friends, remember her as a treasure! A rare gem, indeed! We all recollect her with fondness and speak of her with respect and the highest regard. We speak of her so much, that the younger generations (including my three children) feel they know our special and precious Nonnina!! Hers was truly a memorable life well-lived.

Nonnina, you are forever in our hearts and thoughts. We know you are our angel, watching over us. I can just see you, Mom and Dad having espresso

together as you smile upon us. We all love you, Nonnina!!

Vi vogliamo tanto bene, Nonnina!!

# Tribute Wall

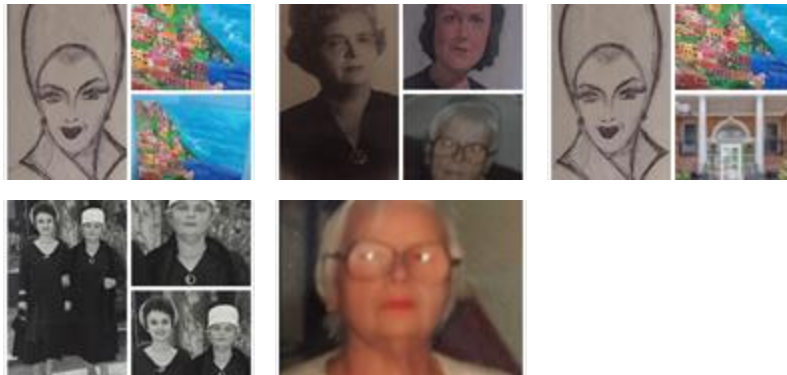


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October 05, 2023 at 11:16 AM



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