



Giuseppina Ferrari

January 30, 1927 - August 27, 2021

Abbi Coraggio

Giuseppina Ferrari (nee Coletti, Coletta) aka: Mamma, Josie, Jo

Born in Sora, Italy, on January 30, 1927, Giuseppina was the first child of Assunta Petrozzi and Vincenzo Coletta and the eldest of five children - Marietta, Pasquale, Domenica and Bernardino.

As a teenager, World War II shook Italy and Giuseppina lived in the horror of that conflict. She suffered physical and emotional injuries and wore a deep scar on her body from a piece of shrapnel. She sustained the injury during a bombing raid in town, when she heroically threw herself over her younger cousin.

At a young age she became the finest sarta (seamstress) in the area, tailoring wedding dresses. And most importantly she met and courted her future husband, Felice Ferrari. They were a beautiful young couple in love.

Felice Ferrari was the eldest of four brothers who lived in the nearby borough of San Giorgio. Luigi Ferrari, Felice's father, had fought in the U.S. Army during World War I. As a result of his service, he earned U.S. citizenship. After the death of his mother and father, Felice put to use the American citizenship

he inherited from his dad, Luigi. Sponsored by Italian friends, he journeyed to Michigan and sent for his fiancé Giuseppina to join him.

She packed a small single trunk of personal belongings and traveled alone to America by boat. Her memories of that voyage included her roommate being a pregnant woman who unfortunately spent the 10 day voyage seasick.

Giuseppina and Felice were married in Detroit September 29, 1956. At the time, Felice was a bricklayer and Giuseppina worked as a seamstress at the downtown Hudson's Department Store doing alterations. They lived in East Detroit (now Eastpointe), where she learned to drive. While working construction, her husband fell three stories down a shaft and was then hit in the head by a piece of falling cinderblock. Josie cared for him for over a year until he recovered.

Giuseppina and Felice lent a hand by sponsoring family members from Italy to come to Michigan. They included: Pasquale Coletti, Jo's brother; Domenica Catena, Jo's sister; Giuseppi, Felice's brother and his wife Filomena and their children Loretta and Chiarina; Antonio and Paulo Ferrari, Felice's younger brothers. Many of their siblings married and Josie gained nieces and nephews: Enzo and Gianna Coletta, Vincenzo Catena, Cynthia Noe and Vincenzo Coletti, Lori Pantera and Chiarina Douglas, Luigi and Joseph Ferrari, Lorena and Gianni Ferrari.

While waiting in a line of workers seeking employment at the gate of Ford Motor Company, Giuseppina asked to use the restroom facilities. She was granted admittance because she was pregnant. Once inside, she jumped on a sewing machine and totally impressed them with her skills. She was hired on the spot. She opened the door to Ford Motor Company for the entire family. First Felice, then his three brothers, a nephew and her son all worked at Ford.

The young Ferrari family grew to include two children: Gabriele Louis and Maria Susan (Su). Josie suffered the loss of two other children - Loretta who was stillborn and a miscarriage.

During this period the couple worked opposite shifts at the Ford Utica Trim Plant. In front of the guard shack the children would sit in the family car waiting for the parent finishing their work shift to come out and change places with the driving parent. Because the Ferrari's had an acre garden at home in Romeo, they sold vegetables to the Ford workers during the shift change.

After many years working in the sewing department, Giuseppina had to be hospitalized and almost died from a lung infection caused by the toxic fibers in the air of that industrial facility. Due to her lung injuries, she was medically retired. Her husband continued working at the factory and finally retired after a heart attack.

With their children, Gabriele and Su grown up, the couple moved to Beverly Hills, Florida where they lived for many years. Felice's brothers, as well as Josie's brother Pasquale purchased property nearby to one day move to Florida to be all together again. Most of Su's vacations were devoted to seeing her family in Florida.

When her son Gabriele got sick, she compassionately cared for him at their home until his death in 1993. It was heart breaking. Jo began showing signs of dementia in the late 1990's. Then, her husband Felice died in 1999. Her daughter Su began her loving stewardship of Josie's care at that time and shortly after that Josie returned to Michigan to live with Su in Romeo.

Mamma liked to go! When she lived in Florida, she traveled all over. Once back in Michigan, Josie enjoyed biking in the Metro Parks and hiking.

Accompanied by Su's cat Pogolito, they made tours of the scenic western U.S.

In 2006, Josie gained a daughter-in-law, Jaye Spiro. Mamma and Su moved from Romeo to Ferndale. It was a walkable downtown like Sora. The three lovingly walked arm in arm and later she journeyed by wheelchair all over the neighborhood. They enjoyed meals together, singing, ice cream and chocolate in countless places and so many shared settings. Mamma liked to go! She wanted to go wherever they went and they took her!

