



Maria C. "Ria" (Lowe) Dardano

May 31, 1978 - May 2, 2026

WHITESBORO – At just 47, Maria C. “Ria” (Lowe) Dardano’s passing on Saturday, May 2, 2026, was sudden and unforeseen. Still, we trust she rests in peace, held in grace, while her family finds comfort in faith, love, and the beautiful memories she leaves behind.

Born in Ilion on May 31, 1978, Maria was the daughter of Robin (Kempton) Wilson and the late Kenneth Lowe. She was educated in the Herkimer school system, graduating from Herkimer Senior High School with the Class of 1996.

She soon met the love of her life, Anthony P. Dardano. When Anthony first saw Maria, his “Ria,” he immediately knew they were destined to be together. The two were like the great romantic tale “West Side Story,” even sharing the names of its protagonists. On August 23, 2003, they were wed. They were an excellent team in all things, especially as parents, giving love and support to their two sons, with Maria playing both good cop and bad cop when necessary. They shared an unconditional bond and provided an incredible example of what true love looks like.

Maria had extensive work experience, including serving as a “to-go” manager at Hannaford in Washington Mills. Of all her positions, she often said this was her favorite, as it came most naturally to her because it gave her the opportunity every day to be helping people. She was proud of the work she

did and the friendships she formed there. She had a particularly compassionate heart for assisting the elderly and those in need. She was an outstanding worker, diligent to the very end, and was relied upon as a trusted trainer for new employees. She viewed this responsibility as a reflection of how much her knowledge and work were valued by her employers.

Maria was a “mother” figure to many. She was generous, kind, compassionate, and outgoing, with a touch of spice at times. Her laughter, love of fun, and nonjudgmental nature brought joy, warmth, and life to those around her. She was keenly attuned to the needs of others and often put them before herself.

When family and friends gathered, she was the designated bartender—able to master or create just about anything you wanted. Her Bloody Marys were the best and, like her, always a little spicy.

As a mother, she was immensely proud of her boys. From childhood, all she ever wanted was to be a mom. When her two sons were born, she became a protective “mama bear” from the very start. She offered them advice, wisdom, and encouragement to find their own way, never missing a chance to show affection or to tell them she loved them. She created a joyful life for them and a home filled with love. Her favorite activities revolved around her children and her beloved dogs, Peanut and Apollo—she was their “mom” as well. Anything that brought happiness and kept her family close was her top priority.

A devoted baseball mom, she never missed a game. Her sons gave her a deep sense of purpose, and nurturing them, in turn, gave her a full and meaningful life. Anthony Jr. became an EMT, saving lives and helping others—values he learned from his mother. Vinny was an avid baseball player who she traveled far and wide to watch, and along the way, she became a “mom” to the whole team and was known to bring the best snacks!

She also had a playful side and was known as a bit of a jokester and prankster. Her laughter was contagious, often leaving her unable to finish a joke because she was laughing so hard. She had a wonderful ability to tell a good story. In her quieter moments, she enjoyed reading and binge-watching Netflix. She was also an avid shopper, both in stores and online—there was almost always a small package waiting for her on the front porch. She was no stranger to the kitchen either, never preparing a dull meal. Nicknamed the “Crock-Pot Queen,” she was known for her creative dishes. Anthony especially loved her pot roast and vegetables—he often went back for seconds, even thirds.

Maria was a woman of faith who loved the Lord both privately and openly. She was a godly woman who has now reunited with her loved ones who have gone before her into eternity.

She will perhaps be most remembered for her words: “Love you more.”

Maria is survived by her loving husband, Anthony P. Dardano, Sr.; beloved sons, Anthony P. “Ray” Dardano, Jr., and Vincenzo Gianni Kenneth “Chenz” Dardano; mother, Robin and her husband John Wilson; sister and brother-in-law, Leigh Ann and Michael Dillon and their children Evelyn, and James Dillon; aunt and uncle, Roxanne and John Mutchler; cousins, including Sarah DeMarchena and her husband Michael and the late Jacob A. Mutchler; father-in-law and mother-in-law, Kenneth and Tina (Christiano) Dardano; sister-in-law, Chrissy Dardano; brother-in-law, Kenneth Dardano, Jr. and Gina Zegarelli, and Kenneth’s children Jed Dardano and Kaylee Marie Dardano; and her “HTG” friends, a great combination of folks whom she appreciated and loved, as well as a plethora of cherished friends from the course of her life. She was predeceased by her maternal grandparents, Robert and Mary (Berarde) Kempton; uncle, Robert “Bobby” Kempton, Jr.; and brother-in-law,

Joseph P. “Joey” Dardano.

The Dardano family would like to extend their heartfelt gratitude to the COCVAC response team, who went above and beyond with exceptional professionalism and compassion—especially paramedic Freya Sjolund. It was through her son Anthony’s mutual profession that so many teams responded out of regard for their fellow EMT. Everyone was professional, caring, and deeply compassionate. The family also wishes to thank the staff at Wynn Hospital for their guidance and care during a difficult time.

A giving spirit to the very end, Maria was an organ donor whose final act was one of generosity, offering others hope and a lasting remembrance of her life.

Visitation will be held on Saturday, May 9, 2026, from 2:00-4:00 p.m. at the Eannace Funeral Home, Inc., 932 South St., corner of Hammond Ave. Memorial contributions in Maria’s name may be made to her Go Fund Me Page online at www.gofundme.com/f/support-for-maria-dardanos-family. In observance and to honor Mother’s Day, Maria’s Mass of Christian Burial and Celebration of Life will commence on Monday, May 11, 2026, at 10:00 a.m. at St. Anthony and St. Agnes Church, 422 Tilden Ave. Interment will take place in Calvary Cemetery.

Cemetery Details

Calvary Cemetery

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

Upcoming Events

Visitation

MAY 9. 2:00 PM - 4:00 PM (ET)

Eannace Funeral Home, Inc.
932 South Street
corner of Hammond Ave.
Utica, NY 13501
(315) 724-6714
eannacefh@roadrunner.com
<https://www.eannacefuneralhome.com>

Funeral Service

MAY 11. 10:00 AM (ET)

St. Anthony & St. Agnes Church
422 Tilden Ave.
Utica, NY 13501
(315) 732-1177
<https://www.stanthonystagnes.com/>