



Angela Zegarelli VanDerhoof

September 27, 1935 - October 2, 2025

UTICA – Angela, “Ang,” Mrs. VanDerhoof, “The General,” or simply “Nonnie.” If you had the blessing of knowing Angela Zegarelli VanDerhoof by any of these names, your life was all the richer for it. On October 2nd, 2025, following a brief illness, Angela passed peacefully from this world and into the next, in the comfort and dignity of her home, with loving family by her side. Over the course of her 90 years—a life marked by integrity, accomplishment, industry, kindness, and compassion—Angela made a difference in ways that are difficult to fully quantify. She lived a life of consequence, and she lived it very well.

Angela was born on September 27, 1935, in Utica, the daughter of the late Vincent “Jim” and Josephine “Josie” (Arcuri) Zegarelli. She grew up in the East Utica of yesterday, in her family home on South Street. Angela often regaled friends and family with stories about growing up amidst the chaos of many cousins, friends, and extended family—a time and place that seemed almost magical. Though money was tight, her parents nurtured her with love and instilled in her a deep appreciation for the importance of education and a strong work ethic—values that made anything feel possible. Those special days lasted far into her adulthood, and her children came to experience some of that same joy at Josie and Jim’s (Nonnie and Papa’s) home well into the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s.

Angela graduated from Thomas R. Proctor High School with the Class of 1953. She continued her education at Alfred University, where she earned a BA in Education, graduating in 1957. During her years at Alfred, Angela met the late Thomas E. VanDerhoof, a fellow student who was also pursuing a career in education. Angela and Tom were married on April 11, 1959, in Grace Episcopal Church in Utica. Throughout their marriage, Angela and Tom shared a deep and mutual devotion that truly graced their years together. Their family life was enhanced by the blessing of three children and the joy they brought into their home. Their union lasted 47 years, until Tom's passing on May 28, 2006.

Angela began her professional career as a history teacher in the Utica Public School System. Her career—and ultimately her life's work—would take her from the halls of her alma mater to a new and transformative calling in human services.

Angela became the Executive Director of the Oneida County Chapter of the Epilepsy Foundation, where she served with distinction for several years. However, she found her truest passion in 1979, when she became the Executive Director of the Oneida County Chapter of the Association for Retarded Children, later known as The Arc, Oneida-Lewis Chapter.

At the time Angela took the helm, the Oneida County ARC was a modest, one-county human services agency with few employees, a shoestring budget, and a single building on Arnold Avenue in Utica. Its services were limited—primarily offering a small number of jobs in a sheltered workshop setting.

What no one could have foreseen was that, under Angela's leadership over the next three decades, the agency would undergo a remarkable transformation. It expanded into neighboring Lewis County, becoming The Arc, Oneida-Lewis, and evolved into one of the largest human service

organizations in the region—with a multi-million-dollar budget, a staff of over 750 employees, and services reaching more than 1,700 individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

During her tenure, The Arc opened numerous new facilities throughout Oneida and Lewis Counties, including a new administrative building in downtown Utica and many community residences across the area. For Angela, inclusion of differently abled individuals in neighborhoods and workplaces wasn't just an ideal—it was essential to the very soul of a thriving community.

To realize this vision, Angela brought her keen business sense to bear, forging lasting partnerships with the government agencies and local businesses—including Miele Manufacturing, ConMed Corporation, NYISH, the U.S. Department of Defense, AMF Bowling, and the F.X. Matt Brewing Company. These collaborations helped provide meaningful employment opportunities for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Angela firmly believed that the pride and dignity that come from meaningful work are fundamental human rights—rights that should be accessible to all, regardless of ability.

During her time as Executive Director, Angela (affectionately known to some as “The General”) championed numerous innovative programs, including Saturday Friends, StageWorks, and CollegeWorks. She consistently demonstrated exceptional competence, extraordinary intelligence, and tireless leadership in her unwavering service to both her community and profession.

Her leadership was a profile in tenacity and undaunted courage. For Angela, leadership was far more than holding a title—it was rooted in conscience, hard

work, and the responsible stewardship of an organization that would one day pass into the care of future generations. To her, leadership was the privilege of helping to shape something greater than oneself—and of doing right by those you are entrusted to lead.

Angela served The Arc, Oneida-Lewis with both intellect and heart, always striving to create pathways to inclusion and a better life for individuals with developmental disabilities and their families. Thanks to her vision and dedication, The Arc became so much more than it was when Angela was first called to it.

