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Obituary

Jeanette Collesano a 'wonderful lady who cared so much'

Those we love truly never leave us. There are things that death cannot touch,' Jack Thorne

Jeanette L. (DeBacco) Collesano was the embodiment of love in human form. She was ushered into Heaven by the Lord on Feb. 5, 2023, as the angels witnessed the most beautiful reunion with her best buddy and partner in crime, her loving mother, Marjorie Merrill.

Jeanette made her home in the Village of Lewiston 39 years ago, when she married the love of her life, former Village Mayor Terry C. Collesano. She became a staple in the community through her devotion to service. For decades, she was an active member of the Lewiston Kiwanis Club, where she served as co-chair of the annual Peach Queen Pageant.

For the last 26 years of her working career, she cherished her role as the director of the Town of Lewiston Senior Center. At her retirement ceremony in February 2020, a senior center member and friend remarked, "To be responsible for the operation, maintenance and planning of a senior center, at times, can prove to be very challenging. ... But for 26 years, Jeanette Collesano has made it look flawless."

She loved her seniors and gave every one of them a piece of her heart. After retirement, she enjoyed sunny months in Florida with Terry, their family and her dearest friend, Peggy Person.

In her 74 years, Jeanette taught her family many things. Most importantly, the importance of traditions. Jeanette created the most grand holiday gatherings with an open-door policy – cooking enough food to send you home with meals for the week. Her annual Easter bread-making brought the entire family together every spring. Kneading the dough for what seemed like forever, the house filled with laughter. She snapped pictures of flour-filled faces and smiles that made your face hurt. All afternoon, when the family had gone, she would bake dozens of loaves for family and friends. Without fail, she would follow up later that evening with a phone call saying the same thing, "Well, I think I overcooked it again. Hope it turns out OK."

Jeanette never forgot a birthday or anniversary. Her calendar was full of ink – every possible white square packed with names of everyone she loved. If she knew you, your name was on that calendar and you received your card right on time. "The Kids" received cards



Jeanette Collesano

for every possible holiday Hallmark sold cards for, always with a crisp \$5 bill to add to their piggy bank.

Jeanette was the rock of the family, ending every conversation with "I love you more today than yesterday," never allowing you to be the last one to say, "I love you."

In addition to Terry, her husband, Jeanette helped raise and love her stepchildren: Leandra Collesano and Christopher (Mary) Collesano. Her grandchildren, Christopher and Sophia Collesano, were her sun and moon. She treasured her three brothers and their wives. They were her "sisters" not sisters-in-law: Dale (Mary) DeBacco, Gary (Susan) DeBacco and Darryl (Marlene) DeBacco. Her nieces and nephews were "her babies" no matter how old they got and when they had babies of their own – life was that much sweeter for Jeanette – Marisa (Matthew) Adams and Laura (Joseph Dante) DeBacco; Lana (Ned) Perlman and Dale DeBacco Jr.; and great nieces and nephews: Maggie, Ellie, Mack, Garrett and Isla.

She is also survived by many beloved cousins who will miss her many phone calls. She was always checking in on them.

Jeanette was a devoted friend to Michele and Andy Vigluci, who she always reminded, "If it wasn't for you guys, we'd never leave Lewiston." She also spent many Wednesday nights in the upstairs apartment with her "wine club girls" Carol Jacobs and Patty Zahno. She loved all friends as family.

Jeanette was predeceased by many loving aunts, uncles, cousins and friends. Most notably, her dear cousin, Margie O'Sullivan; and special friend, Janice McCaw.

One of her final gifts to this world was to be an organ donor through ConnectLife.

Dearest Jeanette, we love you more.

Family and friends may call on at the Hardison Funeral Homes Inc., 401 Ridge St., Lewiston, on Friday from 3-7 p.m. Funeral services will be held at the First Presbyterian Church of Lewiston, 505 Cayuga St., on Saturday, Feb. 11, at 11 a.m. Burial will follow in Niagara Falls Memorial Park.

Memorial donations may be made to the First Presbyterian Church of Lewiston or the Lewiston No. 1 Fire Co. ambulance fund.

Please visit www.hardisonfuneralhomes.com for online condolences.

In a Facebook post, Town of Lewiston Supervisor Steve Broderick wrote, "Jeanette was a wonderful lady who cared so much for all her seniors at the Lewiston Senior Center. Although recently retired, she was a frequent visitor to the center to see her friends and co-workers. She will be missed. My heart goes out to her family and all the seniors that she took such good care of."

Niagara River Region Chamber of Commerce President Jennifer Pauly said, "I met Jeanette in 1997 when I was a contestant and queen in the Peach Queen program. Jeanette always made her queens feel so special and taken care of. When I took over the program, Jeanette would continue to help out and was always there to give advice. The program will not feel the same without her waiting in the wings backstage for the envelope to open. I will miss her. She never ended a conversation with me with the word 'goodbye.' It was always 'love you more,' and I will never forget her."

Friend and colleague Paulette Glasgow said, "I called her 'Grasshopper' after the '80s TV character. She would ask me all sorts of questions, but I couldn't figure out why because she was the smartest, insightful person I had ever met."

"She was passionate. She loved the mayor, her family, friends, community and the seniors."

"Jeanette and I spoke almost every night. She would call and we would talk until the cordless phones lost power, and then we would switch to our cell phones."

"At her retirement, I encouraged her to enjoy every minute – she did. Be happy – she was. Never wait for something outside yourself to make you happy – she didn't. Make every day special with your family – she did."

"She was my friend of over 30 years. It's written that many people will walk in and out of your life, but only a true friend leaves a footprint in your heart."

Investigations continue into Youngstown fire

Niagara County Fire Investigation is continuing its investigation into the cause of a fire in Youngstown that took the life of a village resident.

According to the Niagara County Sheriff's Office, at 8:12 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 2, the NCSO communications center received a 911 call reporting smoke in the apartment building located at 136 Jackson St. NCSO deputies and officers from the Lewiston Police Department were first on the scene and confirmed smoke was coming from the second floor of the building.

Responders included the Youngstown, Ransomville, Lewiston No. 1 and Upper Mountain volunteer fire companies. Upon entering the apartment, firefighters located a 70-year-old male on the floor who was suffering from cardiac arrest. The male was transported by ambulance to Mount St. Mary's Hospital where he was pronounced deceased. He was later identified as Harlan K. Green.

The fire was found to have originated from a second-floor apartment that began to extend to the structure's attic and roof. An esti-

mate of the damage was not available.

Green, a former parks employee at Fort Niagara State Park, was born June 4, 1952, in La Grande, Oregon. He is survived by his son, Patrick (Addy York) Green; and by a daughter, Katie (Ryan) Green. Family members said visitation would be held from 3-6 p.m. Friday, Feb. 10, at Rhoney Funeral Home, 901 Cayuga St., Lewiston. A celebration of life is set for 4 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 11, at The Ontario Hose (The Jug), 358 Main St., Youngstown. Friends are invited.