

newsletter

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Fran and Nick Macri—An Ardsley Love Story

By **THERESA DI STEFANO**

Fran Claire D'Angelo Macri and Nicholas Dominic Macri, Sr. have shared the Ardsley skies for over 88 years, 62 of them as a happily married couple. This sharing all started in the year 1922 when Dr. George Quincy Johnson delivered both of them in the Village of Ardsley.

On April 15, 1922, Dr. Johnson delivered Nicholas Dominic Macri in a home owned by his grandparents and parents located on Moulton Avenue in Dobbs Ferry. At this point in time, before the construction of the Thruway, this area was considered part of Ardsley.

Later, on October 10, 1922, Dr. Johnson delivered Fran Claire D'Angelo in an apartment located on the corner of Ashford Avenue and Addyman Square over the grocery store owned by the Riccios who were relatives of Fran's mom and dad.

And, so started a life-long Ardsley journey of two devoted people who shared their hometown living closely to each other from their births.

The Early Years

Fran and Nick were both baptized in Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church that was, at the time, temporarily located in a back room of the Burke Building on the corner of South Field and Ashford Avenues across from North Field Avenue. (Please remember that at this time this area was considered part of Ardsley Village.)

As time went by and Fran and Nick were maturing, their church, Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church was expanding. With time, the church found itself located in Ardsley in the Lyceum Building, once an old barn, that had been converted into a theater where parties and festivities were held by the residents of Ardsley. Then, in 1927 to 1950 the building temporarily became Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church, the first Catholic church of Ardsley. In this new church location, Fran and Nick received the rest of their sacraments. In fact, they were the last couple to be married there before Our Lady of Perpetual

Help Church was relocated in a brand new building which is now on Ashford Avenue and King Street in Ardsley proper.

During this time, the church became a vital part of Fran's and Nick's young lives as Nick served as an altar boy and Fran sang in the choir. They both also participated in many charitable functions. Fran remembered being part of the Garden Club held in the basement of Our Lady Of Perpetual Help Church where she and her close friends created and then sold their beautiful flower arrangements. The monies made from the sale of these works of art, were then taken to a religious store in New York City to buy necessary church supplies. Fran said that, "life was easy and a good part of her life and Nick's life was centered around the church and its happenings." Stopping a moment, Fran said, "We always knew each other."

School Years

Meanwhile, both Fran and Nick attended the Ardsley school then located on Ashford Avenue directly across from Village Hall where classes were held from kindergarten to 12th grade. Both Fran and Nick shared memories of this school. They recalled the teachers, principals, and coaches that were present while Fran was a cheerleader and Nick



Frannie Claire D'Angelo
High School Graduation
"Happy and gay,
Smiling each day."



Nicholas Dominic Macri
High School Graduation
"His joking and carefree
manner has brought
many acquaintances."

participated in basketball and baseball for four years. For example, Fran and Nick remembered principal, Arthur Silliman who took a special interest in all of

Fran and Nick Macri-An Ardsley Love Story CONTINUED



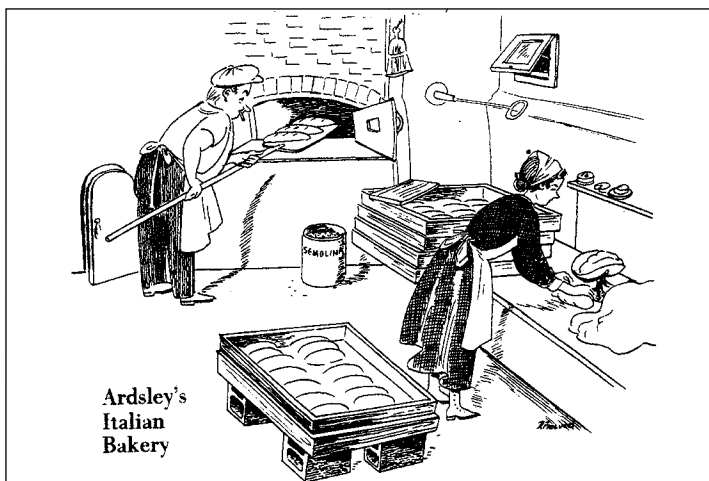
Nick (4) was playing basketball as Fran cheered him on as a cheerleader (standing center in back)

his students as well as the history of Ardsley. Nick also had great memories of Coach Pop Brown whom he often went to for advice and friendly chatter. Fran and Nick also recalled hearing the school bell being rung by Curly Travis each day at 8:45 calling them to school. The bell was heard all over town so no one had an excuse to be late for school. Later in the day, a 4:30 “Put” whistle was the only signal needed to call Fran, Nick and friends to go home and not to be late. As Nick said, “No mother had to call out windows for children to come home.”

Note: Later the Ardsley school system was divided into three separate units, Elementary School, Middle School, and High School, as Ardsley’s school population increased. It was this expanded school system that the six Macri children experienced as they went off to school. This old school building was later converted into condos as it now appears.

