



"For love that is shared is a beautiful thing- it enriches the soul and makes the heart sing!" ~Helen Steiner Rice



Charlie & Louise Catanoso, two weeks before their wedding day, 1948



Charlie & Louise Catanoso filled with wedding bliss on April 25th, 1948



Louise Catanoso in 1953 at their first home on 21st St. in North Wildwood



Proud granddaughter and daughter, Lauren & LouAnn helping to celebrate anniversary #55 on April 25, 2003.

The True Measure of Love

by Lou Ann Catanoso



25th Wedding Anniversary celebration at Neil's Restaurant in 1973 (L-R) Allen Pierce, Bill, Cathy, Joe, Anthony, LouAnn, Chuck, Charlie & Louise

When I was a young girl of fifteen, my boyfriend gave me a card which read, "This is the true measure of love: when we believe that no one has ever loved before us, and that no one, will ever love in the same way after us." To be honest with you, it was a little overwhelming for me at the time. So, you can only imagine the panic I felt when he wanted to give me an engagement ring just a few months later. But, when my mom was that same age she knew exactly what, and who, she wanted in life.

My mother grew up in West Philadelphia, but moved to Wildwood in her junior year of high school to live with, and take care of a sickly aunt. My dad was 20 years old at that time. He and his eight siblings were raised in North Wildwood. His family owned and operated a small grocery store on 18th and New York Ave.

Two weeks before my mother's 16th birthday, my mom and dad were introduced to each other for the first time. Their mutual friend, Frank DeCorio, played matchmaker at a Wildwood High School dance. My parents met each other for the second time when my dad delivered roses to her from another boy on the day of her birthday, (while he partnered in business with his brothers Joe and Len at Wagon Wheel Florist.) That day was April 11th, 1947. One year later, on April 25th, 1948, my mom and dad married.

My sister Cathy was born in August of 1949. And then five more children soon followed. I believe my parents fell in love with each other on the very first night they met. (Thanks Frank!) My mom always says it was her dream to have six children, and my dad couldn't have been happier. Mom was in her glory, being a housewife and mother; and dad never complained while working multiple jobs on a daily basis to support his large family. And, our home was always open to visiting friends and family. Every summer our huge home was filled with company. Throughout the years some of our friends took up temporary residency in our home at one time or another. My parents were, and still are, surrogate parents to many of them.

My mom often jokes, that 'if she hadn't met her true love in Wildwood' some 65 years ago, this world would be a lot less populated. She happily gave up her singing career when she became pregnant with me, her third child, in order to devote all of her time to her 'life's dream', being a mom and a wife. My parents' signature song is 'Embraceable You'. Mom is still asked to sing this song at almost every affair they attend. While some of the crowd may be thinking she is singing to them, anyone who knows my parents, know that she is singing the song to my dad. Some of the songs that come to my mind when I think of my parents are; 'So Much in Love', by The Thymes, the love theme from the old 'Spartacus' movie, and 'I Say a Little Prayer', sung by anyone. My mom's wedding dress still rests in the cedar chest my dad gave her on their first Christmas together.

Their love for each other has been an inspiration, and beautiful example for their children, grandchildren, and friends. I can't begin to express the amount of love I have for both of them. And, I am very proud to be their daughter. This past April my parents celebrated 63 years of marriage together. I think their life together can be defined as 'The True Measure of Love'.



25th Wedding Anniversary



Charlie & Louise Catanoso with Molly, 1986



On October 25th, 2011, LouAnn celebrated being cancer-free for 12 years. This photo was taken of her & George Durante at a Relay for Life event held at LCMR High School 11 years ago.

Dedication: This story is dedicated to my boyfriend George. We are making our own memories over the years, watching Saturday night concerts in Wildwood Crest during the summer, sharing vegetables from our garden with our neighbors, and hitting the Newark Ave. beach.