



"Treasure each other in the recognition that we do not know how long we shall have each other." ~Joshua Loth Liebman

I have vivid memories as a child watching my Uncle Andrew and Aunt Mary dancing together. It always seemed as though they were floating. Their feet barely touched the floor. I was in awe as I watched them dance to some of their favorite songs; In the Mood, Moonlight Serenade, and Love is a Many Splendored Thing, to name a few. Watching them jitterbug together was a treat.

Over the years, I have had the pleasure of watching my good friend Tommy, their middle son, follow in his parents' footsteps. Tommy, with the help of older brother Andy and younger brother Brian, was elated to share his parents' story.

Andrew Melchiorre was the first child born in America. His two brothers, Victor and Oswald, and sister Jeanette were born in Italy. All the children learned to speak English in Margaret Mace School. Eventually, Victor became a lawyer and Oswald moved to Florida to work for Eastern Airlines while Jeanette became an R.N. All three boys served in WWII combat. Andrew received three battle stars.

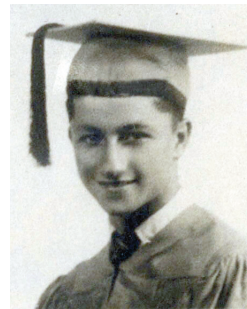
During his teenage years, Ants (Andrew) earned his nickname, thanks to his fast moves on both the dance floor and the basketball court. Ants met Mary, who



Mary Hickey
Wildwood High School
1939

The Story of Ants & Mary Melchiorre

BY LOUANN CATANOSO



Andrew Melchiorre
Wildwood High School
1937



Looking towards the Melchiorre family home and business on the corner of 1st & Central Ave. (center of photo) Photo taken in the 1920s from the Hereford Lighthouse, courtesy of Wildwood Historic Museum donated by Jeri Hoffman McDaniel

lived on Maple Avenue, while attending Wildwood High School. Her father, William Hickey, owned and operated "Hickey Beer and Soda". The building still stands on Park Boulevard.

Ants and Mary were both proud Wildwood Warriors. Ants, who loved to brag about being on the first South Jersey Champs basketball team, was also a member of the track team. Mary, also known as "Gabby," was very involved in school, serving on the yearbook and school news paper, "Ship Ahoy."

Andrew and Mary were married on September 14, 1941. They lived at 1st and Central Avenues in North Wildwood. Their three sons, Andy, Tom, and Brian all seem to share the same wonderful childhood memories in which a perfect blend of their Irish - Italian heritage was created. Among their memories were Sunday night dinners, which started at 3 PM and seemed to go on all night, with interesting conversations about politics, religion and sports. The menu was always the same; leg of lamb, mashed potatoes, mint jelly and peas with a side dish of pasta in red sauce and wine.

Ants worked for Met Life for 33 years while Mary worked in the mayor's office in North Wildwood until retirement. In the early years, Mary stayed home with her children, only working occasionally in her parents' restaurant. Every day, all of the young moms would walk down to a



Ants & Mary with Anthony, Jr., 1944

charming Pacific Avenue, filled with "mom and pop" businesses, with their babies in tow and compare notes.

Uncle Andrew and Aunt Mary were not my blood relatives, but my parents bestowed the title to their cherished friends. Aunt Mary would literally move right in my house with her children to take care of my siblings and me when my parents needed to go out of town. Uncle Andrew was only a phone call away. Tommy especially was like a brother to me. His favorite childhood memory about my grandmother is how she combined two of his favorite meals, turkey and meatballs, together when he was staying with us one time!

Ants and Mary raised a kind, beautiful, and successful family, having been inspired by their parents, the Hickeys and the Melchiorres. They had many friends and served their community well. To know them was to love them. The song, "There's a Summer Place," comes to my mind when I think of them. In my mind's eye, I can see them dancing together in the clouds of heaven; just as I saw them 'floating' on the dance floor when I was just a little girl.



This story is lovingly dedicated to the 3 Melchiorre boys.



On the night before their wedding, Sept. 13th, 1941, the bride and groom (center) posed with their Best Man, John Grande, and Maid of Honor, Eleanor Hickey



Young Brian with his parents in 1965.



Mary with Anthony, Jr. and Tommy, 1948



Ants & Mary Melchiorre, 1990s

**"Potatoes and pasta,
music and dance. . . an
Irish-Italian family finds
paradise in Anglesea."**

~Tom Melchiorre



Tom Melchiorre inherited the family dance gene... dancing to the Geator with Heater at The Hop, Oct. 2011, Wildwoods Conv. Center