



Mr. Donato P. "Don" Colucci

February 1, 1932 - May 21, 2021

UTICA - Mr. Donato P. "Don" Colucci, age 89, passed away on Friday, May 21, 2021 in the comfort and dignity of his daughter's home with his loving family by his side.

Born in Utica on February 1, 1932, Donato was the son of immigrant parents from Monopoli, Italy, Thomas and Filomena (Esposito) Colucci. He attended Brandegee Grammar School and was a graduate of T.R. Proctor High School. A proud veteran of the United States Army, Don honorably served his country during the Korean Conflict stationed stateside in San Antonio, Texas. His baking skills were seen at an early time in his career as he designed master-class cakes and received honors from government officials that were duly noted, even from the President!

On October 5, 1956 he married the former Mary Lou Steppello with whom he shared 52 years in love and partnership in both their personal and work lives. Don was a traditional husband and father, and their love was a fine example for their kids to emulate. Family came first, always! Don missed and dreamed of his love, Mary Lou, since her passing on January 31, 2009, and the family takes comfort in knowing they are reunited for eternity.

The couple met at DiCuffa's Bakery where they both worked. They then became "partners in crime" and established, owned, and operated Colucci Pastry Shop, Scholls, DeVito's, Rosato's, and lastly Donato's, ...and this was where the recipes for Tomato Pie, sizable Chocolate Chip Cookies, and the Original Manny's Cheesecake originated in the Utica area! Don also managed

the Grand Union Supermarket Bakery Department, and Dan Dee Donuts on Genesee Street. It was because of his experience and desire to mentor that he never hesitated to help any locally-owned bake shop to initiate their business, and he was held in great regard in this city for his talents and benevolence. A hard worker, Don put his heart and soul into his craft and business ventures. At the same time, he was loyal to his family and their needs. Being in the company of his children was so comforting to him, and the grandchildren always had a way around their grandparents who idolized them and were so proud of their accomplishments. Don and Mary Lou knew each of their grandkids individually, were involved with all of them, but never compared any of them. The only disappointment they had was that they never got that pony! Don enjoyed gardening ~ vegetables, flowers, and grape vines, a peaceful pursuit that brought a cathartic, restorative, wholesome pleasure with the sun on his face and his hands in the soil.

Family was always Don's priority, and he planned an annual vacation to spend time together. Sunday Mass followed by Sunday dinners was just another meaningful custom. Holidays were honored, and the Feast of the Seven Fishes was a Christmas Eve must. Don was also the one who created the sauce, sausage rolls, fried dough, and all the food, in abundance, with care packages, to go. Some of the things that Don found to be fulfilling were dancing with Mary Lou, watching Yankee baseball games with his kids, and taking rides to see the latest progress in the growth of Utica, his beloved city. Don was a member of the Disabled American Veterans, the American Legion Post #229, and the Baker's Food and Allied Union.

He was raised by parents who taught him virtues and valuable lessons of life, and his children now embrace those traditions and are so grateful to have been raised by such a great man. His humor shined in memorable comments, sometimes sweetened with sarcasm, but with a smile behind them. Laughter lived in his light-hearted take on life that made him insightful, charming, and adored by peers, pals, and people, in general. He also had a place in his heart for dogs. He always had multiple pets in his home, and he treated each of

them as family. He was truly a “Dog Whisperer” and the original “Princess” was his baby.

In all phases of his life, he was organized, disciplined, routined, and his hospitality was so evident when he welcomed people to his world, to share his craft, conversation, and cheer!

A communicant of St. Mark’s Church, Donato was a devout Catholic and the Sacraments were important to him. He was a long-hauler COVID survivor, and he knew the Lord was by his side and blessed his soul to heaven, when it was time to go home.

Donato is survived by his daughters and sons-in-law, Donata Colucci Arcuri and the memory of his son-in-law Louis R. “Louie” Arcuri who passed on January 4, 2015, Philomena and William Gerstner III, and Dana and Christopher Gonzalez; and his grandchildren, Giavanna Marie Gerstner, Santina Rose Gerstner; Amaris Danielle Gonzalez, Christopher Luis Gonzalez, Ariana Grace Gonzalez, and Krislyn Nicole Gonzalez. He will remain in the hearts of his nieces, nephews, great-nieces, great-nephews; cousins, especially Geno Esposito and family in Bari, Italy; sisters-in-law and brothers-in-law, Philippa and Roger Palek, Sharon L. Steppello, and Louis Steppello; and his loyal friends who kept in contact with him, Anthony Durso, Joe Spano, and Howard Armstrong; and the memory of many friends who preceded him. He was predeceased by his brothers and sister-in-law, Dominick and Anna Colucci, and Vito Colucci; his in-laws, Donald F. “Bena” Steppello, and Lorraine M. “Lar” Curriere; and his niece, Carm Graziano. The family is grateful to Dr. Fred Talarico and staff for their support and guidance; and Deacon Richard E. Prusko for his spiritual support and solace. Visitation will be held Friday morning, May 28, 2021 from 10:00-11:15 at St. Mark’s Church, 440 Keyes Road in N. Utica; his mass of Christian burial and Celebration of Life will commence at 11:30. All COVID protocols will be followed. Donato’s Rite of Committal and Interment beside his wife Mary Lou will take place graveside in St. Agnes Cemetery at the convenience of the

family.

Please take a moment to connect with Don's family through the "Memories" section of his obituary. Our prayers go out to all as a sign of our continued support.

