

Comings & Goings

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In Memoriam

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Augustine M. "Gus" Masiello, 1927-2004

This final article for the current version of "Comings and Goings" is based on the eulogy given at Gus Masiello's funeral Mass at Most Holy Trinity Church, Pomfret, October 11, 2004.

Although we mourn the loss of a great man, a friend, mentor and teacher, we should not dwell on his passing, but instead celebrate his life ... as he celebrated life with a remarkable and unmatched passion. Perhaps the best lesson my father passed on to us is that life is a precious gift ... and we should thank God everyday for his blessing and giving us life. My Dad took nothing for granted and cherished little things in life: a ray of sunshine, the sound of wind, the smell of cut hay, the caress of a loved one.

Gus Masiello was a man who loved life ... he lived his life to the fullest. He was a man of principle, a man of action, a man who deeply loved God, his family and our great Nation. Perhaps we can best describe him, in Teddy Roosevelt's words, as a "man in the arena." A man **"who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat."**

Much as our father embodied Roosevelt's observation, he was similar to President Roosevelt in other ways. If you did not know, despite his robust appearance, he, like Roosevelt, dealt with various ailments and poor eyesight as a child. Dad suffered through

rheumatic fever and its consequences. A bad bout with asthma knocked him out of the Army in 1946. However, he was not someone easily deterred. He worked hard to become stronger; he took risks and ultimately lived out his dream by becoming a Green Beret – another passion in his life. He remained proud of his service and did what he could to help those who currently are serving their country, both at home and overseas.

The son of immigrants, he not only believed in the American Dream – he was the American reality. With vision, hard work and tenacity he was able to live the dream. He grasped the power and potential of education. He grounded himself in the belief that to live is to learn ... and to learn is to live.

My father was truly a patriot. He believed strongly in our Nation and this community. Though a son of New York City, he could not call that city his home. He moved onto the suburbs of Boston and finding no comfort there, moved on again and never looked back. He clearly found himself and a true home in Woodstock. He greatly admired and looked up to the small businessmen, storeowners, and most especially the men and women who worked this land and he did what he could to help preserve this rural way of life.

Gus believed government service was just that – not simply a job or livelihood, but in fact a service to the community, a profession on a higher plane – or perhaps a calling. He held those in power or those who served in the military, to a higher standard of conduct, a higher standard of accountability, a stronger sense of integrity. He called them as he saw them and could not look away if he believed a person's actions revealed anything less than selfless service.

(cont'd on page 2)

We bid farewell to a friend,
a mentor, a patriot



TAKE CARE TO NOTE:

*A truly just and fair
government requires vigilance
on the part of its citizens*

In Memoriam (cont'd.)

His stand on certain issues may have left a false impression with some. Unbeknownst to them, he was an extremely generous man ... generous with his time, money and, of course, his opinions and advice. He thrived on debate and even in a heated discussion, you could swear there was a little twinkle in his eye.

His passion for life also extended to his family. He was a great brother and uncle. He always made time for Marian, his sister, and her family. He took a genuine interest in and loved his nieces and nephews. He was a wonderful father and grandfather. With his principled stand on how to live and act, sometimes his was a stern love, but through his words and deeds he meant for each of children, grandchildren and great grandchildren to be upright citizens and strong and passionate about what we did and what we believed in as was he. He had dearly hoped to be here among us and share his love with his third great-grandchild when he or she enters this world next Spring.

He deeply loved our Mom and that love and devotion were not diminished by 56 years of marriage. Our Mom completed Dad. She remained the love of his life, and as he often noted, she remains just as beautiful as the day they met. Like no other, she tugged on his heart, made him laugh and saw him through some tough times. She was his editor, as much with "Coming and Goings" as she was throughout his life. Without her love and strength, it is difficult to imagine how he would have been able to accomplish nearly as much as he did.

Our father's accomplishments were many, his interests myriad, but his greatest accomplishment was his ability to touch so many lives, so many people in so many ways and that is his legacy.

Despite our loss, there will be a tomorrow. When I rise each day, the first thing I will do is thank God for the day and the opportunity to enjoy that day ... and I have a feeling that many others who were touched by this great man shall do the same.



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