After 31 years of distinguished service, Angela retired from her position as Executive Director. Her retirement was marked by a series of honors and recognitions, including a Resolution from the New York State Legislature in 2010. In lasting tribute to her legacy, The Arc dedicated a building in her name on Route 5 in the Town of Kirkland.

Amazingly, Angela's career at The Arc was only one part of her lifelong commitment to service and activism within the community. She somehow found time to contribute to an extraordinary range of organizations, including:

- Member, Faxon Hospital Women's Auxiliary
- Founding Member, Oneida County Aging and MRDD Coalition
- Member, Oneida County Office for the Aging Advisory Board
- Member, Oneida County Community Services Board
- Chair, Senior Citizens Committee and Centennial Committee of the Utica Rotary
- Member, Utica Rotary Board of Directors
- President, Utica Rotary
- Member, Mohawk Valley Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors
- Member, Utica Symphony Board of Directors
- Member, Oneida County Women's Democratic Committee.

Angela's dedication to the community was both palpable and inspiring—motivating others to get involved and give back in meaningful ways. In recognition of her service, she received numerous awards and honors throughout her life, including:

- The Athena Award
- Woman of the Year, Beta Sigma Phi
- YMCA Human Services Woman of the Year Award
- Woman of Merit in Human Services, Mohawk Valley Women's History Project
- East Utica Optimist Club Hall of Fame
- Friend of Education Award (2010), Phi Delta Kappa
- Senior Volunteer Award (2010), Oneida County Office for the Aging
- Paul Harris Fellow, Utica Rotary
- New York State Senate Commendation Award (2022)

These are just a few of the many accolades Angela received during her lifetime—too numerous to list in full. Each one stands as a testament to her unwavering commitment to service and her lasting impact on the Mohawk Valley.

Although Angela retired at age 75, she never retired from life. True to form, she lived just down the street from her grandchildren during their formative years, and her home remained the heart of countless family gatherings.

She cherished traveling with her children and grandchildren, and she continued to stay involved in community events for many years. What made these moments even more special was one of Angela's most endearing qualities—one that might not leap off the page from everything you've just read: Angela was hilarious. Her sense of humor was razor-sharp, her people-watching commentary spot-on, and her love of life's absurdities ever-present.

Her wisdom was often matched by her natural funniness, making even the most ordinary conversations a delight. Whether discussing current events or sharing stories from the past, Angela could always make you laugh. Her wit is something we will all miss deeply—but we are forever grateful for the memories that still make us laugh out loud.

Angela is survived by many dear friends, including Betty Arcuri, who has been like a sister since childhood; dear friends and confidants from The Arc, including Joanne Donaruma Wade, Anne VanStrander, Mary Jane Tottey, and Leeanne Wereszynski, whose constant friendship extended far beyond their years of working together.

As Angela grew older and downsized from her home of 50 years, she began a new chapter as a resident of The Community at Sunset Wood in New Hartford. True to her nature, she quickly forged new and dear friendships in her next stage of life.

Angela was a bit of a high roller in her time. A lifelong lover of card games—and a skill-rated Bridge player—she found kindred spirits at Sunset Wood and took great joy in her weekly Bridge games with “The Ladies.” These gatherings were more than just a pastime; they were a source of laughter, connection, and camaraderie. Particular mention must be made of her friend and Bridge partner, Doris Ernest, with whom she shared a truly special bond.

Having lived a long and fruitful life, Angela was also touched by the sadness of losing many family members and friends who passed before her. She was predeceased by her husband, Thomas VanDerhoof; her parents, Vincent and Josephine Zegarelli; and numerous beloved aunts, uncles, and cousins.

Angela also mourned the loss of many close friends throughout the years,

including, Carmen Arcuri, Paul Schaeffer, Joseph and Madeline Hobika, James and Ruth Turnbull, JoAn Cardamone, and Tony Militello. A special mention is reserved for the late Vincent Colgan, her Assistant Director, right hand, and fast friend for many years.

Angela is survived by her children: son, Thomas S. "Scott" VanDerhoof, Major, USAF, Ret., and his spouse, Jann VanDerhoof, Cibolo, TX; daughters, Rebecca A. "Becky" VanDerhoof, New Hartford, and Heidi VanDerhoof Coluzza and Michael A. Coluzza, Utica. Also included is Francis J. Coluzza, Utica, who was part of every family celebration. It should be noted that Becky spent the last few years by her mother's side, providing loving companionship and daily care.

