

ALFONSO

Born August 2, 1919
Buffalo, New York



ALFONSO (FUNZI) ANGELO PAOLINI

BORN: AUGUST 2, 1919 in BUFFALO, NY



Alfonso Angelo (Funzi) Paolini was the youngest child and son of Nicola and Berardina. He was born on August 2, 1919 one year after they moved to their home at 445 Eagle Street. He was baptized at St. Columba's on Eagle and Hickory Streets. One month after his birth on September 3, 1919 Nicola, Berardina and his older siblings: Giulia, Mary and Anthony became United States citizens (See *Nicola and Berardina*).

At about one year of age, Alfonso became very ill with a severe mastoid infection. Although he was close to death, he recuperated. He attended Kindergarten at Public School #32 at Cedar and Clinton Streets (now Montessori Magnet) and he attended St. Columba's from Grades 1 through 8 where the Sisters of Mercy instructed him. Those were some of his happiest early days, as he was the lead singer in the children's choir. He made his Communion at St. Columba's at age seven and was confirmed at the age of twelve. He was sponsored by his cousin, Louis Marini, (now a resident of Rochester - son of Nicola's sister, Giulia, and of Berardina's brother, Pio Antonio Marini). Alfonso was also an altar boy at St. Columba's.

Alfonso remembers a very happy childhood as the youngest in his family household. There was always a great deal of activity due in part to the many boarders who roomed there in the third floor attic. He recalls that the boarders sometimes gave him pennies or treats and often gave him a lot of attention.

Alfonso also recalls many close family relationships. He shared one of two large bedrooms that Nicola added on the second floor with his sister, Elvira and his brother, Ernest. Nicola would often return from work at the *Touraine Hotel* during the winter with pancakes for breakfast or with ice cream that he carried in a canning jar. Alfonso would run outside and retrieve the jar of ice cream, which Nicola had placed outside in a hole carved into the snow in order to keep it cold. Other chef-specialties that Nicola would prepare at work or at home included: *sauteed Scallops*, *Frogs Legs Provencale*, *Bacala-Italian style*, *broiled pollo (chicken) with garlic*, rosemary and olive oil, all types of *pasta sauces*, *minestrone soup*, as well as *sauteed cervelli (brains of lambs)*! He also recalls how his older brother, Anthony (Tony) would sometimes prepare *French Toast* for the family for breakfast. Alfonso retains wonderful recollections of the glorious aroma of his mother's freshly baked *pane* (bread) cooling on the windowsill most days. At Easter, she would also bake *sweet bread* shaped into crosses and twisted wreaths braided with hard-boiled eggs. Berardina also prepared many delicious

Minestres (soups) prepared daily which included *Lenticchio e Patate (Lentils and potato)*, *Lenticchio e Sagna (Lentils with Pasta)*, *Verdutti e Patate (Escarole and potato)*, *Pastina e Uova (Pastina and Egg)*, *Pasta e Fagiole (Beans and Macaroni)*, and a lovely dish of *Cipolle e Patate (Onions and potato)*. Her pasta specialties included homemade *sagna* (fettucine-like pasta); *gnocchi de patate* and wonderful platters of *polenta* with pomodoro sauce to be shared. These would be prepared with *marinara and meat sauces, meatballs or braciola*. Also wonderful *Insalata patate (Italian potato salad)* and *Insalata di fagiolini (String bean salad)* and *Uova Pomodoro (Eggs in Purgatory)* were served.

Alfonso recalls the lovely layout and coziness of his home at 445 Eagle which included a coal-vented stove and butler's pantry which were adjacent to the kitchen. The parlor boasted a "rug" which Nicola had painted on the wood floor (i.e. trompe l'oeil -now considered a sophisticated European art technique).

As a boy, Alfonso shoveled snow and put in the coal at his house, and at the homes of his sister, Giulia, and his godmother, Camara Jenny Mattucci. He also kept the stairs clear and would clean his older brothers' bedrooms. Ernest and Anthony, his older brothers, looked out for Funzi; they often gave him spending money and would also loan him the use of their cars when Funzi was older which he always appreciated.

Music has always been an integral part of Alfonso's life. He recalls how important it was in his family's home, as he often enjoyed listening to his older sisters, Mary, Rachel and Elvira singing and harmonizing together, as they were cleaning on Saturdays. Funzi mimics their Lebanese neighbor, Mrs. Moses, who remarked to his mother, Berardina, "MRS. 'BALINI'!! Your daughters sing so BEAUTIFUL!!!" Alfonso retains a remarkable talent for recalling the lyrics of many songs. This is a talent that he often credits in part to his older sister, Mary. He recalls that he learned all of the old songs of the day by listening and singing along with Mary as she sang to the radio for hours in a beautiful voice while ironing for the family. Alfonso recalls singing at a rally for Mayor Schwab at *Walker's Grove* on E. Delavan and Eggert when he was about ten years old. He was a participant in the planned entertainment that was featured that day. At about fourteen years of age Alfonso often sang with his friends on certain evenings outside of *Andy's BarberShop*. An accordion player named Mose accompanied them along with Johnny Red who played the harmonica (He later played with the "Harmonicats" who went on to Hollywood fame.)

