

Mary Melicia Benech

1927

MONTGOMERY WARD CATALOG MANAGER, COMMUNITY SERVICE

WRITTEN BY JANICE BENECH BROWN

Mary Melicia Benech, the daughter of Salvator and Angelina Melicia, was born on June 21, 1927, in Monterey, California. She was one of five children--brother Ted, sister Rose, Mary's twin sister Louise and sister Angelina. Mary's father, Salvator, was born in Isola delle Femmine, Sicily, and after serving in the Italian military came to America and settled in Monterey before sending for his wife Angelina. Salvator provided for his family by joining in the local fishing industry with his two purse seiners, the *New Limited* and the *Sherman Rose*.



Angelina and Salvator Melicia

Mary attended Monterey High School and graduated with the class of 1946. All through high school she worked at the State Theatre. During World War II, when all the men were off fighting, she filled in as a packer at the San Carlos Cannery. Mary would pack the sardines in cans and put the cans on a conveyor belt. Cannery work was hectic: If you were not packing quickly enough, the floor women would tap you on the shoulder to work faster. After graduation Mary went to work for Montgomery Ward as the catalog manager and continued working there on and off for over 20 years. Later in her life, she worked part time at Mike's Seafood and Casa Karmelkorn, businesses owned by her sister Angelina and brother-in-law, Joseph Anastasi.

In 1947 Mary met the love of her life, Henry Benech, Jr., whom she dated for a year before becoming engaged. They were married on September 4, 1949, at San Carlos Cathedral. Their four children are Kathleen, David, William and Janice. They also have one granddaughter, Cara Rose, who attended Santa Clara University School of Law and finished her degree at Monterey College of Law.



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Henry Benech, Jr.

Mary has always enjoyed donating her time to various organizations. Her list of volunteer activities includes Community Hospital of the Monterey Peninsula for 37 years (over 12,500 hours), Italian Catholic Federation Branch #36 for 26 years, Festa Italia for 17 years, Monterey County Fair Ag Country Store for 14 years and Alliance on Aging for seven years.



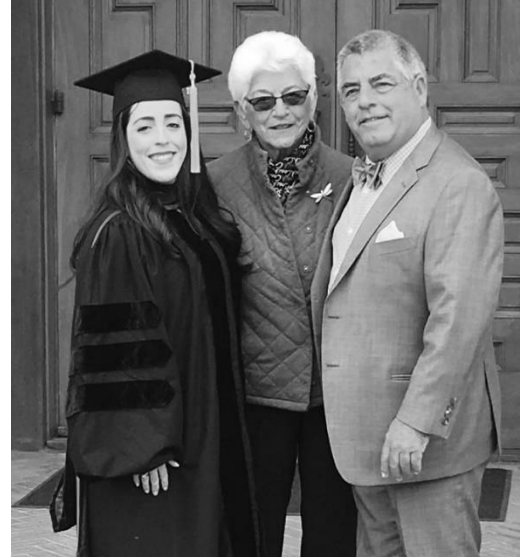
Kathleen, David, Mary, Henry, and William Benech.



Mary Benech, Janice Benech Brown, Cara Rose Benech, William and David Benech.



William Benech, Cara Rose Benech, William Brown and bride Janice Benech Brown, Mary Benech, and David Benech.



Granddaughter Cara Rose Benech, Mary Benech, and William Benech at Cara's Monterey Law School graduation.



Mary Benech at the Festa Italia cannoli booth.



Janice Brown, Kathleen Benech, and Mary Benech at Disneyland.

Mary was proud to have been honored by the Italian Heritage Society for her years of community service.

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