Angela is also survived by her grandchildren, Matthew V. Fonner, Utica, Emma Jo Fonner, Springfield, MA, and a very special "bonus" grandchild, Sophia V. Vallese, Utica. They were truly the light of her life.

She further leaves to cherish her memory her niece and nephew, Anna and Rick Gargiulo, and their daughter, Grace; many members of her extended family, including her uncle, Raymond Arcuri and beloved aunt, Janet Cannistra; as well as numerous cousins from both the Arcuri and Zegarelli families.

As a mother, Angela loved her children fiercely and was a constant, grounding presence in their lives. She offered unwavering support and encouragement—always there with a listening ear, wise words, or a gentle push when needed. She raised her children to be kind, compassionate, and attentive, and she instilled in them a strong moral compass: always do the right thing, even when it isn't the easy thing.

Angela's family would like to publicly acknowledge and share their deep

appreciation for the staff and her loving neighbors at Sunset Wood; Hospice and Palliative Care of New Hartford; and the numerous health and wellness professionals throughout Central New York who provided dedicated and compassionate care.

They especially recognize Dr. Naji El Khoury and his devoted team—including Kerry, Kara, and Lisa—for their exceptional support. Special thanks also go to Dr. Stephen H. Passalacqua and his team, as well as Dr. Mark J. Schug, for the care and kindness they provided over the years.

A very special thanks goes to Maria Tucci and Gina Burke of Maria Tucci Hair Design, who always kept Angela looking “just so.”

Finally, Angela’s family would like to extend heartfelt gratitude to Mallory Henderson and her team of dedicated and compassionate caregivers from Henderson’s Homecare, LLC, who helped Angela remain in the home she loved, surrounded by family during her final days

Truly, a life of consequence. Surely, a life well-lived.

Visitation will be held on Friday, October 17, 2025, from 4:00-7:00 p.m. at the Eannace Funeral Home, Inc., 932 South St., corner of Hammond Ave. In lieu of floral offerings, memorial contributions in Angela’s honor may be made to Best Buddies International online at <https://www.bestbuddies.org/donate/>, or The Kelberman Center online at <https://www.kelberman.org/giving/donate/>; envelopes will also be available at the funeral home. Relatives and friends are respectfully invited to attend Angela's Mass of Christian Burial and Celebration of Life, which will commence on Saturday, October 18, 2025, at 10:00 a.m. at Mary, Mother of Our Savior Parish, Lourdes Campus, 2222 Genesee Street. Interment will follow in Calvary Cemetery.

This tribute to Angela's life was lovingly written by her family.

Cemetery Details

Calvary Cemetery

2407 Oneida Street
Utica, NY 13501
(315) 735-2727

Previous Events

Visitation

OCT 17. 4:00 PM - 7:00 PM (ET)

Eannace Funeral Home, Inc.
932 South Street
corner of Hammond Ave.
Utica, NY 13501
(315) 724-6714
eannacefh@roadrunner.com

Funeral Service

OCT 18. 10:00 AM (ET)

Mary, Mother of Our Savior Parish, Lourdes Campus
2222 Genesee St.
Utica, NY 13502
<https://www.motherofoursavior.org/CatholicChurch.php>

Tribute Wall

RB

“ *My condolences to Angela'a family, I knew her for many years in Utica Rotary Club.*

Roger Breslow - October 21, 2025 at 11:26 AM

JA

“ *My deepest condolences.*

Joseph Arcuri - October 19, 2025 at 12:16 PM

LD

“ *Becky and family I am so sorry for your loss. Angela was priceless. May she RIP*

Lorraine Dominick - October 17, 2025 at 03:34 PM

LC

Family, you all write the most beautiful tribute for your Mom! She was a true inspiration in all works and love for family. I was very blessed to experience her love and kind words of wisdom and comfort ❤️ Your Mom will be forever missed! Much love, hugs, and prayers to all of you!
❤️🙏

Lori Damuth Chiarello - October 18, 2025 at 10:07 AM

PJ

“ *i started services when she was in charge it ran smoother she will be missed*

paul varacalli jr - October 15, 2025 at 10:48 AM

LR

“ God Bless you Angela in your eternal life. Your dedication to the cause of helping those with disabilities has made this world a better place and provided so many the opportunity to live a better life. I have a nephew who was enrolled in ARC and she would always go out of her way to ask about him and assist our family whenever needed.