With Jaye and Su, Giuseppina continued her travels. She attended NWMAF conferences, martial arts training camps, Buddhist retreats. The three of them visited Italy and Canada, traveled extensively in Michigan and saw many U.S. states.

They traveled many times to Madison, Wisconsin to visit Jaye's family - brother Steve Spiro, wife Susan, niece Jaala and her husband Mike Callahan, and their children Corrina and Steve (Aden), nephew Jacob Spiro and his wife Krista and their children Skylar (Zoe) and Kai.

Josie became a regular at Meijishi Martial Arts where Jaye is the director. The dojo (school) is located two blocks from their home. She came to the studio many days a week and there she was loved and cared for by curious children and compassionate adults as they achieved martial arts success and learned self defense.

Josie's life journey came to a close on August 27, 2021, in Ferndale, MI surrounded by Su and Jaye's loving embrace. She will be laid to rest in Beverly Hills, Florida alongside her beloved husband and son. Forever at eternal rest. She remains in our hearts and center in our memories, a courageous woman who lived a good life in service to her family and those

around her. Rest in peace. We loved you very much!

No Flowers Please - Our donation wish is that you invest time with your family or friends or someone who is in need of your loving kindness. Put the money in a jar on your counter and decide where to go to expand your connection with others. That would make Mamma's wish continue for generations to come.

Spend the time. Create the memories and share them with us.

You may have held open a door for Mamma and her wheelchair, said a kind word, given her direct care or something in between. We want to personally thank each one of you for standing with Josie and with us. Beside our gratitude for family and friends, we also appreciate the years of support that the Mejishi community has given to us. It has lifted us up and allowed us to be by her side.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you

When the relatives in Italy found out about Mamma's decline they told us to "Abbi Coraggio" which means "Have courage." As we sat by her side Josie taught many lessons to us. May you also find strength and compassion to carry on this legacy of love.

The family will receive friends on Tuesday, August 31 from 10 am until time of funeral Mass, 11 am at Our Mother of Perpetual Help (St. James Campus), 241 Pearson, Ferndale, 48220.

*** PLEASE NOTE: Masks are required ***

Entombment will be at Memorial Gardens at Beverly Hills, FL on Thursday,

time pending. Share your memories at www.sullivanfuneraldirectors.com.

Previous Events

In-State At Church

AUG **31**. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (ET)

Our Mother of Perpetual Help ~ Ferndale
241 Pearson
Ferndale, MI 48220

Funeral Mass

AUG **31**. 11:00 AM (ET)

Our Mother of Perpetual Help ~ Ferndale
241 Pearson
Ferndale, MI 48220

Tribute Wall



“ *Personalmente non ho mai conosciuto Giuseppina, ma ho avuto l'onore e il piacere di conoscere Jaye e Su che mi ha dimostrato sempre tanto affetto e hanno sempre avuto un pensiero per me. Sono sicuro che se Su è una persona così bella è perché ha avuto l'esempio di una grande donna come sua mamma! Spero che il mio abbraccio per voi arrivi fino in America. Raffaele, Francesca e Giovanni*

Raffaele Prince Vanacore - September 30, 2021 at 05:30 PM

RO

“ *What a full life Josie had! And as she declined she continued to bring out the very best in people. Thank you for sharing this remarkable story with me. I feel the warm embrace of your family.*

Roberta - September 02, 2021 at 10:17 PM

MF

Thank you Roberta. One of our young students came to the school and asked who the person lying down was. We explained that she was Mamma Josie. Every time that the student would see Mamma she would say hello to her. Mamma presence made a difference.

Maria Ferrari - September 05, 2021 at 07:03 PM

SS

“ *Hi Sensei Su and Jaye,*

My deepest condolences on the sad demise of your beloved mother. It's very hard to digest and to know that she is no more after living with us for long time. She really left the courageous and caring moments left behind to cherish and to learn from. My thoughts are with both of you.

Surya Saladi - August 31, 2021 at 04:00 PM

MF

Thank you Surya. We will all miss her at Mejishi.

Maria Ferrari - September 01, 2021 at 08:27 PM

AM

“ *Su & Jaye, my condolences on the loss of your beloved mother. Thank you for sharing her remarkable story. The richness of her life was enhanced by your loving care in her later years. May her memory be a blessing.*

Alice McKeage

Alice McKeage - August 30, 2021 at 09:44 PM

MF

Thank you Alice. We agree we are all blessed to have had her in our presence.

