

Anita Maiorana Ferrante

1928-2019

RESTAURATEUR, PROPERTY MANAGER, COMMUNITY SERVICE

WRITTEN BY HER LOVING CHILDREN AND FAMILY



Anita Maiorana Ferrante was born in Marettimo, an island off the coast of Sicily, to Pietro and Giuseppa Maiorana. Her father left Marettimo for America before Anita was born, in order to earn enough money to relocate his family to Monterey. At the age of six she met her father for the first time, when he returned to Marettimo in 1934 to accompany her and her mother to Monterey.

The family's first home was an apartment on Van Buren Street. It was a festive time, because the fishing industry was thriving. When Anita's baby sister Rosalie was born in December 1934, the family moved to a new home on Larkin Street. Two more sisters were born--Phyllis Maiorana Zahradka of Bracciano, Italy, and Maria Maiorana O'Farrell of Salinas.

As a first grader at Walter Colton School, Anita quickly learned to read and write English. She continued her education at San Carlos Catholic School, Monterey High School and Monterey Peninsula College. While in school, she was her parents' bookkeeper and interpreter. She also worked at the Monterey hospital as a receptionist for five years.

In 1951 Anita returned to Marettimo with her mother, father and youngest sister, Maria, to visit family and reconnect with the island she loved so much. This beautiful island home continued to be a special place for Anita throughout her life.

In 1952 she married Victor Ferrante; together they owned and operated the Tip Top Coffee Shop on Cass Street, where Anita made many lifelong friends. They had four

children--Vicki Ferrante Ramirez (Ron), Diana Ferrante Miller (Carl), Tori Ferrante (Ann) and Maria Ferrante. Anita became the proud Nonna of six grandchildren.

When her children had all grown up and were living on their own, Anita still felt the need to be a “mom,” so she placed a card on the bulletin board at the Monterey Institute of International Studies offering to house students. Over a period of 12 years she welcomed 35 international students into her home, warmly enfolding and embracing all of them into her family.

Anita’s love for her family extended far beyond her front door, to friends and neighbors. Christmas Day revolved around an exquisite 40-foot dining table with different-themed decorations each year, welcoming her loving family. There were years when every member of the family (53 in all) was seated there to enjoy a traditional Italian Christmas meal near her celebrated *Presepio*, or nativity scene. Anita had a talent for floral arranging and cooking delicious Italian meals, which added to the warmth of her welcoming home. Throughout her life she cherished her collection of Vatican postage stamps and fine ceramics from all parts of the world. As the matriarch of the family, Anita continued the legacy of her mother and father by celebrating the love of family.

Anita had many passions that were part of her full and successful life. She was a devout Catholic and faithful parishioner of San Carlos Cathedral and a member of the Italian Catholic Federation, Sons of Italy, Italian Heritage Society and Festa Italia. She was a founding and active board member of the Italian Heritage Society of the Monterey Peninsula, which each year hosts a dinner for honorees. Anita opened her home yearly to provide a place for the board members to wrap the homemade Italian cookies she and many of the board members baked to be served at the dinner. In 2016 she herself was one of those honored by the IHS for her outstanding community service.

As a member of the Monterey History & Art Association, Anita was a pivotal member of MHAA’s La Merienda committee for many years. Each June she was a Merienda hostess and beautifully decorated a table for her guests as part of the celebration of the founding of the City of Monterey. She had the responsibility of

ordering the celebratory cake and, with the help of volunteers, cutting it and serving it to sometimes as many as 500 guests.



Anita cutting and serving the cake at La Merienda.

Anita was a member of the Monterey Commercial Property Owners Association (MCPOA). At the city's annual 4th of July parade, she proudly represented MCPOA as she served coffee and doughnuts in front of the Monterey Post Office to parade participants.

Recognized as being from one of Monterey's early fishing families, Anita was selected by Mr. William J. Douros, the then West Coast Regional Director for NOAA's Office of National Marine Sanctuaries, to christen the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration research vessel, *Fulmar*, at the Monterey Coast Guard pier in 2006. Before christening the new vessel, Anita spoke of the need for sustainability of the fisheries in the Monterey Bay.



Anita with NOAA West Coast Director William J. Douros and other dignitaries, including former Mayor Dan Albert on the far right, as she christens the *Fulmar*.

Anita loved Italy so much that she spent one month every year, along with her sister Phyllis of Bracciano, Italy, on the island of Marettimo in the house where she was born. Her time on the island was very special and was filled with laughter, delicious meals and evenings of music and friends. Loved by both visitors and locals, Anita was recognized by the Marettimo Association of Culture, Sports, Recreation & Tourism for her contributions to her island community.



Anita in Marettimo being recognized by the Culture, Sport, Recreation & Tourism Association. Pictured left to right: Sal Scaduto, Luigi Laluna, Pepe LaTorre, Anita, association president Vito Vaccaro and Linda Scaduto.

Monterey has held a special spot in the hearts of all who come from Marettimo because the two have similar, beautiful coastlines. Anita's visits to the island over the years have influenced many of her family and friends to visit and enjoy its simple but exquisite beauty. Some even say that those visits were Anita's secret way of retaining her youthfulness. She was proud of her origin and was known by many as the "ambassador" of Marettimo.



Anita enjoying a casual lunch with family on her beloved island of Marettimo.

Left to right: Anita, daughter Vicki Ramirez, granddaughter Maria Ramirez, granddaughter Alexandra Ferrante, sister Phyllis Zahradka, daughter Diana Miller, grandson Dominic Ferrante and daughter-in-law Ann Ferrante.

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