

Natalino “Nat” Anthony Agliano

1932 - 2022

PRESIDING JUSTICE, CALIFORNIA COURT OF APPEAL, 6TH APPELLATE DISTRICT (RET.)

AS TOLD BY NAT AGLIANO

Nat Agliano's parents, Frank Agliano and Mary (Corso) Agliano, were born in Siracusa, Sicily, Italy. In his 20s Frank worked in farming and fishing and for several years served in the Italian Navy with distinction. Mary helped her parents maintain the family household with excellent cooking, sewing and in many other ways. Frank and Mary married in 1918, and in 1920 they emigrated to the United States of America. They made their first home in South Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. In 1939, Mary's mother, Providenzia, sailed from Sicily to live with them.

Like most Italian immigrants, Nat's parents had a strong work ethic. Nat's father worked in lumberyards and for the Philco and Victrola companies in and around Philadelphia. He generally worked six days a week without vacation or days off. Nat's mother initially worked as a seamstress in clothing factories and later operated her own women's apparel shop in the storefront of the family home. Frank and Mary had innate wisdom and were very hardworking, intelligent, honest and responsible citizens. In 1930 they became proud citizens of the United States.

Nat was born on February 18, 1932. He attended kindergarten at Drexel Public School and then transferred to St. Thomas Aquinas grammar school in South Philadelphia. Nat and a majority of his classmates, mostly from Italian households, initially spoke only Italian; but they quickly learned to speak, read and write English, thanks to first-rate instruction by the teaching nuns at St. Thomas, many of whom were born and educated in Ireland. The Sisters also taught math, geography, history, civics, art and music. School days were full—early church service followed by class from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. every weekday, usually followed by music lessons. With his father's “encouragement” Nat, at age 11, began working Saturdays in a

local grocery store. He served customers, stocked shelves and did most everything else needed. His pay consisted of tips for delivering groceries to customers' homes, using a wagon his father made for the purpose. This job was the first of many kinds Nat was to hold during non-school hours and summers throughout his high school and college years and during summers in law school.

Life in the culturally diverse South Philadelphia neighborhood was a great learning experience. Nat said, “We lived in two-story brick row houses in a largely Italian neighborhood. We made wine in the fall and canned fruit and vegetables year around. Meals were home-cooked and taken at the kitchen table. Few people had cars, so we walked or otherwise traveled by trolley and subway.”

For young people, sports and other activities were common and on-going. You could hardly walk out the front door without getting into a game of some kind—stickball, football, marbles, skating. Kids formed their own sports clubs, held meetings, and paid dues--usually ten cents--to purchase caps, balls and bats. In the main, young people interacted and governed each other without adult supervision--but always within well-understood parental limits.

Nat graduated from grammar school in June 1945, the year World War II ended. His parents had many cousins in Monterey, and they saw the prospect of steady employment there. They were offered jobs at the Enterprise, a start-up cannery. At the time the sardine industry was flourishing so they moved to Monterey, eventually settling in Pacific Grove. Nat's parents immediately began working. Frank's primary job involved rolling large metal “retorts” of newly canned sardines into boilers for cooking and thereafter extracting them. It was strenuous work. Mary first started working on the packing line, and she later became the cannery cook. Frank and Mary worked long hours. Nat worked there part time and contributed to the family finances. He also worked in retail and wholesale fish markets on Fisherman's Wharf, as well as in other jobs in Monterey.

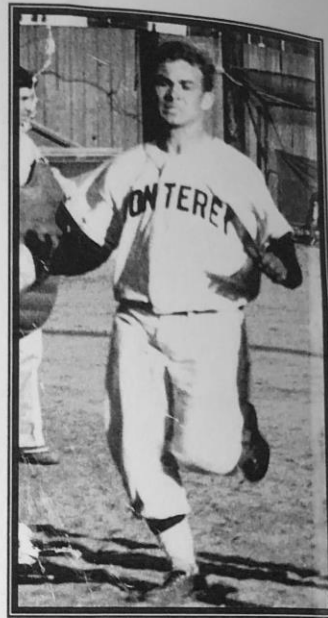
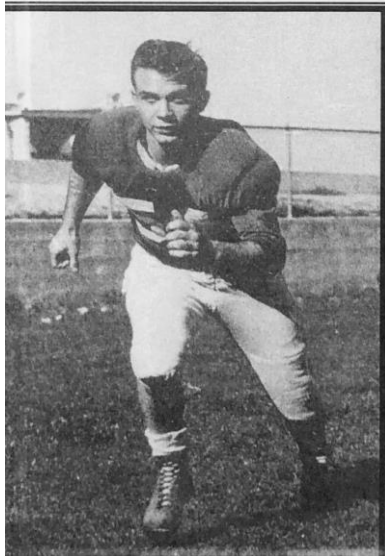
Most of Nat's and his parents' relatives in Monterey worked in the fishing industry either as fishermen, in marketing or other industry-related work. Their circle of families was close and supportive of each other. Family gatherings at holiday times were memorable, as were the home-cooked meals. Nat, his parents and grandmother admired their relatives and greatly appreciated living and working in Monterey. Several cousins owned fishing boats and occasionally invited Nat out, usually trolling for salmon. Nat was greatly impressed by the courage, perseverance, strength and quiet dignity of his relatives in the fishing industry. They influenced his entire life.