From 1934 to 1935, Funzi attended Boys' Vocational High School at Genesee and Oak Streets where he wanted to enroll in the machine shop course, but wasn't allowed to. He recalls how, as a result, he would enter the front door of the school and then immediately exit through the back door. However, Alfonso was always energetic and industrious, and was often completing errands for his many family members. His older sisters would often send him on short notice to a downtown store to purchase silk stockings when they were dressing to go out, and he would always willingly oblige. He used to do odd jobs at *Emerick's Candy Co.* at Spring and Eagle Streets or in his brother-in-law, Serafino's, store where he would pack groceries, slaughter and dress chickens or sweep.

In 1938 at the age of nineteen Funzi began working as a barboy at "*Lorenzo's Restaurant*" on Chippewa and Pearl Streets where his cousin, Louis Marini, was the chef, Nicola and Uncle Vincent (Jim) Paolini were cooks, and Uncle Sam Paolini (also Nicola's brother) was Steward. Lorenzo Pace who was the brother of Uncle Sam's wife, Katy, then owned "*Lorenzo's*". Sometime later Funzi became a busboy and waiter there. Teresa Massa also worked there in 1940, as a pantry girl at the age of fifteen. At the age of nineteen, Funzi was looking forward to getting a good job, finding a girl to marry and having children. He planned to work hard to move up the social register, while trying to keep his mind off of the events which were transpiring in Europe. Those plans were to be put on hold, however.

Alfonso shared his perspective on his personal involvement in World War II in an interview with his son, Peter Paolini, almost fifty years later. In his own words he stated: "It was Sunday, December 7, 1941. I was working at *Lorenzo's Restaurant* as a barboy. The bartender on duty that day was named Tommy. He told me to turn the radio on so we could listen to some music like we always did at work. The reception was not too clear, so I taped a nickel on the antenna to clear up the sound. I was not clear on where Pearl Harbor was, but it was clear to me, being twenty-one at the time, that the US was going to war against Japan. I wondered what was *Japan's beef* with us. Within months I found myself in an army boot camp at Camp Shelby, Mississippi, where I trained for combat. It was a very confusing nine months in boot camp. Thoughts of 'Who will I fight- the Germans or Japanese?, Where am I going to fight?, and Will I live or die?' crowded my head. It was at this time that my faith in God became the strongest. I realized that I would need a strong religious faith to get me through this bad situation. As my religious convictions grew, so did my hatred for Hitler.

Hitler was the man I held responsible for the war in the first place. I perceived the nine months at boot camp as physical and mental preparation for the job of ridding the world of Hitler and his Nazi Army."

Alfonso's war recollections have been documented here through many conversations over many years which he has shared with his daughter, Mary Paolini Pachla, as well as with other immediate and extended family members.

Alfonso was drafted into the US Army and was inducted as a Private on May 4, 1942, and then was sent to Fort Niagara. He went on to train at Camp Shelby, MI where he entered the 338th regiment, Company C of the 85th Infantry division. He received infantry training there for one year and a half.

In 1943, Alfonso was sent to Camp Beauregard, Louisiana where he met his life-long friend, Joseph Colangelo who was also from Buffalo. Alfonso was then attached to the 15th Corp of the Headquarters Company where he served as a noncommissioned-billeting officer ensuring laundry and dry-cleaning services for the officers at Camp Beauregard. His main duty was to act as a reconnaissance driver for the 15th Corp once in combat.

There was tragic irony that this first-generation Italian-American young man, among many others like him, was now going to war to represent his nation against the Axis powers that included his parents' native country of Italy that they left only several decades before. Initially Funzi found it difficult to hold hatred for Mussolini and his Fascist Army in Italy, but his emotions shifted to disliking Mussolini after the latter had aligned himself as Hitler's ally. Likewise, Funzi did not agree with the communist policies whereby people's rights were removed in Russia; but he was prepared to join with the Russians against Hitler, as his country instructed him to.

