

AnnaMarie Della Sala-Stanton

AnnaMarie was born on August 22, 1950, at Carmel Hospital. She is the first-born child of Rosie Bruno and Charlie Della Sala. AnnaMarie's mother was born and raised in Monterey and started working in the canneries at age 13. AnnaMarie's father was born in New York, raised in Foreno & Naples, Italy, and came back to the United States at the age of eighteen. He was stationed at Fort Ord and worked at the Presidio of Monterey. Her parents instilled in her a strong work ethic, the importance of accomplishing tasks at an extremely high level, the value of the dollar and love of community. Words to live by often repeated in the Della Sala household were “if there is a will there is a way” and “nothing is beneath you, if there is a job to do, you do it.” That led to many hours of helping her parents paint and clean family-owned rental apartments, including the toilets, and a love for solving problems, “finding a way.”

Shortly after her 16th birthday she had a minor fender bender resulting in a day of work at the Monterey Public library. As she quickly completed each task she asked, “What’s next?” By the end of the day she was offered a job earning a whopping \$1.00 an hour working weekends and afterschool. Her next job offered a 25% raise at \$1.25 an hour working at the Mac & Mac clothing store on Alvarado Street in downtown Monterey. She held that part time job until she left for San Diego State College. In 1971 she returned home for the summer break and worked for Monterey Fish at their Sand City cannery, the last operating cannery on the Monterey Peninsula. For a short moment in time, AnnaMarie continued the fishing legacy of her grandfather and uncles, and her mother and aunts.

AnnaMarie attended Monterey schools, including San Carlos, Walter Colton Junior High, Monterey High, and Monterey Peninsula College. She graduated from San Diego State University with honors and earned her teaching credential locally from the Monterey Institute of International Studies (now Middlebury Institute). AnnaMarie loved school and learning new things and socializing with friends. As a child she was always the teacher with the neighborhood children, all the while having fun. She taught school locally at Hayes and Olsen Elementary School and then Sherman Oaks Elementary School in Southern California until retiring in 2005. AnnaMarie not only taught school, but she also performed as a singer/songwriter at fundraisers for Sherman Oaks Elementary and in clubs in the Los Angeles area playing guitar and eventually bass as well. She had the opportunity to be backed by talented L.A. musicians including her husband, guitarist Robert Stanton and his band, Freeway Philharmonic. Her first instrument was accordion taking lessons locally at ABC music and she was a member of the accordion marching band playing accordion from 7 to 12 years old. Following her father's love of all things Italian, her first car was, you guessed it, an Italian Fiat.

After spending 23 years living in Santa Monica she retired from teaching and returned home to Monterey. At that time her parents Rose and Charlie Della Sala were very active in Monterey's Italian organizations including the ICF Branch 36, Festa Italia, Sons of Italy and the Italian Heritage Society where Charlie was vice president and Anna Panetta was president. Under their leadership the IHS raised \$100,000 toward an Italian Heritage center, was in the process of applying for a grant, and was putting on an event at the Sunset Center featuring a trio from Sicily. Unfortunately, the grant writer became seriously ill and did not complete the grant, and the Sicilian Trio did not pack the house at the Sunset Center and there was a loss of thousands of dollars. Charlie asked AnnaMarie to join the Italian Heritage Society Board of Directors at that time when the board was greatly discouraged at

having a major set back in achieving the goal of purchasing a heritage center.

After serving several years as a member of the Italian Heritage Society board of directors AnnaMarie became Co-President with Anna Panetta and currently serves her hometown as President of the Italian Heritage Society of the Monterey Peninsula (IHS), is Corresponding Secretary of the Italian Catholic Federation (ICF) and is an active member of Monterey History & Art Association serving as the Co-Chair of La Merienda for the past 10 years. In 2022 MHAA awarded her the Laura Bride Powers Memorial Award in recognition of outstanding service to Monterey. As President of IHS, she originated and coordinated the project that produced the books, "*Italian Fishing Families of Monterey*" 1st and 2nd editions with the help of Mike Ventimiglia and Rosemary Metzger. The books were a labor of love for Annamarie in honor of her heritage, her mother and her maternal grandfather, Giuseppe Bruno, who fished the waters of Monterey Bay. A website followed featuring the ability to read and flip through all the pages of *Italian Fishing Families of Monterey*. The follow up book, *Italian Americans: "We Don't Just Fish!"* was completed with the continued help of Mike and Rosemary and of all those who contributed their stories. Her most recent Italian Heritage Society project, *Bounty of the Sea*, was completed in August 2023 and is a timeline of the history of fishing in Monterey Bay with the emphasis on the contributions of Sicilian/Italian fishermen during Monterey's Sardine Capital of the World era. The exhibit is now open for viewing at Monterey History & Art at Stanton Center.

AnnaMarie has been involved in her family's real estate business and has a keen eye for interior design. AnnaMarie is the "go-to" member of her family when important decisions are considered regarding design, color, and details. AnnaMarie's siblings are Anthony Della Sala, former Monterey Mayor-Chuck Della Sala, Kathy Shepherd, and Mary Ann Randolph.

AnnaMarie enjoys writing and playing music with her husband of 44 years Robert Stanton, gardening, and interior design.