



Florence Tringali Cavaliere

Florence was born in Monterey on December 11, 1952, at the Monterey Hospital on Hartnell Street. She is the daughter of Philip and Mary Tringali. Her mother was born in Sant'Elia which is in the Province of Palermo, Sicily. Florence was the first granddaughter to Salvatore and Concettina Tringali from Augusta, in the Province of Siracusa, Sicily; as well as to Antonino (Nino) and Anna Balestreri from Sant'Elia. Nano Nino was a fisherman, who like so many Sicilians emigrated to Monterey. Florence has two brothers, Salvatore and Anthony Tringali, and a younger sister, AnnaMaria Aiello.

Florence grew up on Spaghetti Hill, on Scott Street in Monterey playing with friends who lived on Larkin, Watson, Seeno, Franklin and Jefferson Streets. Grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins lived within blocks of each other. With so many relatives living close by, it was difficult to get away with anything. Seriously though, it was a gift having loved ones surrounding her. The Sicilian language was her first language and she still speaks it today. She went to local schools including Thomas O. Larkin, Walter Colton Junior High, Monterey High School and Monterey Peninsula College where she studied accounting. Florence always loved school and learning. She graduated in the top 10% of her senior class of 1971 at Monterey High School.

As a little girl, she was involved in the Italian Catholic Federation Branch #36 Santa Rosalia parades. The parade began on Figueroa Street from San Carlos Cathedral and concluded on Fisherman's Wharf #2 for the blessing of the fishermen and their fishing vessels. Her nano Salvatore was at one time president of ICF Branch #36. Florence helped serve dinners for events in the Old San Carlos Parish Hall and helped to sell homemade Italian cookies at the Plaza for the Santa Rosalia Festivals. When she was a teenager, she submitted recipes in the Central Coast District Italian Catholic Federation cookbook along with her nana Concettina. Keeping the Italian culture and traditions alive in Monterey is something she holds dear to her heart today.

Her nano Salvatore and her father Philip were the original owners who opened the doors of Monterey Fish Company. At the time it was a small fish market on Old Fisherman's Wharf. From there they opened the fish market on Fisherman's Wharf #2. Eventually, they expanded to a fish processing/freezing plant and fish cannery in Sand City. Philip's brothers, Carmelo Tringali and Joseph Tringali, were also partners in the business. As a teenager in high school and for a few years after high school, Florence worked for her family's company on the wharf as an assistant bookkeeper. She loved working side by side with her nano in the office, as well with her father in the fish market. She fondly remembers her nano helping to sponsor relatives from Sicily to come to America to work and begin a new life in Monterey.

While working at Monterey Fish Company as a bookkeeper, she met her husband Bonaventura (Turie) Cavaliere who is also committed to the Monterey Italian Community. Turie is the son of Ratzi (Skipper, Red) and Sarah Cavaliere whose families came from Isola della Femmine, Sicily. They owned and operated Cavaliere's Fish Market in Watsonville and then moved the retail fish market to Old Fishermen's Wharf in Monterey. Turie then became the owner in charge of running and operating Cavaliere's Fish Market. Turie and Florence married in October 1972 at San Carlos Cathedral. She has also received all of her sacraments at San Carlos including, Baptism, Reconciliation, Holy Communion and Confirmation. They were the first Italian couple to have a very large traditional Sicilian wedding in the ballroom at the new Hyatt Regency. Her nanas and family members made homemade tomato sauce for the pasta which was served as a first course. It was a tradition at Sicilian weddings. Homemade Italian cookies were carefully plated, wrapped in cellophane and tied with a bow and placed on the guest's dinner tables.

The favors, “bomboniere” with 5 white Jordan almonds (sugar coated almonds), were placed in a large white satin covered open basket and passed around to all the guests by the bride and groom. The odd number of candies is a tradition used to symbolize the couple’s indivisibility. Turie and Florence have four children: Sarah, Turie, Maria and Christina. They have six beautiful grandchildren: Angelina, Matthew, Jaelyn, Florence, Bonaventura and Giuseppe; and two wonderful great grandchildren: William and Johnny.

Florence is a member of the Italian Heritage Society, Friends of Isola, Italian Catholic Federation Branch #36, Santa Rosalia/Festa Italia, Catholic Daughters of the Americas, The Legion of Mary, Parish Life & Hospitality and is a Eucharistic Minister for San Carlos Cathedral. She has also helped with the religious education classes preparing children to receive First Holy Communion. Florence has helped and has volunteered to aid in many local non-profit community events.

Florence has been an Italian Catholic Federation Branch #36 member for over 30 years. During the Lenten dinners she helped to sell the 50/50 raffle tickets. After a few years of selling raffle tickets, she worked in the kitchen to help prepare meals for the Lenten dinners and also helped in the kitchen during the year for the dinner/meeting events. She is now the chairperson for the Dessert Station during the Lenten dinners, but also continues to help in the kitchen. She is currently on the board for ICF Branch #36 as Recording Secretary.

Florence has been a member of Festa Italia for over 25 years. As a member, she was on the committee as co-chair for the Queen’s Coronation Ball for ten years. Two of her granddaughters have participated throughout the years. As a committee member she also worked in the beverage booth during the 3-day Santa Rosalia/Festa Italia Festival and was in charge of the merchandise booth for a few years purchasing T-shirts, hats, aprons and a variety of Italian souvenirs. She has volunteered and helped plan many Festa events.

Florence is an active member of the Catholic Daughters of the Americas. The purposes of the Order are exclusively religious, charitable and educational. She enjoys participating in their fund raisers in-order-to raise money for their local and national charities. They have two large fundraisers a year, one in the Spring and one in the Fall.

Florence has been a member of the Legion of Mary for 22 years. The Legion of Mary is a lay apostolate combining Marian spirituality with active evangelization, visiting the sick and homebound. As a member of the Legion, she became a Eucharistic Minister at San Carlos Cathedral. She brings the Eucharist weekly to residents in convalescent homes, assisted living facilities and to the homebound. She loves the work of the Legion and its devotion to the Blessed Mother.

She is also an active member of the Parish Life & Hospitality Ministry. The ministry oversees and plans parish events and celebrations at San Carlos Cathedral. They also host and serve donuts after Mass on assigned Sundays.

Florence has a great love for family, church and her Italian heritage. She keeps the Italian traditions alive with her family and friends. Sunday family gatherings for dinner, traditional foods taught by her mother and grandmothers and passing the tradition and recipes to her children and grandchildren are important to her in keeping the Italian Culture alive. Florence feels blessed and very thankful to have her children, grandchildren and family so close to her. She is very proud of her strong Sicilian heritage and proud to acknowledge that her grandfathers, grandmothers, uncles, aunts, and cousins came to America from Sicily to begin a new life in a new world keeping the Sicilian culture alive and active in their families. Florence is forever grateful!!

Thank you to the board of directors of the Italian Heritage Society for considering and nominating me for this special community service award. It was a total surprise and I feel greatly honored. Mille Grazie!

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