In December 1943, Alfonso, who was the youngest child of Nicola and Berardina and was born to them as they were preparing to become American citizens, now joined the European Theatre of Operations (the war front) against Italy and Germany. On December 14, 1943 he crossed the Atlantic on the Queen Mary to arrive in Glasgow, Scotland on December 21 and then on to Northern Ireland. There the role of the 15th Corp was to represent a fake army in order to confuse the German intelligence and allow them to believe that the Allied forces there were ready for battle at any time. Funzi's job was to drive the

colonel from the reconnaissance camp to the front line. On two separate occasions Alfonso was assigned the task of transporting by jeep two very special celebrities who were visiting the troops: comedian, Jack Benny (Alfonso told him a joke which he thought was very good) and the exquisite actress, Ingrid Bergman.

Later in Canterbury, England Alfonso was assigned as a *bartender and the only other person present* at a Staff Meeting for Generals Eisenhower, Patton, Mark Clark, Patch, Omar Bradley, White, Collins, and Haislip. The Allied generals initially discussed issues regarding incoming equipment at the meeting, but then they asked Alfonso to leave at a certain point during top-secret discussions.

Alfonso served under two generals: General Patch and General Patton. The 15th Corp was attached to the Third Army under General Patton. On July 24, 1944 Alfonso landed with the 15th Corp at Omaha Beach as part of Combat Operations of the Normandy Invasion in France. A special historical map, "The Advance of the 15th Corp of the 3rd, 1st and 7th Armies" clearly documents those combat operations. This map was given to Alfonso upon his discharge and is still in his possession.

It notes the departure of the 15th Corp from Southampton, England (in crossing the English Channel) to the beaches of Normandy, France. Within a week, the 15th Corp had spearheaded the breakthrough at St. Lo, France on July 31, 1944. Two days later, on Aug 2, which was his birthday, Alfonso was in a bucolic countryside near Avranches (the Falaise Gap) where he would experience a most harrowing event, as described below.

Alfonso's sister, Elvira, recalled in a letter to him thereafter, how Berardina had prayed for Alfonso all day long in St. Columba's on his birthday, August 2, 1944.

On that same day in a cow pasture in France, Funzi recalls a threatening situation when his life (and the lives of the men with him) was in danger. He abruptly and intuitively told the men to move quickly from under a tree to a ditch (which he would later determine was a safe location) during a German counter attack and bombing raid. His urge to move went against his training! Afterwards the cow and the tree, which they were standing under (before they moved), were blown up, and the cow was **in** the tree! (This event occurred approximately 50 miles southeast from LeHavre, France where more than 30 years before, Nicola had departed from Europe for the last time and where the following year in 1913, Berardina,

Giulia, Mary and Anthony would make their final departure to come to America. It would also be the same port city of Alfonso's departure from Europe to America after the war had concluded.)

Alfonso traveled with the 15th Corp, 3rd Army for 150 miles to cross the Seine River on August 19 and proceeded within ten days to reach Paris, which was liberated on August 29, 1944. During this time, Alfonso's family would regularly correspond with him, and he would write back to them. He recalls the way that worked for him: "I considered my correspondence with my parents as being totally separate from my life as a soldier. In my communication with family back home, I would make sure to convey some idea of normalcy, so they would not worry so much about me. Their letters of support and the news of all the support back home were crucial to us in winning the war. It is my belief that seventy-five per cent of the credit should go to the men and women that worked in the factories, state-side, to supply the troops."

Alfonso recalls the advancing procession through France and Germany under Patton in his own words: "Patton believed in full mobilization, as the front line moved, everyone moved... At first, the enemy's resistance was tough, as they had been fighting for five years before we arrived, and they were well prepared. Our chief officers informed us that once we got our army prepared that the tables would turn, and sure enough, they did. As we moved forward to defeat the German Army, we left a trail of destruction. In this 'trail' I saw thousands of German privates, dead along the roadside. At this point I began to feel that these were boys just like me with families that loved and cared for them just as I had. It was not them that I hated, it was the monster called Hitler."

Alfonso continued with the 15th Corp as they proceeded to march through France and the German Rhineland from July 31, 1944 to May 11, 1945 liberating many towns there along their path (i.e. Laval, LeMans, as well as Strasbourg, Stuttgart, Mansheim and Munich among many others).

The 15th Corp under the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Armies were the first American troops to reach the Rhine River on November 23, 1944. Alfonso's job was in reconnaissance whereby he would drive Colonel Niessen to a new bivouac area in order to make provisions for the 15th Corp to set up operations following each advance (At times the pace was so fast that they did not have time to set up operations in advance.).

Alfonso and his regiment spent Christmas 1944 in a convent near ^{Sareguemines} ~~Baccarat~~ just north of the Voges Mountains. The convent had been transformed by the Germans into a chemistry laboratory. He described how on Christmas Eve day he had informed the chaplain that the chapel in the abandoned convent would be the site for Christmas Mass. He scrubbed the floor and worked with a crew of men to prepare the chapel for the mass on Christmas Day.