Maria Ferrari - September 01, 2021 at 08:30 PM



“ *2 files added to the album Memories Album*



Zach Ashley - August 30, 2021 at 07:13 PM

MF

“ 27 files added to the album Memories Album



Maria Ferrari - August 28, 2021 at 04:15 PM

RO

“ Dear Su and Jaye,

Your love, tender care, and celebration of life with Josie has been so inspirational. Those thoughts and feelings will be with me forever. Josie's story tells us about a loving, courageous, caring, and life-cherishing person. It is is easy to see the apple did not fall far from the tree. Our thoughts and prayers will be with all of you in the days ahead.

Rob and Debbie

Rob Olsztyn - August 28, 2021 at 03:24 PM

MF

Thank you Rob and Debbie. She brought us many adventures and joy. We will miss her deeply.

Maria Ferrari - August 28, 2021 at 10:16 PM

LF

“ 4 files added to the album Memories Album



Lorena Ferrari - August 28, 2021 at 03:05 PM

PD

“ I can hear "Bella!" And felt so much love always. I am glad to have shared in her journey, I Love you both!

Pamela D - August 28, 2021 at 02:33 PM

MF

She is Bella! My Aunt shared a story about when she worked at Hudson's downtown Detroit. Mamma went in dressed up, as she often was, and the next day so were all the employees! She was a courageous trend setter. Thank you for sharing Pamela

Maria Ferrari - August 28, 2021 at 03:59 PM

JB

“ What an amazing life story that lives on in you, Su.
All my love to you and Jaye. ❤️

Julie Barker - August 28, 2021 at 09:00 AM

SF

Thank you Julie. It is an amazing story of courage.

Su Ferrari - August 28, 2021 at 02:10 PM

MO

“ Su and Jaye,

I'm so sorry to hear about Ms. Josie's passing. She was so warm when I attended Mejishi, and was always a kind face to see out when the kids and I would be taking a walk around the block.

Sending love to you both, Your across the street neighbours,

Michelle, Chad, Leo and Clyde

michelle ouellette - August 28, 2021 at 08:49 AM

SF

Thank you Michelle and family! We appreciate your neighborly kindness that you have shone over all the years,

Su Ferrari - August 28, 2021 at 02:09 PM

LY

“ *I remember one day I went in to the dojo for class and Sensei Su greeted me, beaming with happiness. She told me that she was so happy because she had asked Josie to give her a kiss, and Josie heard, understood, and gave her a kiss! After reading about Josie's life, I understand where Sensei Su got the love and patience and hard work ethic needed to provide the level of care that Josie required for so many years. Josie herself taught it to Su, leading by example. What a beautiful illustration of doing unto others as you would have done unto you. Thank you for sharing Josie's story. It, along with the care I watched Su and Jaye show her, has truly touched my life.*

*My thoughts and prayers are with you,
Lydia*

Lydia - August 27, 2021 at 11:22 PM

SF

That is a great memory Lydia! It brings us joy reading about it!

Su Ferrari - August 28, 2021 at 02:06 PM

TK

“ Dear Sensei Su and Sensei Jaye,
We are so sorry to hear about the passing of Josie.
And thank you for sharing such an amazing life Josie lived. I read it
once but need to read it again. I can't even begin to imagine all that
she had seen and done. Full of life, adventure and courage.

With continued thoughts of prayers and peace,

*Sincerely,
Tanya, Marc and Miles*

Tanya Kempf - August 27, 2021 at 11:18 PM

SF

She was truly courageous!

Su Ferrari - August 28, 2021 at 02:05 PM

MB

“ *Jaye and Su; God bless you in your loss and
Josie inb her journey. What a beautiful story!
Many prayers will come your way.*

Mike Barrett/Southwest Solutions

Mike Barrett - August 27, 2021 at 11:04 PM



SF

Thank you Mike and she is on her journey.

Su Ferrari - August 28, 2021 at 02:04 PM



“ *Cathie Bella Ferrari lit a candle in memory of
Giuseppina Ferrari*



Cathie Bella Ferrari - August 27, 2021 at 11:00 PM

SF

*Aunt Cathie,
We Love the photo that you posted of our family.
We miss Luigi but he lives on in all of us!*

Su Ferrari - August 28, 2021 at 02:03 PM

IV

“ *Josie was much more than the Mejishi Elder. She was a
mother/grandmother to all of us. We still see her in the wheelchair
with Minnie diligently keeping guard right next to her. No, no one will
ever get used to such a tremendous loss. But we do get used to not
being able to do so.
With prayers, Ilene and Victor*

Ilene and Victor - August 27, 2021 at 09:21 PM

SF

*We will not get used to her loss, but we do cherish all the memories
that we have created; each and everyone of us!*

Su Ferrari - August 28, 2021 at 02:13 PM