Nat enrolled at Monterey High, a great school with high-quality teachers, excellent educational programs and engaging activities. He found his fellow students to be industrious and friendly, and he thrived in the Monterey environment. Nat joined the football and baseball teams. He played on the 1948 varsity football team, which was undefeated and subsequently recognized by the *Monterey Peninsula Herald* as the Monterey County "Team of the Century." Many of the team members were sons of Italian fishermen. John Gardiner, the team's coach, was highly respected and was a great teacher and role model. He later became renowned in the world of tennis, owning and operating Gardiner's Tennis Ranch in Carmel Valley and several other tennis resorts in California and Arizona. The football team members all went on to lead productive lives as teachers, businessmen and civic leaders. They remained close friends. Dan Albert, the football team quarterback, became a highly respected teacher, coach and, later, mayor of Monterey for 20 years.

Nat graduated from Monterey High School in June 1949 and was able to attend college locally, thanks to a farsighted group of citizens who founded Monterey Peninsula Community College (MPC), thus providing current and future generations of high-school graduates with valuable opportunities for higher education. Nat attended MPC for two years. In addition to taking university preparatory classes and working at various part-time jobs, he participated on the football, baseball and golf teams. In 1950, the football team won the divisional championship and included

THE MAN IN THE ARENA

It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man [or woman] who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds;



who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat.

Nat featured in Monterey High School sports article.

many of Nat's former fellow Monterey High School championship teammates. After graduating from Monterey Peninsula College, Nat, with encouragement and help from Luke Phillips, went on to the University of California, Berkeley, and majored in business administration. Luke Phillips, a loyal friend, had been admitted to UC Berkeley after graduating from MPC two years earlier. He later became an

iconic teacher, coach and respected member of the MPC faculty. Vince Maiorana, Nat's good friend and classmate at Monterey High School, was by then also a student at UC Berkeley. Notably, he and Luke Phillips became members of the 1950 University of California football team that played in the Rose Bowl.

Nat worked his way through UC Berkeley, washing dishes in the school cafeteria during the day and loading trucks in the evening. Nat also played on the Cal football and baseball teams, earning a letter in baseball and membership in the Big C Society. During the first summer vacation, he worked on a logging crew in the Northern California Sierras and played semi-pro baseball on Sundays. The following summer he worked for PG&E, constructing pipelines in Oakland.

On August 29, 1953, Nat married Lillian (Lil) Bergren. Lil had attended Clark College in Vancouver, Washington, graduating in 1951 and then moving to Berkeley, where she and Nat met. Nat graduated from UC Berkeley in January 1954 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration. He had taken classes in land use hoping to eventually work in real estate. The Korean conflict intervened, however, and he was drafted into the Army to serve two years. He entered basic training at Fort Ord and was stationed for the remaining time at Fort Bliss, Texas.

Nat's future plan changed for another reason. Following graduation and prior to entering the Army, Nat encountered a former classmate who, by pure chance, was walking to the university law school to begin applying for admission. He invited Nat to go along and, out of curiosity, Nat did so. While his friend went to the school office, Nat waited in the hall. He saw a sign over an open door that read "Moot Court Room." He entered and casually looked around the quiet, dimly lit space. He noted the jury box, counsel tables, the judge's bench, the clerk's desk, the witness chair and bailiff's station. He liked the feel and imagined other court rooms, where citizens of a civilized society could air grievances and settle disputes in a peaceful and orderly manner. He wanted to be part of it. Never before had he imagined an interest in law, but this visit to the law school changed that. He went home and told

Lil of his desire to study law. Lil calmly said, “Go for it.” So, with Lil's encouragement he applied for admission to Hastings Law School, an affiliate of the University of California in San Francisco. Hastings' acceptance letter arrived two years later, breathtakingly close to Nat's discharge from the Army.

Nat and Lil left Fort Bliss, Texas, and returned to the Bay Area to prepare for law school, renting a small apartment near Berkeley. While waiting for the start of law school, Nat worked several months for MacWhyte Wire Rope Co. in San Francisco.

Law school began in September 1956. It was a serious challenge and very hard. Nat finished the first year in the top ten of the first-year class of several hundred students. He was then appointed Note and Comment Editor of the Hastings Law Journal. During the first and second summer breaks of law school, Nat worked full time for a meat processing and packing company in Berkeley.