The 15th Corp continued throughout the Rhineland liberating German towns and cities. Ultimately, in 'Germany on April 30, 1945, they liberated the Dachau Concentration Camp. Alfonso's training was not enough preparation for the abhorrent sights that he and his Army colleagues would witness there.

As a witness to these events, Alfonso recalls his thoughts at that time with stirring eloquence:

"By the time we took control of France and had invaded Normandy we were hearing about all of the atrocities that Hitler was committing in his own country. We heard that he was planning and carrying out mass executions of millions of people, in particular those of the Jewish race. We did believe that this was true, but not until the day came that I liberated the concentration camp at Dachau, did I believe that such an animal could exist on the face of this earth. I had often wondered why the followers of Christ had not done something to prevent Christ's crucifixion. Here was evidence of the reign of terror that Hitler was allowed to wage on the whole European continent. If all of the events that preceded and contributed to our involvement in the war had never happened, and if Hitler was guilty of ONLY this mass execution of millions of people, I still would have fought the war. What we saw was unbelievable and many of us couldn't sleep for days after that. The horrible memories will haunt me for the rest of my life."

At Harr, Germany, (just southeast of Dachau) on May 5, 1945 Alfonso and others helped to set up the ceremony of the formal surrender by General Kesselring and all of the German Army forces who had opposed Allied forces of the 6th Army Group under the command of General Omar Bradley. At the surrender ceremony, Alfonso helped to remove the German flag and helped to raise the American flag during the signing of the Peace Treaty. The war was concluding.

The 15th Corp proceeded to advance to Salzburg, Austria where Alfonso would work in the Officers' Club running the laundry room. The war ended on the European front while he was there on May 11, 1945, and thereafter he visited the home of Mozart in Austria.

Alfonso departed from Europe, which was now at peace through the port city, LeHavre, in France on October 8, 1945. Ironically, Le Havre, France, was the same city of Nicola's final departure from Europe in 1912, and also of Berardina's departure with Giulia, Mary and Anthony in 1913. Nicola and Berardina had traveled with hope in their hearts for times of promise for their growing family in coming to the United States. Over 30 years later, their son, Alfonso, would return to Europe to courageously do his part with other Americans to restore life and freedom to Italians, French, Germans, Jews and all Europeans who had been scourged through the wrath of Axis occupation. Upon Alfonso's departure through Le Havre, Europe was at peace.

Alfonso traveled by private yacht from Le Havre on October 8, 1945 and arrived at home to kiss American soil on October 18, 1945 at New York harbor (again this was the same destination of his parents, Nicola and Berardina, and his older siblings, Julia, Mary and Tony, on their earlier journeys to America.

His recollections of his emotions at that time were most profound: "I was so happy to be going home to see my family. I experienced a feeling of patriotic pride in being an American who had served to help win the war. This was mixed with sadness in reflecting on all of the lives that were lost. I had entered the war as a young, naive soldier, and I felt that I had been reborn into a human being with a deep understanding of human behavior."

Alfonso considers himself fortunate to have lived through those events during the war and feels that his tour of duty and honor as a soldier continues today in presenting his testimony to all that he witnessed.

Alfonso was honorably discharged from the Army on October 23, 1945 at Fort Dix, NJ. Battles and Campaigns listed include: Central Europe; Normandy; Northern France; Rhineland. His medals include: American Service Medal; European-African-Middle-Eastern Service Medal; and the Good Conduct Medal.

On June 3, 2000, fifty-five years later, in the **United States House of Representatives**, Congressman Thomas M. Reynolds, signed and witnessed certification for

awarding the **"Jubilee of Liberty Medal"** to **Alfonso Paolini** by authority of the Governor of Normandy *"in grateful recognition for service during Operation Overlord, June 6, 1944 to August 31, 1944"*. The certificate notes that the medal was *"Commissioned by the Regional Council of Normandy, and first cast by the Monnaie De Paris mint, the Jubilee of Liberty is presented as an appreciation from freedom loving people upon the Anniversary of the D Day Invasion of Normandy, June 6, 1944."*

Shortly after being discharged and returning to post-war Buffalo, Funzi returned to work again as a bartender at *"Lorenzo's."* There he became reacquainted with Teresa Massa who was now twenty and had grown up to become even more beautiful. Teresa, who grew up and lived in South Buffalo on Hopkins Street, worked as an inspector at the *Chevrolet* plant during the "Rosie-the-Riveter" war effort years. However, like many other loyal and selfless women of the forties, she was willing to leave that job after the war to allow a returning soldier to inherit it. Teresa also returned after the war to *"Lorenzo's"* to work as a waitress. Funzi remembers that after about eight attempts to date her, Teresa finally consented to go out to a show and a restaurant with him. After a courtship of several months, they became engaged. They were married at St. Agatha's on November 28, 1946. A dinner at *"Lorenzo's"* and an evening reception at the *"Perseverance Hall"* followed the wedding. They honeymooned in Montreal, Canada.

