

# Frank Joseph Nuovo

1930

**BUSINESS EXECUTIVE, MUSICIAN, BUSINESSMAN**

WRITTEN BY FRANK S. NUOVO, SON

The Nuovo family dates back nine generations in Monterey to a Spanish cadet named Joaquin De Latorre, who arrived in 1801 with the Spanish military. Frank Nuovo's father, Antonio Nuovo, was born in San Vito Lo Capo, Sicily, on December 5, 1897, the son of Giovanni Novo and Caterina Alastra Novo. (His father's surname was changed to Nuovo when Antonio came through Ellis Island.)

Frank was born in Monterey on January 5, 1930, to Antonio Nuovo, a fisherman, and Rose Melicia. They had four children including John, Catherine and Dolores. Tragically, Antonio died in 1950 at age 52 while fishing off the coast of Mexico on his purse seiner, the *Sherman Rose*. Frank's mother, Rose, was 42 at the time. Frank was only 20 years old, and his adult life had only just begun. He recognized that as a priority he needed to step up and do whatever he could to fill the shoes of his highly respected and hardworking father. He then dedicated much of his life to helping organize and lead extended family interests. Frank always kept in mind that his father did not want him to be a fisherman so that he would have more options in his life; and, while Frank was proud of his Sicilian fisherman roots, the guidance and dreams of his father were active influences on his life choices.

Frank began his working career very early selling *The Herald* newspapers on the street and then delivering them to upper Franklin Street. Then at age 14 he was hired as a grocery clerk and delivery driver at Roma Market, where the Portola Hotel & Spa now stands. He also worked with other local Italian family-owned businesses-- D'Aquisto and Sons, a ship supply store, and Del Monte Fish, a wholesale fish market owned by the same family. His experience was a powerful influence on his life and the source of many of his stories, which were about everything from driving delivery trucks during World War II to making succulent Italian olives in big barrels

of brine. He shared with his children as they grew up to impart the many lessons he learned—working hard, being honest, building respect and reliability, and following through with what you start. These early work experiences also helped Frank form an early strong bond with the extended community in Monterey and further cemented his respect for his Italian roots and the many related traditions.

Frank attended San Carlos parochial, Walter Colton and Thomas Larkin grammar schools and graduated from Monterey High School in 1948 and Monterey Peninsula College in 1950. He went on to attend San Jose State University for a short while, and then the Korean War broke out. He enlisted in the United States Air Force on February 8, 1951, and did basic training at Lackland Air Force Base, San Antonio, Texas. After basic training he attended Pennsylvania State University for a few months and, with luck of the draw, was assigned to 15<sup>th</sup> Air Force Headquarters, March Air Force Base, in Riverside, California. After serving four years, he was honorably discharged on February 8, 1955, with the rank of staff sergeant.



**The guys on Fisherman's Wharf, January 1947.**

**Top row: John Di Maggio and John Catalano. Middle Row: Frank Nuovo, Horace Rappa, John Nuovo, and Sal Gacalone. Bottom row: Robert Crivello, Joe Principato, Frank Rombi, Benny Campango and Sal Rappa.**

Frank Nuovo and Francesca Lucido, a blue-eyed Italian blonde, were childhood sweethearts who were married on July 28, 1951. He was 21, she was 19. Theirs is a classic love story, and on July 28, 2022, they celebrated their 71st<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Frank and Francesca raised a family of four, starting with Antonio (Tony), then Francesca, Linda and finally Frank (Frankie).



**Francesca and Frank at a large dinner event likely in the mid 70s.**

Frank's professional life began after he left the Air Force. He was hired as a billing clerk by California Water & Telephone (now California American Water Company) and worked his way up to business manager. Through the years he refused numerous offers to move farther up the company ladder, because these promotions would have required him to move from Monterey. Family and quality of life have always been number one with Frank, so he stayed on the Peninsula for 38 years until his retirement. It is where he and Francesca still reside today.

A living wage was a big challenge in the early days, but Frank's passion for music and talent as a drummer certainly helped fill the gaps. He played his first professional music job at age 14 and developed quickly into a highly sought-after drummer known throughout Central California. By the time he started his own family, he was an established music professional. Frank moonlighted with various musical groups, resting briefly after his day job at Cal Am, then heading out again to play gigs alongside Mike Marotta, John Catalano, Jake Stock, Buddy Jones and Jackie Coon, and many others. He felt fortunate that he had an enjoyable, and effective, means for earning extra money during all those years of supporting his growing family.



**Some of Frank's closest musician friends. Left to right: Johnny Catalano on clarinet, Frank on drums, Johnny Coustette on bass and Mike Marotta on accordion.**

Through the decades he would be seen performing music of all styles with different artists and celebrities, often helping to raise money for charities at events and venues all around the area. He often said performing music with friends makes it more like fun and that music was his "golf game," but his family knew how hard he worked.

He often performed locally seven nights a week on top of his full-time day job. Also, since he was always interacting with and helping friends in the community, it seemed to his family that much of the time he was playing gratis!

