

Edith Mary Stella Dell'Apa

1924-2022



Long-time Boulder resident Edith Mary Stella Dell'Apa died Dec. 8, 2022 in New Orleans, La. She was 98. Born Aug. 1, 1924, in Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, Edith was the youngest of five children of Antonio and Serafina (Gannone Talarico) Mancini, immigrants from Petronà, Calabria, Italy. As a youngster, Edith told of running away from home to St. Mary's School, where Sister Wilhelmina admitted her to kindergarten, though she was not yet 5 years old. That precociousness foreshadowed a lifelong desire to participate and see the world, and Edith retained her childhood spirit to the end. She was perennially optimistic, enthusiastically supported family and friends, inspired all of us with her indomitable attitude and determination to get involved.

At 17, Edith became the first in her family to earn a high school diploma. A year too young for nursing school, Edith began a short-lived but successful journalism career at the Sault Daily Star. In 1947, Edith accepted an offer from the Hibbing (Minn.) Tribune, where she became an award-winning society editor and member of the National Federation of Press Women. In Hibbing, Edith met Frank Dell'Apa, and in 1951 they were married in Denver, where their four children were born.

The family moved to Boulder in 1964 as Frank became program director of the Western Interstate Commission on Higher Education on the CU campus. Edith joined the University Women's Club, later serving as president of the club and chair for several UWC fashion shows. On campus, Edith was employed as a secretary to the Chancellor and in the College of Arts and Sciences; served on the CU College of Music Vocal Advisory Board; was named recipient of the UWC's prestigious Margaret Willard Award in 2002.

Along the way, Edith earned a degree in counseling in 1977 and was among the first to enroll in the Peer Counseling program in the College of Arts and Sciences, then counseled in the Mini College for Women and via the Crisis Intervention telephone line. Meanwhile, Edith volunteered in everything from student registration to processing Boulder Boulder competitors (also completing the 10k course several times, walking with friends and her son, Jamie). She involved herself in the community, including a short stint as matron in the Boulder County Jail; editing the PTA newsletter and substitute teaching at Paddock Elementary School; conducting Catechism classes for special needs children and at St. Martin de Porres church; publicity chair of the Boulder County Mental Health Association's

Christmas gift drive; heading the regional office of the Association of Volunteer Bureaus; leading an Italian Language group.

Not content with easing into retirement, in 1979 Edith and Frank started Boulder Airporter, pioneering shuttle service to Stapleton International Airport, then DIA. Challenging the ground transportation business paradigm was resisted by established operators, but Edith held her own during contentious Public Utilities Commission licensing hearings, providing key testimony to help sway the decision. Ignoring legal advice to remain non-confrontational, Edith called out taxi company attorneys for bullying witnesses and questioning data, asking: "Are you calling me a liar?" Thinking she had crossed the line - attorneys were signaling for her to "cut" - her nervousness increased, but a glance at the bench revealed a subtle, reassuring smile. Edith's performance on the stand, which included "accidentally" dropping a pen, an improvised rhetorical tactic, became part of family lore.

Edith never backed down from a challenge and never slowed down in life, traveling the world, attending opera in Europe and the U.S. (Salome her favorite; Tosca her husband's); singing along to modern-day Italian pop music (especially Lucio Dalla's "Caruso"); spending long vacations with daughter Andria and family in Italy; leading family reunions in New Orleans at her son's house near Louis Armstrong Park. She compiled long-hand journals of travels and kept extensive notes of studies at the Dante Alighieri School in Florence, Italy.

Edith was an avid letter-writer, tying together her far-flung family. But she gladly adapted to the digital world, mastering an iPad that allowed her to keep in touch with her grandchildren via email. A regular at exercise classes, Edith enjoyed skiing and tennis; playing ping pong with her children. She took up golf late in life, "complaining" she was unable to match the score of her youngest son, Paul, on the links on her 89th birthday. Living at Poydras Home on Magazine Street in New Orleans in recent years, Edith insisted on an occasional night out in the French Quarter, especially enjoying a Rickie Lee Jones club appearance with her sons in the Marigny last year.

Survivors include sons Frank Jr. (Joan Wilder) of Hull, Mass.; Jamie Dell'Apa of New Orleans; and Paul (Lisette) Dell'Apa of Bethlehem, Pa.; daughter Andria (Joseph) Gallinaro of Florence, Italy; grandchildren Matthew, Gaia, Gemma, Tessa and Cara; and great-grandchildren Dante and Lorenzo; many nephews and nieces. Services pending via the Neptune Society.

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