Upon their return, Alfonso and Teresa resided at 49 Harriet Street in the second Paolini homestead which Nicola had purchased in the fall of 1946. They lived in the upper flat with Nicola and Berardina, while Funzi's sister, Rachel, and her family lived in the lower level there. Simultaneous with their return from their honeymoon, *"Lorenzo's Restaurant"* had burned in a fire in December 1946, and Alfonso and Teresa found that their jobs were not waiting for them. Alfonso opened a new *"Lorenzo's"* in Rochester, NY and commuted to work there during 1947, and subsequently, traveled to Syracuse to open another *"Lorenzo's Restaurant"* there, to which he would commute weekly.

"Lorenzo's" in Buffalo would later reopen under new ownership, as *"Leonardo's Restaurant."* (A parking ramp exists now at the site, but frescoes from "The Grotto" room have been reinstalled on the walls of *Just Pasta* on Hodge near Elmwood)

In September 1947 Funzi and Teresa's first child, Mary, was born. From 1948 to 1951, Funzi worked as a bartender at *"Victor Hugo's"* which was another elegant Buffalo

landmark restaurant at Delaware and Edward Streets (now restored, as *The Mansion*). Post-war Americans were experiencing a "boom time" in that incomes were growing and life was generally happy. Funzi and Teresa enjoyed going to nightclubs and restaurants with their friends and siblings, particularly on Saturday nights. In 1951 Funzi began work as a bartender at the noted "*Hackney House*" (later to become "*Fridays and Saturdays Disco*" which was owned by Ernest and his sons, Ronald and Nicholas; See- "*Oreste Luigi- Ernest Louis Paolini*") on Youngs Road in Williamsville. The restaurant was noted for its fine food and comfortable ambiance with an equestrian theme. This move to the suburbs paralleled the same trend that was occurring nationally during the fifties reflecting American choices for housing and employment opportunities.

During this time, Funzi and Teresa's family was growing. Their second daughter, Hope, was born in 1951 shortly after Berardina passed away. Rachel's family had moved to South Drive, and Funzi's sister, Mary Mattucci, and her family had moved into the lower level at 49 Harriet. Their third daughter, Joanne, was born in 1953 and their youngest daughter, Francine, was born in 1955. Funzi's niece, Elaine Candlena, who had married and lived at 49 Harriet, had also given birth to her first daughter, Paula, when Francine was born. The two families shared many happy times, meals, and family life together there, particularly at holidays and during the summer months. (See - *Maria Bambina-Mary Paolini Mattucci*) In 1958 when Mary Mattucci and Elaine's family moved to Englewood, Nicola continued to reside on Harriet with Funzi's family, who now occupied both floors, after purchasing the house from Nicola.

Nicola would reside with them until his death in 1961. (See -*Nicola and Berardina*)

Their home at 49 Harriet continued as the Paolini homestead throughout the years. There was always great vitality there with many relations and friends including their nieces, nephews, and their children's friends who visited and felt quite welcome. Funzi and Teresa remodeled their kitchen in 1961; Funzi was adept at undertaking many home carpentry/painting and even minor plumbing and repair projects throughout the years. He constructed shelves for every possible need. In 1957 they rented the upper rear bungalow apartment to Teresa's newlywed niece, Rosemary Ferola and her husband Joseph Petrie. Thereafter, in 1961 Funzi's newlywed niece, Patricia Muniza (Elvira's daughter) lived there with her husband, Carmen Valenti, and their first son, John, was born during that time.

Funzi and Teresa's sons, Michael and Peter, were born in 1957 and 1960, respectively. Their six children attended Public School #82 for Kindergarten and St. Lawrence School for Grades 1 to 8, where they participated in many school, cultural and parish activities. They went on to graduate from, Archbishop Carroll, Kensington, or Bishop Turner high schools before earning graduate and masters degrees from various local and out-of-state college: Buffalo State, Villa Maria, Erie County Community College, University of Buffalo, and University of Michigan. They hosted many parties for their extended families to commemorate their children's birthdays, communions, confirmations, and graduations.