Special Memories

While Fran and her friends participated in the Garden Club, during these school years, Nick palled around with Lou Pascone, Joe Denardo, Jimmy Mantello, Joe Nannariello and other Ardsley boys. Nick remembered when they all purchased jackets engraved



The Paolucci Italian-Style Bakery where Fran and Nick took their mothers’ bread dough to be baked. Illustration by Don Paolucci (A Short, Informal HISTORY OF ARDSLEY, N.Y. by Arthur W. Silliman)

‘AC.’ Nick remembered how they played ball together and how they had good clean fun like turning over old wrecked cars in the town’s square on Halloween night. These wrecked cars were found in the back of Joe Nannariello’s garage. Of course, later, they had to clean up the mess.

Fran and Nick shared two other memories. One was how the both of them took the bread dough their mothers had prepared in the evening down to the Paolucci Bakery in town. There Mr. and Mrs. Paolucci baked the bread and had it ready the next day to be taken home. Nick said, “They were wonderful people.” The other memory was of Police Chief, Tom Eaton, who had to place a lantern in the town square so automobiles did not crash into the traffic barrier in the middle of the town square during the nighttime hours.

Fran and Nick thought back to when Ardsley had no paved roads and how they went sleigh riding right onto Ashford Avenue. At the time, there was no street plowing. So, Nick said that his grandfather and father had to hand shovel from their property into Ashford Avenue. Nick also remembered how he went hunting in Ardsley which was full of wild game. Fran and Nick both agreed that Ardsley was a quiet village that they were glad to be part of as youngsters.

Old World Traditions

Outside of school, starting from their very young years, Fran and Nick also came to know each other well through the Italian community in which they functioned. This community within Ardsley continued many of the Italian traditions that its many members had taken with them from Italy when they emigrated to America. So, following their grandparents’ and great-grandparents’ traditions, Nick and Fran were unknowingly tied closer together as time went by. Yet, Nick said, “I knew she was always there.”

One tradition that was fondly remembered by Fran and Nick was the one practiced on special holidays such as Christmas and Easter. During this time, while the women cooked, the men visited each other’s homes to wish happy holidays to families and friends. Within this similar tradition and other traditions, members of this inner community, often married. For example, Fran’s sister, Maria, married John Palermo, Nick’s friend. In fact, after the war, John courted Maria while Nick courted Fran. Nick and Fran laughed as they recalled how Fran’s father set the clock in her living room at nine o’clock each night getting ready to go to work the next day. It was understood that the setting of the clock was the signal that John Palermo and Nick had to go home.

“Families worked together,” Nick said. Nick lived on a small farm in which fresh vegetables were grown. At times, Fran’s father helped care for the farm and often the fresh crops were shared. Although the farm often supplied much of what was needed to eat, Nick smiled as he remembered how other food supplies were needed and how his family headed towards Yonkers each Saturday to gather and to purchase these other food supplies.



Nick in uniform as part of the 81st Wildcat Division in the South Pacific

War Years

Even though Fran and Nick associated socially in so many ways, they had little thought of romance until the end of WWII. After high school, Fran took a job with Stauffer Chemical Company first working locally in Dobbs Ferry and then in New York City taking the 'Put' back and forth to work. Nick settled in working for the Scarsdale Water Department until the beginning of WWII. Shortly after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, Nick was drafted.

During the war, Fran and her friends worked and contributed to the war effort by entertaining the troops, by sending care packages and supplies to the troops and by writing letters to Ardsley soldiers. And, of course, after he was drafted, Nick went off to war with a number of Ardsley and River Town men, leaving as a group from the Chauncey railroad station. Nick left with some of his close friends, the very friends he played silly pranks with, played baseball with, and enjoyed hanging out with at The Ardsley Chocolateria where the Pascones served them ice cream and chocolates. These were the same friends with whom he had gone hunting and sleigh riding in their youth. Now they were soldiers.

After basic training, Nick and his friend, John Palermo, who later in time would become his brother-in-law, found themselves in the South Pacific in the Eighty-first Wildcat Division. Nick also saw action in the Philippines. When the war was over, Nick earned the following medals: Bronze Star, American Campaign, Asiatic Pacific Campaign with one bronze service star, World War II Victory, Army of Occupation with Japan clasp, Combat Infantryman, Good Conduct, Army Commendation, Philippines Liberation ribbon, Honorable Service lapel button, World War II button, and Sharpshooter's Badge with Rifle Bar. Then, Nick returned home in 1946 just before VJ Day.

Life Returns to Normal and a Romance Began

After the war, Nick slowly resumed his life in Ardsley. He returned to work and one day he accidentally met Fran Claire D'Angelo while they were both in town. She was looking for camera film that was difficult to find. Nick was able to find some film in Doc Englemen's Drugstore. As Fran smiled, Nick said, "After that it was all history. We just clicked." Thereafter, they started courting, became engaged and then married in 1948. They held their wedding reception at Farragut Inn in Hastings. They honeymooned up north in Maine and Canada. While doing so, they found Watertown in the Adirondacks where they eventually bought a country home that they owned for 26 years. Returning home, at first they lived with Fran's parents on Judson Avenue until James McCartney found them their home on Major Appleby's Road in Ardsley.