Bottom line, Frank is a successful musician in his own right--one of Monterey's premier drummers who was a first call for many band leaders during his active years. Frank also shared his musical experience and expertise by serving the Monterey Jazz Festival as a member of the Educational Committee. He and his many musical friends also creatively influenced his sons Tony and Frankie, whom he taught his percussive craft. Both followed similar paths in the music field, specifically becoming successful drummers while pursuing other career goals. Tony is the proud founder and owner of the award-winning Layers Sensational Cakes in Monterey, and Frankie is a world-renowned industrial designer and entrepreneur.

Frank has utilized his strong business, financial and organizational skills when participating in various community activities. He has demonstrated his passion for his community through service with organizations such as Kiwanis, for which he served as a director, and he was always ready and willing to help out at Laguna Seca races, golf tournaments, the Monterey County Fair and Monterey Jazz Festival events.

Frank continued his family's longtime association with San Carlos Cathedral, where he was baptized and he and his parents and siblings were married. Now in his 90s, until very recently he was an active participant in meaningful parish projects. As a member of the Italian Catholic Federation, he served on the fund-raising committee for the San Carlos Cathedral restoration project. Frank was also involved in various Italian Heritage Society-centered activities. Whether helping with planning and logistics, or simply marching with a drum in a parade or performing onstage for a festa, Frank always has been eager to contribute his time and skills in support of local events and charities.

With a stellar reputation as a business manager, Frank often was asked and accepted leadership roles. He was a co-founder, along with Jerome Lucido, Charlie Della Sala, Peter Coniglio and others, of the Italian Heritage Society of the Monterey Peninsula and established it as a non-profit. Together the men raised funds and cleared the hurdles for obtaining approval from the Coastal Commission and the

City of Monterey for the creation and dedication of the statue of Santa Rosalia, which was installed at Fisherman's Wharf. The statue is an essential part of the Santa Rosalia Festival and Blessing of the Fleet, which is an important annual event on every Italian Catholic's calendar. Frank led efforts that included planning, logistics, setting up, operations and entertainment for the festival and related activities. When needed, he would even work with his good friends and family to break down and clean up the plaza. Charlie, Frank and Jerome used to laugh out loud together (slap happy from the long day) while collecting trash and sweeping up Custom House Plaza at nearly midnight. They were all important business leaders, but they also shared a sense of responsibility and willingness to perform whatever task was needed to make the festival a success. And it always was.

As business manager of the California American Water Company in Monterey, Frank's goal was to provide a positive, family-like work environment akin to his Italian-familia upbringing and his early work experience in local shops. During his career, Frank hired and managed a diverse range of people. While he focused on the company's main mission of delivering clean fresh water to the Monterey Peninsula, Frank utilized Italian cultural influences to create a sense of community among Cal Am's employees and customers. Because of Frank's efforts, the company was a strong supporter and good friend to the citizens and businesses of the Monterey Peninsula. His sound business practices resulted in his being elected as President of the Monterey County Water Works Association; additionally, he served on the board of the Monterey Chamber of Commerce. Frank also served on the Monterey division of the California Employment Development Committee.

As busy as he was—working and building his career, supporting his growing family, drumming in the evenings, participating in community activities, serving on boards and committee, helping his widowed mother wherever needed and aiding his in-laws--he still found the time to deliver lunches and dinners and visit with people in need for Meals on Wheels. Frank served in a variety of positions over the years, including President of the Monterey Paisano Club and Secretary and President of the

Compari Club. He has earned life membership status of the American Federation of Musicians and The Elks Club in Monterey and was an active member of the Kiwanis Club of Monterey for 35 years where they presented him with the American legion of honor award for his many years of service.

Frank J. Nuovo has received many honors in his lifetime, including, a congressional award presented by Congressman Leon Panetta for his contribution to the community, the state and the nation; the Monterey Peninsula College Distinguished Alumni Award in recognition of his contributions to the Monterey Peninsula, and two awards from the City of Monterey including an award for special musical contributions and a centennial award with gratitude from the mayor and city council.

Looking back over his 92-plus years, Frank considers that his greatest achievements center around his beautiful wife and family. His wife Francesca is known for her own contributions, amazing cooking and her work in both public school and private preschool. She also taught catechism, served as a docent for the San Carlos Cathedral and was a Eucharistic Minister alongside Frank for many years. They are still a team today, modeling a solid and admirable example for their four kids, six grandchildren and seven-going-on-eight great grandchildren. Frank and Francesca generously invested and actively participated in their children's dreams and futures providing financial advice and support for college educations and business ventures, and all have achieved success and admiration in the community.

Frank retired as a highly regarded, trusted individual and remains a truly admired figure in the community. An important Legacy for Frank is that the Nuovo family maintains a close bond with an eye toward building a positive influence in the community wherever possible. Their children have all been successful with their endeavors--as before mentioned with Tony and Frankie, and with Francesca's highly regarded *Serendipity Preschool* and with Linda serving many years as a preschool teacher around the bay area and Monterey.

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