While Nat attended law school, Lil worked continuously to support the two of them, first for Universal Pump Co., then Jacuzzi Pump Co. and finally for Kaiser Aluminum and Chemical Co. in Oakland. The monthly G.I. Bill payments helped. Fortunately, law school tuition was much lower than it is now.

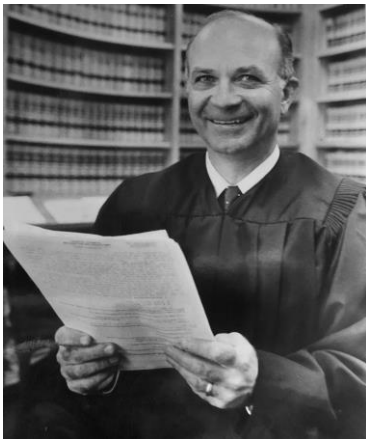
Nat graduated from law school in June 1959. He applied and immediately became employed by the California Attorney General's office as a junior counsel in Sacramento. He studied for and passed the California Bar Examination and was admitted to the California Bar in January 1960. He was then appointed Deputy California Attorney General assigned to the Criminal Division in Sacramento. While there, he represented the People of California in many criminal case appeals, primarily in the Court of Appeal, Third Appellate District.

In addition to the appellate cases, the Attorney General's Office assigned Nat to assist several Northern California district attorneys in the prosecution of criminal cases at the trial-court level. In this capacity he investigated and presented cases to

courts and grand juries. Among other matters, he assisted the district attorney of Plumas County in the trial of a major murder case. Subsequently, he prosecuted a conspiracy grand theft before a jury in Susanville, Lassen County.

After three years in the Attorney General's office, Nat entered private practice in the Salinas office of Cunningham and Panelli. When Mr. Cunningham retired, the firm became Panelli and Agliano. The practice involved business, probate, family, personal injury and criminal law matters. Michael Panelli was a great lawyer and partner. Over the ensuing eight years, Nat represented clients in a variety of cases--civil and criminal, in state and federal courts, in administrative hearings and in workers' compensation proceedings.

In October 1971 Governor Ronald Reagan appointed Nat to serve as a judge of the Salinas Municipal Court. In March 1972 the governor appointed him to serve as a judge of the Monterey County Superior Court. There he served in hundreds of civil and criminal cases. He further served several terms as presiding judge of the court.



In November 1984 Governor George Deukmejian appointed Nat Associate Justice of the Court of Appeal, Sixth Appellate District in San Jose. In 1986 the Governor named him Presiding Justice of that court. In addition, the Chief Justice of California appointed Nat as Justice Pro-Tem on several cases pending before the Supreme Court.

On February 18, 1992, Nat retired from the Court of Appeal. Thereafter, for approximately one year the State Judicial Council assigned Nat to assist trial courts in

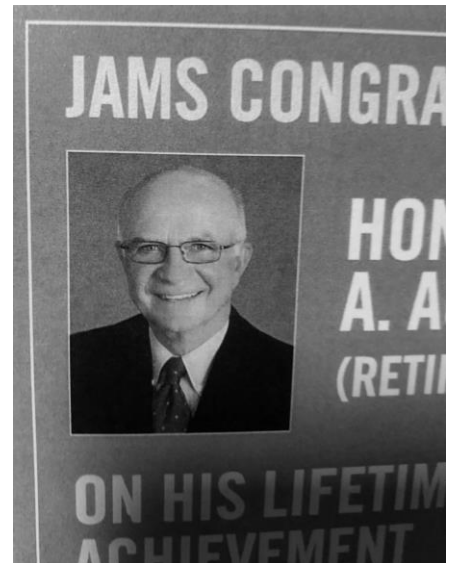
Superior Court Judge California.

In mid-1993 Nat became associated with Judicial Arbitration and Mediation Services (JAMS) and has since served as a mediator and arbitrator in hundreds of

cases in California, as well as several in Washington State.

On October 17, 2019, the Monterey County Bar Association presented Nat with a Lifetime Achievement Award “For exemplary service and dedication in the pursuit of Justice over his career.” Nat is profoundly grateful for having had the opportunity to serve.

Nat and Lil have four children--Michael (deceased), Lisa, Cheryl and Julie. Lisa, an attorney, served as a deputy district attorney of Santa Cruz County. Cheryl is a librarian in Illinois. Julie, now retired, served in the finance department and as Finance Director of the City of Monterey.



**Lifetime Achievement
Award Poster**



Nat and Lil have five grandchildren--Annika Gustafsson, a PhD candidate in astro-physics; Sonja Gustafsson, an English teacher; Lena Gustafsson, a UC Northridge graduate in communications; Emma Hersom, a Southern Illinois University graduate in theatre arts, and Sam Hersom, an entering Iowa State University student planning to major in aerospace engineering.

Lil & Nat

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