Alfonso continued to work diligently through long hours in the restaurant business in order to provide for the needs of his growing family, which included music lessons. He often worked holidays and Sundays, but usually had Mondays off which became a special family day, especially during the summers, when he enjoyed taking his family to parks, for a hot dog or hamburger, or sometimes out for a special dinner. He always was proud of how well his children behaved in a restaurant and he would enjoy hearing the compliments. They also went on some memorable vacations to the Adirondacks and to New York to visit Teresa's family there. Music continued to be an important part in his and Teresa's life. His family enjoyed singing together on many occasions throughout the years. Most of their children studied piano, drums or voice privately, and enjoyed growing up in a home where music was always played, listened to, or was being sung.

From 1960 to 1973, Funzi managed "*Esmond's Restaurant*" on Wehrle Drive in Williamsville, which was another Art Deco elegant landmark noted for its fine food and atmosphere. Funzi had developed a diverse clientele who would often seek him out there due to his friendly, gracious service, his attention to detail, and his quick wit, humor, and conversational skills. He would often prepare with great flair a *Caesar Salad* tableside or flame a *Chateaubriand* or *Cherries Jubilee* which were house specialties.

For several years after 1973, Funzi worked at various odd jobs. During the sixties and thereafter, Teresa also worked at varied jobs which included "*Eduardo's*," "*Salvatore's*" and the "*Plaza Suite*" (both with Elvira, Funzi's sister) and "*The Saturn Club*." Funzi and Teresa also continued to cater private parties together, many of which occurred throughout the eighties and early nineties.

In 1977 Funzi became the bartender at "*The Place*" on Lexington and Ashland where he continued to work periodically until he retired in 2002 at the age of 83 due to heart disease. He had been working in the restaurant business for almost 65 years - from 1938 to Fall of 2002.

During the late sixties through the nineties, Funzi and Teresa always gave their support as their children went on to work and complete their college education - or to marry and /or relocate to another region. Funzi enjoyed planning and hosting his daughters' holiday weddings: Mary and Michael Pachla in Christmas 1969; Joanne and John Kacala for Labor Day 1973; and Hope and Robert Liddle on July 4, 1974. Their son, Michael, married Michele Guadagno in 1984. Their daughter, Hope, and her family have lived in Akron, OH; E. Lansing, MI; Atlanta, GA; and since 1983 in Naperville, IL. Since 1986, their daughter, Joanne, and her family lived in Southern Pines, NC and in Charleston, SC. where she married Kem Fronabarger in 1994. Their daughter, Francine, has lived in E. Lansing, MI and in Grand Rapids, MI since 1978 where they have visited and enjoyed seeing her vocal performances in the group, "Sounds Like Fun." In 1999, Francine married Martin Zyla in Grand Rapids where they share a home.

Funzi's children were the first generation of Paolinis to relocate primarily for employment. This is indicative of economic changes that occurred during more recent decades in the Buffalo area.

Funzi continues to place his family and God as the primary focus in his life. He and Teresa continued to live at 49 Harriet until 1998 when they sold their home of more than 50 years and moved to a condominium at 50 Groton #2 in Charter Oaks, Amherst. They remain very active in St. Lawrence Parish. Funzi is a member of the Holy Name Society there. He often helped in organizing and serving at past "Spaghetti Dinners". He and Teresa were both Eucharistic Ministers and Teresa has been a member of the choir there for over 55 years.

Alfonso has always been happiest when his entire immediate family and close friends surround his table for a special meal that he and Teresa plan, prepare and serve with flair. Holidays have always been preceded by a complete "cleaning fury" of activity and preparation which is always exciting for Funzi and other family members whom he would recruit, whether willing or not, to pitch in. Many other family members have enjoyed special

meals or memorable Christmas dinners including, Funzi and Teresa's perfect roast beef and Teresa's wonderful cookies. In summers, he enjoyed working in his yard, gardening and preparing his patio for al fresco dining. He and Teresa often would invite family and friends (especially Mary and Joe Colangelo) for impromptu barbecues, often with grilled chicken, or "wine, special beef, and a little salad." They particularly enjoy having their six grandchildren visit during the summer or at holidays. Jonathan Kacala, Joanne's son, always looked forward to staying with his Nina (Teresa) and Papa (Funzi) for several weeks during the summer when he was a young boy.