Cemetery Details

St. Agnes Cemetery

601 Arthur Street
Utica, NY 13501
(315) 732-8588

Previous Events

Visitation

MAY 28. 10:00 AM - 11:15 AM (ET)

St. Mark's Church
440 Keyes Road
Utica, NY 13502

Funeral Service

MAY 28. 11:30 AM (ET)

St. Mark's Church
440 Keyes Road
Utica, NY 13502

Tribute Wall



“ *Donata;*

We are so sorry to learn of your Dad's passing. Sending our condolences, good thoughts and prayers to you and your family.

Pam and Jimmy Casamento

james casamento - June 03, 2021 at 07:57 AM



“ *So very sorry to hear about your Father. Your parents always made me feel very welcome at your home - lovely family. My prayers and thoughts are with you. Kathy Baumgartner-Foote*

Allan Foote - May 29, 2021 at 08:05 AM



“ *Sincerely sorry for your loss. We are unable to be with you in person. Please know that our prayers are with you. Sincerely, the Papale family.*

Margaret, Frank and Bethany - May 27, 2021 at 04:56 PM



“ *Arrive in Style was purchased for the family of Mr. Donato P. "Don" Colucci.*



May 27, 2021 at 04:01 PM

LF

“ *Such a lovely man, a wonderful father, your parents made a great team! Throughout the years from East Utica to North, Don and my Dad, aka the pastry chefs, would talk about old times. I loved to listen to all those stories and watch their faces light up. Our heart felt condolences to you. ~Tessie Collicco & Lisa Filletti*

Lisa Rose Filletti - May 27, 2021 at 09:04 AM

NJ

“ *Nancy J. purchased the Beautiful Heart Bouquet for the family of Mr. Donato P. "Don" Colucci.*



Nancy J. - May 26, 2021 at 01:00 PM



“ *Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Mr. Donato P. "Don" Colucci.*



May 26, 2021 at 11:57 AM

SJ

“ *Donata, Philomena, Dana and family,
I am very sorry to hear of your Dad's passing. He was one of the
nicest and most caring person I have known. Philomena, I do have
memories as a child of how kind he was when we had our
sleepovers and he had to get up so early for work. He never minded
how noisy we were. I remember visiting him at Dandee Donuts and
he gave me those huge chocolate chip cookies! All of you girls took
such good care of him. He will be missed by many.*

Cousin Sherri

sherri julian - May 25, 2021 at 08:50 PM

CD

“ *Donata, Philomena, Billy and family- Our sincere sympathies to you
all on your dad's passing. We wish you all a time of healing and
peace. Joe and Cathy Ducato*

c ducato - May 25, 2021 at 07:00 PM

YP

“ *Yvonne Pugliese lit a candle in memory of Mr.
Donato P. "Don" Colucci*



Yvonne Pugliese - May 25, 2021 at 08:09 AM

YP

*Sending love and prayers to Donata, Phil and Dana at this time. What
a wonderful man and couple who welcomed me as part of their family. I
will always have a place in my heart for MaryLou and Don and their
precious daughters. Love always*

Yvonne Pugliese - May 25, 2021 at 08:16 AM

TC

“ Praying for my sister friend and my deepest condolences to the entire Gonzalez family, I love you with all my heart , love always T. Coney

T coney - May 25, 2021 at 06:40 AM



“ Florist Choice Bouquet was purchased for the family of Mr. Donato P. "Don" Colucci.



May 24, 2021 at 11:01 AM

AS

“ Aileen Steppello lit a candle in memory of Mr. Donato P. "Don" Colucci



aileen steppello - May 24, 2021 at 10:53 AM

LL

“ Lorie Lismore lit a candle in memory of Mr. Donato P. "Don" Colucci



Lorie Lismore - May 24, 2021 at 10:24 AM

LL

Most beautiful and informative obituary of Uncle Dan ! Much Love and Prayers to All Of You !

Lorie Lismore - May 24, 2021 at 10:26 AM

JM

“ *To my god father .im going to miss you so much.you were always like a father to me.after my dad passed away even more..you and mary lou were like sceond grandpartens. To mikey always and forever.he loved you both so much.my heart is breaking.saying good bye to you its like saying good bye to my dad all over again.you will be miss.my love prays and thoughts go out to the whole family.*

Justine minosh - May 24, 2021 at 10:11 AM

TC

“ *Dana, Chris and family, I am so sorry for your family's loss. May warm memories live within your heart. May faith guide you and help you find strength. Praying for comfort and peace for your entire family... God bless,*
Theresa Meehan Chapes



Theresa Meehan Chapes - May 24, 2021 at 06:59 AM

AS

I'm so sorry for your loss..Your family is in my heart and prayers..Aileen

Aileen steppello - May 24, 2021 at 09:02 AM

BL

So very sorry for your loss. Our hearts are broken but we find comfort knowing that heaven has gained Uncle Danny and that he is with his special lady. 💖 Sending the family prayers so that your faith and happy memories help you thru life. R.I.P. Uncle Danny

Bill & Michelle Lopiccolo - May 24, 2021 at 09:23 AM

DS

So many memories of this loving, kind, gentle man. Years of Friday night dinners and Saturday night laughter. The BEST best man ever.....God's speed my friend until we meet again.....

Dolores Salerno - May 25, 2021 at 06:16 AM

DC

Donata, Philomena and Dana. We are so saddened by the loss of Uncle Danny. He truly was a great man who shared his warm smile with everyone. We will remember the bakery days, Christmas Eve celebrations at the house and family gatherings. Cherish the memories you have made. Aunt Meme is smiling, so what a blessing for you all. You girls are amazing and you each have certainly made your parents proud. We love you and pray with you in your time of sorrow. Love, cousins Frank and Debbie Curriere

Debbie Curriere - May 25, 2021 at 11:03 PM