



## Yolanda Melkun

January 14, 1922 - December 27, 2023

Yo left this earth on December 27, 2023, almost 102 years after her arrival January 14, 1922. She spent her last 4+ years in the home of her daughter and son-in-law, Dot and Jim Dickerson, with frequent visits from granddaughters, Janna and Emma. Yo landed in Fort Collins on June 16, 2019 kicking and screaming, since she didn't want to leave the warm climate of sunny Florida. As she feared, that June was the coldest on record in Colorado.

But with a raised thermostat on West Mountain Avenue, Yo settled comfortably into the Dickerson routine surrounded by family, friends, love, and really good food. Frequent visits from the little girls next door, Ava and Amelia, always lit up her day, as did visits from the neighbors' dogs Dottie and Junie, Tour de Fat was her favorite day in Fort Collins. Yo would sit in front of the house (sometimes in costume) cheering on the whimsical bike parade. "I love a good parade" she would say as participants stopped to give her a hug or accept a sunflower from her.

Her years in the Fort were short compared to the rest of her long life. She was born in a different fort, Fort Lee, New Jersey to two Italian immigrants Josephine Orione Venturini and Arturo Venturini. The Venturini children, Yo, Del, and Lucian, along with their parents, settled in Brooklyn, NY as prohibition became law, organized crime bloomed and the Great Depression

hit.

The Depression was hard on the Venturini family. The older siblings went off to work while young Yo was sent to Fort Lee to spend summers with her Aunt and Uncle. They lived very close to many of the new film studios (Champion) where American filmmaking began. Aunt and niece would walk over to pick up used set screens to take home and make into dish towels and other assorted household items.

Still, the depression continued and the Venturinis lost their home, the bungalow on Beaumont Street that Arturo had built. Yet they survived. Music was instrumental. Everyone played one (an instrument, that is), or sang, or danced, or all of the above. Pop built and played both a violin and mandolin. Yo played the piano and accordion. Lucian the piano and guitar. Del danced and sang, always enjoying a good time.

The 1940s were filled with weekends at Coney Island and many days of roller skating. Yo was proud to be an employee of Otis Elevator in New York City until she met Samuel Angello. She and Sam knew how to have a good time and could be found with their reliably fun group of friends getting up to some shenanigans. It was not until after the war (WWII) that the two married.

After marrying Sam, the couple moved to Merrick, Long Island, and started a family in 1952. Humor was a mainstay in the Angello household. But so was tragedy.

Their firstborn Peggy died at age five, leaving 4-year-old Dottie to keep their humor alive. The Sacred Heart Church community was supportive and strong and the friendships were deep and rich. Yo found strength in her faith and her friends who were all creative, clever, and very funny. Music continued to be part of Yo's life at home and at church she sang in the choir.

In 1971 Sam died six months after a botched brain surgery left him in a coma. He was 53 years old and Yo was 49.

Life went on for Yo, and her children, Dottie and Frankie. She went back to work as a secretary propped up again by friends, her faith, and family. Laughter and life continued among friends and family despite loss. They still could not be stopped, bringing light to most any moment. Then, in 1991 Frankie died from AIDS. Recently remarried, and retired, Yo sold the house in Merrick and moved on.

Jerry Seinfeld once said, "My parents didn't want to move to Florida but they're in their sixties and that's the law." So, as a true New Yorker, Yo followed suit and retired to Florida with her second husband, Adam Melkun. He passed away shortly after their move. But Yo thrived in retirement living with her sister for 33 years, traveling and enjoying life and life's happy hours. New friendships grew and life in warm Hudson, Florida was filled with choir practice, painting classes, theater excursions, boating adventures, and Elderhostel trips, that eventually morphed into more visits to the doctor and chiropractor. Yo used to joke that Florida was God's waiting room. When Del died at almost 102 years old, it was time for the next phase of retirement which came in the form of her move to Fort Collins.

Yo became part of the Dickerson's Fort Collins community on Mountain Avenue and even ventured outdoors once that cold June gave way to warmer weather in July. She contributed her spotty Italian to the weekly Spanish Group; played piano for our little neighbors; enjoyed visits from Phyllis to listen to Frank Sinatra; happy hour on the front patio, and cracking jokes only an old New Yorker could get away with.

By the time Yo turned 100, she had managed a pretty full life and was slowing down but still wasn't done making friends. As her health declined a new set of friends became part of her days. Damian was always there to make her laugh and help whenever needed. PTs Jennifer and Bailey, aides Katherine, Aisha, and Clair, and hospice friends Janna and Helene. All of whom helped keep her at home with family so she could enjoy good company, good food, good laughs, and good dessert.

Her final month was spent in a new home, Monarch Greens Assisted Living with a few youngsters, relatively, to keep her company, some even from New York. With frequent visits from friends and family, she was kept entertained and smiling, for the most part. Although resigned to the situation and grumpy about it, music, and company kept her spirits up in this new place. That is until Covid snuck in. At almost 102, it was a challenge too great for even Yoey Melkun Angello Venturini.

She will be remembered for her strength, humor, friendships, and her smile.

There will be a Celebration of Life on Saturday, January 6th between 5 and 7 pm in the home of Dot and Jim. Please join us if you can.

# Previous Events

## **Celebration of Life**

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JAN 6. 5:00 PM - 7:00 PM.

Home of Dot and Jim Dickerson

# Tribute Wall

PP

“ Rich and I are so sorry for your loss. What a sweetheart Yo was and I will always cherish the time that I got to spend with her.

Phyllis Pekari - January 04, 2024 at 02:41 PM

TB

*Dottie...what a beautifully written (short) story of your wonderful mom, Yoey. I will never forget her despite not seeing the both of you since Frankie's passing 🙏 I remember your dad driving by our house in Merrick with his windows down waving to us on our lawn. Your mom was a bright (and kooky) light with my mom, Bernadine and the rest of the Terrible Ten! She always donned a smile and her energy and laugh contagious. And although her illness and subsequent passing can often be a painful reminder of the finality of life, TRUST that your spirits will be lifted by ALL the wonderful memories shared. She will always be special to all of us Bennetts! God bless you and your husband for all you did for your mom to make her life in Colorado sooo warm despite the cold winters... God bless you and may Yoey enjoy her reunion with so many who have gone before her...  
LoVe and prayers,  
Tracy Bennett-Bohack*

Tracy Bennett-Bohack - January 08, 2024 at 12:28 PM

PP

“ 3 files added to the album Phyllis' memories



Phyllis Pekari - January 04, 2024 at 02:38 PM

DD

“ 25 files added to the album Yo! Photos from the Dickersons



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**Dot Dickerson** - January 02, 2024 at 09:31 PM

LH

*Fabulous. Thank you for sharing.*

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**Linda Hanilton** - January 03, 2024 at 01:44 PM