

We are gathered here today to celebrate the life of my dad, Anthony Joseph Marsella, Sr, the quiet life of an unassuming man who lived for little more than to provide for his family, do kind deeds for others, and for Mom's potatoes and eggs!

We've all heard the stories many times before: about his being born across the street and moving to the house on Grand Street which his father had built when he was six months old, where he lived his entire life, and where he died at 94 years, two months and 17 days. He was a Taurus!

His was a life of dedication and service--to his family, to his community, and to his country--a life well lived, a life well loved.

Dad suffered unspeakable loss and grief: losing his brother John and, some years later, his daughter Patty, both in their early twenties. But he, himself, was a survivor.

His fluency in Italian and shorthand made him a valuable asset as an interpreter during the war and kept him relatively safe, away from the front lines of battle. Dad cheated death many times—at least five that I know of.

I used to call him the “Ever Ready Battery Bunny.” He just kept going ... and going ... and going ... doing what he knew he had to do for his family.

He manufactured aircraft parts for minimum wage, one day walking to work from Mamaroneck to Harrison in a snow storm when his car wouldn't start! He caddied at the golf course, delivered groceries, worked at the drug store in the evenings, cleaned pools, and tended bar on the weekends.

Some of us may remember him collecting abandoned shopping carts—sometimes hauling them out of the Mamaroneck River with a rope and hook—driving around with them hanging out the back of his station wagon and returning them to the A&P for 25 cents each.

He worked long days out-of-doors, and some long cold nights plowing snow for the Town. And, on those evenings (and mornings), when he'd return home half frozen, we kids would meet him at the door with a tall shot of Scotch while Mom ran him a hot bath.

He loved being a gardener (as his father was) and was so happy to finally land his best and favorite job—at Playland Park—where he worked for 22 years, becoming the foreman, and getting us kids on all the rides for free!

Although it seemed he worked both night and day, he always found time to ride us around the living room on his back, play “Indian ball” with us on summer evenings and help my brother Anthony deliver his newspapers when it was raining or he had a late track meet.

He had a fantastic memory, keeping dozens of phone numbers in his head, and helping my sis and me with our shorthand decades after he himself had learned it.

His later life softened and mellowed like a nice bottle of wine, and brought him excellent health, early retirement, the financial security he'd worked so hard to attain, and his most prized possession: “peace of mind.”

It also gave him the time to explore his interests. He worked again as an interpreter of Italian, this time for the court system in White Plains. He developed a love for travel, taking Mom on a

second honeymoon for their 25th anniversary. They followed me to wherever I moved, took cruises to the Caribbean, trips to France, Italy, Canada, and many trips to visit their good friends Bob and Carol in South Carolina where they'd laugh for hours and ride bikes on the beach.

Dad once told me that, when he couldn't sleep at night, he would lie awake and think of nice things to do for people.

Since he was a very good sleeper, I suspect he spent many waking hours doing the same!

Whether it was singing in the church choir, volunteering for 18 years at Sarah Neuman Nursing Home, making sandwiches and coffee for poker games at his club, or his lifelong involvement with the Knights of Columbus, American Legion and Veterans Association, he was always ready to help out in whatever way he could.

He continued to enjoy gardening, whether it be his own, mine, the neighbor's, or the Town of Mamaroneck's!

For many years, Dad spoke to local middle school students on the occasions of Memorial Day and Veterans Day to help keep alive the memory of his brother John, and others who were lost to war. He was the subject of a high school student's archival project—a project that now lives at the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C.

We all know how he LOVED to sing and was always so proud to be asked to lead the singing at Town events. In 2007, he was honored with a breakfast and named "Mamaroneck's Favorite Republican," and, on his 90th birthday, Dad was inducted into the New York State Veterans' Hall of Fame in a special ceremony in Albany.

But what he considered to be his greatest accomplishment and source of pride, besides his children, was the tireless campaign he helped wage, and the victory won, to keep The Richard M. Kemper Memorial Park where it is, to honor and remember those who sacrificed their lives for the rest of us.

There are those among us in this life who work toward change, to move things forward, hopefully for the better. Then there are those who work to "KEEP THE PLACE," lest we forget where we came from and those who helped us get here. Dad was one of these.

And, through all his later health trials, he never complained. He "soldiered on," smiling, singing, always so proud to be a veteran.

He died the way he lived: quietly, peacefully, with Mom beside him.

My Dad gave me many things: his dark complexion and curly hair, his skinny legs and bad gums, his love for travel, gardening and singing. But the one thing I hope that I—like HE—will always be remembered for, is his great, great, great BIG heart ... a heart that survived three heart attacks—and being broken more than once—but continued to burst with love for his family and countless friends, and still managed to carry at least a dozen songs at any one time!

He was known to us by "Anthony Joseph, Sr," by "Honey," "Dad," "Pop," "Baba," "Grampa," and "G-pa." By "Tony," "Uncle Tony," "Uncle T," "An-daw," and "Bumble-Ass"! But here's one thing I bet you didn't know about him: Dad's name wasn't really Anthony Joseph!

Some years ago, while going through a stack of papers, we found his birth certificate. It stated

his given name as “Antonio Dominico Marsella.” He went by “Anthony” and his confirmation name was “Joseph.”

I wish he could be here with us today to see the love that surrounds him. He IS with us, not only in our hearts, and minds, and memories, but also, in a sense, sharing this very moment. You see, one last gift I gave to Dad was to begin to draft this eulogy some years ago, while he was still well. I shared it with him so that he could make corrections (which he did) and additions (which he did). And so that he could know how much we all love him and how he will remain forever with us!

Anthony Joseph Marsella, Sr ... or should I say “Antonio Dominico,” a man who will be forever remembered for his devotion to his family, the beauty he brought to this world, and the kindness he showed others.

Donna Marsella
August 8, 2018
Mamaroneck, NY

Tribute to *John Marsella* from Kemper website:

<http://kempermorialpark.org/Park/Profiles/Marsella.htm>