

A Legacy of Memories

By: Andrea E. Garcia
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For 78-year-old Nancy Rossi, sitting in her large entertainment room with bursts of sunlight peeking through the plush curtains, talk of her husband brings a glow to her face.

“We were five months short of celebrating our 50th anniversary when he passed away five years ago,” the elegant-styled woman says of her marriage to Max Rossi, who died at the age of 73. Her eyes wander gingerly across the room; glimpses of memories seem to drizzle for a moment.

She mentions his love of dancing, jazz music and his devotion to family and church. During their marriage, they traveled to 156 countries and had made plans to visit more before his untimely death. Nancy, sitting before a large portrait of Max, turns to face the picture and speaks to him in almost a whisper. “He was the love of my life.”



To many people in the city of Fairfield, Max was known as the man who would gather a plethora of politicians in the room where Nancy is now sitting; the same room where he passed away of a massive heart attack.

He was a community representative for former Congressman Vic Fazio, entertaining guests such as former Governor Jerry Brown and Assemblyman Tom Hannigan, and was Solano County's assistant county assessor.

But he was more than a civic leader. He was a community activist and philanthropist, caring greatly for the needs of the people in Solano County.

“He was very secretive about donations and charitable giving and he always felt that when you give you feel blessed,” she says. “God remembers that and it feels good.”

Max, a man whose looks resembled that of actor Cesar Romero, supported the people of Solano in various ways. His passion for the community's health care led him to serve on the NorthBay Healthcare Foundation, where he helped to fund their Alzheimer's Day Care program.

And his passion went further. Noting a need for charitable giving to remain in the county, he became one of the founding members for the Solano Community Foundation, a nonprofit dedicated to strengthening the community through private donors enthusiastic about lasting contributions.

“He started it because he saw a need for it in the county,” Nancy says. “He noticed there was nothing here like it. Money was leaving the county and he really stressed the importance of keeping it local. We need to help each other.”

Max’s desire to help the community continues. In honor of Max, the Rossi family set up an endowment fund at the Foundation. And Nancy, a woman devoted to the youth of the community, finds fulfillment when making grants toward children’s programs.

“I enjoy helping people in need and in particular, children in need. There are so many single mothers who need our help,” Nancy says. “It’s something the community can benefit from and it’s money going toward something I love.”

As the time passes and the sun becomes overshadowed by the clouds, Nancy, looking younger than her years, stands and looks around the room. She closes her eyes, takes a deep breath and then smiles.

“I will always get involved with a nonprofit that can help children. That’s my baby.”

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