Funzi has experienced some health problems throughout his life that included a bout with stomach ulcers in the fifties, bursitis in his arm during the seventies, and chronic adult onset Diabetes since the seventies, which he controls through diet. Since the late eighties he has also suffered with glaucoma, which is treated with medication, and a hearing loss for which he wears a hearing aide. He has undergone surgical angioplasty in 1990 and in 1994 for arterial blockage for which he takes medication. In late summer 2002, Alfonso experienced two heart attacks one week apart. Veterans Hospital where he had been treated felt that surgery was not a solution due to his age, diseased arteries and diabetes; they had no other viable option. Through the intercession of Dr. Tim Sarac, vascular surgeon at the Cleveland Clinic who is married to Judy Petrie Sarac (Teresa's great-niece), Alfonso was transported by ambulance with Teresa to the Cleveland Clinic on the Friday evening before Labor Day. His two children, Michael Paolini and Mary Pachla drove there to meet them where they were joined by Hope and Francine who flew to Cleveland. Alfonso underwent triple by-pass heart surgery four days later.

Although there were some complications with infection in the wires necessitating a simpler follow-up surgery in November, Alfonso has rallied to regain strength and vigor. In 2005, Funzi again faced heart problems and underwent a procedure for arteriosclerosis. Funzi has faced these health adversities with courage and through his strong faith in God; he continually bounces back with boundless energy and a positive outlook.

Likewise, Alfonso and Teresa's youngest son, Peter Anthony, who was Nicola and Berardina's twenty-fifth and last grandchild, has overcome great health adversity as a young adult. Facing and undergoing five neurosurgeries for a non-malignant but invasive epidermoid cyst on his cerebellum (as well as hydrocephaly). Peter has valiantly lived his life

fully with gusto and enthusiasm. Without complaint he courageously continues to inspire his family members *by giving them strength*, as his family members and friends in turn have rallied to support him. All agree that those times of support during such crises have been our best times, as a family.

Between surgeries, Peter completed his graduate degree at UB in Library Science, taught himself Blues Harmonica, relocated to Charleston, SC to pursue his profession as Media Librarian at Charleson County Public Library; pursued a second career in Improv Theatre and currently performs with a Blues Band.

On Aug 6, 2004, Peter and Mary Gooch were married in Buffalo as a surprise to all at Alfonso's 85th Birthday party at *Salvatore's Restaurant*. Alfonso said it was his best birthday ever!

The importance of the family, which was a value instilled through Nicola and Berardina, was truly borne out in action through Alfonso's lifetime. As a result of his war experiences in having seen so many families which were torn apart, Alfonso vowed to always work to keep his family members together, particularly after his mother's death. Soon after his discharge from the Army, he organized his family in planning the first Paolini Family Picnic. From the fifties through the seventies Alfonso was responsible for initiating the planning for this annual event, as well as other family events. Thereafter, the Paolini Cousins Club (Women) assumed this responsibility. However, "Uncle Funzi" is still the first to pitch in to help out any way that he can for ongoing family events. (It has been said that he could be the first and only male member of the Paolini Cousins Club (women's), since he often attends their meetings.) During the eighties, he was also instrumental in organizing the men's Cousins Club II, which organized meetings for several years before disbanding. His family members have always appreciated his mercurial disposition and his genuine willingness to do all that he can to resolve any issue or problem with finesse and attention to detail. Funzi has always been appreciated for his quick wit and wonderful sense of humor including a superb sense of timing when telling a joke.

Funzi and Teresa continue to work, play and travel together as a team. Funzi helps with the cleaning, laundering and even some cooking, especially while Teresa continued to work at *The Saturn Club* until 2002. At times they enjoyed babysitting for their grandson, Zachary Paolini (Michael's son), and they currently enjoy babysitting for Olivia (Michael and