There is a special place in Heaven for Angela

Lou Raya

Lou Raya - October 12, 2025 at 10:41 AM

FL

“ Condolences to yhe family of a wonderful teacher while attending Proctor, may she rest in peace.Dave (LEE) Lia.

Fave Lee Lia - October 12, 2025 at 09:57 AM

DA

“ Scott, Heidi, Becky, so sorry to hear of Angela's passing. What a wonderful legacy she has left you all. My sincere condolences.
Debbie Arcuri

Debbie Arcuri - October 11, 2025 at 09:41 AM

DD

“ Angela was a lovely woman who will truly be missed. I have had the pleasure and privilege of working with her at the ARC. She was such a compassionate person and we are thankful for all the work she did for people with a Developmental Disability.

Deb Dziekonski and family 🙏🙏🙏❤️❤️❤️

Debra Dziekonski - October 09, 2025 at 09:55 AM

AY

“ I did not have the privilege of knowing Angela but in reading this, I can see she had a life well lived. I know she will be missed but her legacy lives on!

Amber Yancey - October 09, 2025 at 09:45 AM

TR

“ To my dear family. This is cousin Tracey Arcuri Richardson. I am Daniel Arcuri's daughter and I would imagine that Angela and Dad are having a wonderful visit now in paradise. I am so sad to hear this news. Angela was such a groundbreaker for people with disabilities. I followed her and your family closely as I am a mother to a 40 year old autistic son. I had so much respect for her. I was just in Utica this past week visiting my mom, Rosemary at Masonic Home. I miss Utica and all it stands for. We have a wonderful family and Utica will always be a comfort and a source of so many great family memories. God bless all of you. Rest in peace cousin Angela...

Tracey Arcuri Richardson - October 08, 2025 at 09:28 PM

MR

“ I was sorry to learn of Angela's passing. For the past few years, Darby O'Brien and I have had lunch with her in the summer. We were friends from Utica Rotary. Angela and I bonded over shoes and movies. I so admired her and enjoyed her company. She will be missed by many.

Mary Lou Reape - October 08, 2025 at 07:08 PM

SW

“ My condolences sorry for our lost. We will miss her.

Stephen Warchol - October 08, 2025 at 03:12 PM

JR

“ *Angela was a genius and a very wonderful person*
From Jacob Rueger

Jacob Rueger - October 08, 2025 at 03:11 PM

GB

“ *Angela was a wonderful person and shell be deeply missed*
From Gary Burkle (ARC).

Gary Burkle - October 08, 2025 at 03:10 PM

NL

“ *Scott, Becky and Heidi, what a beautiful tribute to your Mom. Im so*
sorry I cannot be there but I will be in spirit. Nanette

nanette loconti - October 08, 2025 at 03:04 PM

JC

“ *My heartfelt sympathies go out to Becky, Heidi, Scott and families.*
Angela was truly a remarkable woman. She will be remembered
always. She has enriched so many lives along the way. May she
truly be rewarded in heaven for all the goodness she brought into
this world. May she be surrounded by angels forevermore.
Jeanne Castronovo

Jeanne Castronovo - October 08, 2025 at 08:11 AM

SC

“ Aunt Angela as she was known to me and my brother Marc always treated us as family with love and humor. My mother, JoAn and her were lifelong friends and are now playing bridge together in heaven. Aunt Angela you will be missed and remain in my daily prayers.
Love Stephen Cardamone



Stephen Cardamone - October 07, 2025 at 05:17 PM

RB

“ Angela was as noted a very accomplished individual and served her fellow human being as we should all strive to do. There was never a time in her company I did enjoy myself with both her wit, humor and observation. Our loss is heaven's gain and no doubt if anything needs fixing she'll be the one to get it done. Enjoy what comes now Angela you certainly deserve it...

Raymond Bach - October 07, 2025 at 04:13 PM

RB

I meant to say never a time I did not enjoy myself in her company

Raymond Bach - October 07, 2025 at 04:16 PM

PP

“ So sorry for the loss of your Mother and GrandMother she was a beautiful woman praying for you all. May she RIP
Love Phyllis Padula

Phyllis Padula - October 07, 2025 at 03:45 PM

MW

“ *Angela was an extraordinary woman. Her obituary is beautifully written and really captures the essence of a remarkable life well lived. She was like a second mother to so many, and we are grateful that she was a part of our lives. We send our love to the entire Vanderhoof / Coluzza / Valise family.*

Matthew & Elizabeth Worth - October 07, 2025 at 03:29 PM