Fran and Nick Macri's wedding

Over the next years, their marriage gave them great joy and six children: Barbara, Lois, James, Kenneth, Sue Ann and Nicholas. Later came nine grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. Fran said, "We are so blessed." During this time, the Macri family was always active in Ardsley Community services. Fran has continued to serve her church. Nick was the first Chief of the Ardsley Volunteer Fire Department from 1956 to 1958 and continued to be part of it for over 60 years. Nick was also part of The American Legion Post #458 for over sixty-five years. He followed in his father's footsteps as part of the Post after his father had served in World War I.

The above piece is a result of an Ardsley Historical Society's film interview that took place this past October 25th with Fran and Nick Macri in their home.



Fran and Nick Macri Family



Spotlight Professor William E. Slocum

“Professor Slocum was the schoolmaster from 1872 until 1910 with the exception of one year. He was also a Civil War veteran who had been captured at Culpepper and incarcerated at the infamous Andersonville Prison. This photo depicts Professor Slocum six years after becoming the head of the Ardsley Schools.”

Photo and Caption Courtesy of: Pictures of The Past ARDSLEY, N.Y. by Patricia B. Arone and Fred N. Arone



Who Am I? If you can identify any of the individuals in this photograph, please let us know. You can contact the Ardsley Historical Society at P.O. Box 523, Ardsley, NY 10502, or by phone at 693-6027. Thank you!



Ardsley Kids Want To Know...

Q.: Alex L., age 7, wants to know, “Have fossil bones ever been found in Ardsley?”

A.: Great question! Look for the next newsletter to get your answer. You’ll be surprised...

If you have a question about Ardsley now or long ago, we would love to hear from you! Send in your questions to the Ardsley Historical Society, either by mail or email, and we’ll do our best to answer them. Can’t wait to know what’s on your mind!

Sharing Memories The Ardsley Gypsies

Once again, The Ardsley Historical Society wants to thank Mr. Fountain, Sr. for sharing another of his memories of Ardsley past. Mr. Fountain, Sr. recalls:

“Somewhere between 1928 and 1932, the gypsies, a Nomadic people, would arrive in Ardsley and camp on an open lot in Ardsley Square. I was fascinated with them and found time, after school, to pay them a visit and play with children. It was fun and the mothers and fathers would find time to give me a small bowl of soup. It was delicious. The music was the highlight of the visit.

During summer vacation, 1932, I ran away from home and did not come home until 1935. Dad then put me in the “Army”. To this day, I always say a prayer to thank him for doing that. I spent four years as a soldier in the Territory of Hawaii and six years as a government employee in Hawaii and the Naval Air Station in Alameda, California.”

Note: If any one else has memories of the Ardsley Gypsies, please let us know. Thank you.



Picture of the Past Dr. George Quincy Johnson

Dr. Johnson served as Ardsley’s country doctor for over 40 years. He arrived in Ardsley in 1895 with a wife, Frances, and two daughters, Ruth and Gladys. Later a son, Frederick, was born in Ardsley. Dr. Johnson graduated from Columbia College of Physicians and Surgeons in New York City. When in Ardsley, he treated patients at their homes and in his office located in the Johnson Building located in Ardsley Square. He also served as President of Dobbs Ferry Hospital, the village health officer under Ardsley’s Board of Health, and Ardsley’s first school physician. And with it all, Dr. Johnson was on twenty-four hour call.

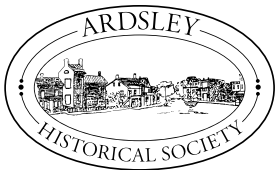
Before he traveled throughout Ardsley and Dobbs Ferry by car, it was not uncommon to see Dr. Johnson going to a sick call while seated in his four-wheeled buckboard pulled by his horse “Roxy” as seen in above photo.

Sharing Memories

The Ardsley Historical Society wants members to share their memories of past years. So please send us your memories of Ardsley. They can be found in a moment of time in your childhood or youth, young adulthood, or as an adult. They could be times before, during and after WWII. They could be memories before, during or after the construction of the New York State Thruway. It could simply be a picture of you as a baby somewhere in Ardsley and notes of what was happening at the time. Please just use your imagination and then share with us. We will then, with your permission, print these memories in upcoming newsletters. When you are ready, mail the memory and information to us at P.O. Box 523, Ardsley, NY 10502. If you have any questions, please call us at 693-6027. Thank you!

The Ardsley Historical Society Newsletter is published three times each year. The Society was established in 1982 and is chartered by the New York State Board of Regents. Its purpose is to collect, preserve, and disseminate the history of Ardsley to members and to the public. Archives are open to the public on Tuesdays from 10 am to 12 noon, or by appointment, at the Ardsley Public Library, 9 American Legion Drive. Our phone number is 693-6027.

Subscription to the Newsletter is included in membership dues. All articles, queries, and replies should be addressed to the editor, Mary Lichtenberg. Although every attempt is made to maintain historical accuracy in the Newsletter, the editor and the Society assume no responsibility for errors. The editor also reserves the right to edit where necessary.



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