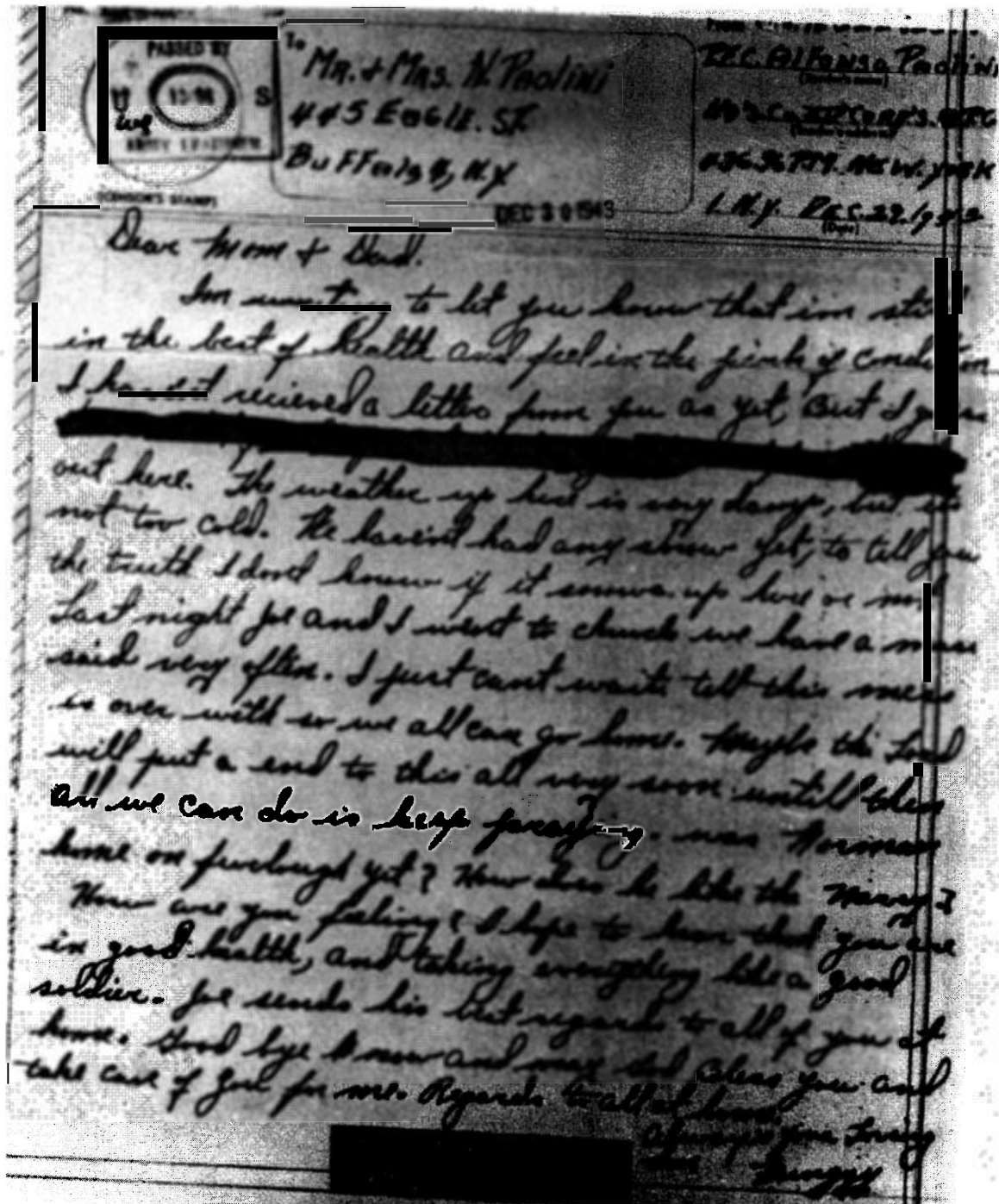
Michelle's daughter). They still enjoy going out with their family and friends at times. They often travel to Chicago, Charleston and Grand Rapids to visit with their daughters, Hope, Joanne, Francine and their son, Peter and their families.

Funzi's faith is primary in his daily life. He prays the rosary daily and is devoted to the Blessed Virgin whose statue has received a place of honor in both of his homes (at 49 Harriet and at 50 Groton). There he always maintains a lit vigil light and attributes many graces and blessings to her intercession (particularly his protection throughout the war and his extended health despite his various conditions). He also prays daily to a deceased nun who was one of his teachers at St. Columba's that bonded with him and made a special effort to assist him academically. He senses her guidance and protection in his life.

Funzi has boundless energy and commitment to attend to so many details wherever he is, as well as for countless memorable occasions, and he always accomplishes very well the task at hand. He can also be feisty and a bit bullish and somewhat cantankerous, if he encounters too many physical obstacles in his path when he has a particular goal in mind. There have been some family events whereby his comments and obnoxious actions were right "over-the-edge" with unbelievable and priceless hilarity!

Funzi's lifetime of service and caring for others' needs continues; whether it be his helping hands serving food or drink at work, at church, at home, at a family function, or at his sons' or daughters' homes where he always is helpful. Or it can be through his offer of loving words of uncanny humor, empathy, encouragement and genuine appreciation for others. His generosity and warm hospitality are renowned, as he always acts with an open heart of unbounded love for all of his dear family members and friends, a love that transcends his words and actions. . He will do anything in his power to maintain family peace, to console or aid family members in need, as well as to bring family members together in prayer or celebration, particularly when food is involved. Funzi's reward is in witnessing the loving bonds of unity between family members that continue to grow and that are always reflected toward him, as well. Funzi is revered and loved by all: his wife, Teresa, his children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, his sisters, his immediate and extended family members, colleagues, patrons and friends.

DOCUMENT APPENDIX



(This is a letter written in December 1943 from Funzi to home. The black outs were made by the Army in order to prevent intelligence from leaking out.)