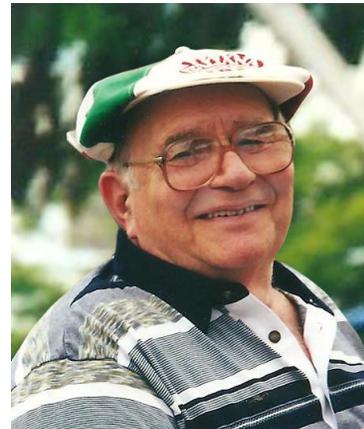


FRANK J. DELIA



Frank Joseph Delia was born on February 18, 1923 in the small town of Sambiasi, Italy (Calabria region). His parents were Frank J. Delia Sr. and Frances (Russo) Delia. He came to the U.S. on the ship Conte Grande at the age of 8, accompanied by a family acquaintance, since his parents had already gone on to America and he had been living with his grandmother. He grew up in a house in south Rockford at Island and Clifton with his parents and three younger brothers, Angelo, Joseph, and John. He went to school with many other Italians in the neighborhood at St. Anthony grade school. He learned English from his classmates. He got part-time jobs as a newspaper delivery boy and delivering bread for a bakery. He also worked for a short time at Nelson Knitting factory. Although he didn't graduate with the West High School class of 1942, he did get a GED. At 18 he got a job at Ingersoll Milling Machine to help support his family. He would continue to work there for 44 years, retiring in May, 1985 at age 62. Frank maintained friendships with many classmates for the rest of his life, including Ray Cacciatore, Louis Dal Santo, and Phil Nicolosi.

Frank learned how to cook Italian food from his mother and said his meatballs were never as good as his mom's. He was a father figure to his younger brothers, especially John who was 18 years younger. Frank enlisted in the Navy in 1944, since that was what his friends were doing. He was assigned to the Seabees, a construction battalion division, and had training in Hawaii.

Frank married Doris J. (Marcus) Delia on Sept. 4, 1954 in her hometown of Holland, MI. They had two children: Marcy Beth (1956) and Robert Frank (1960). They built a new home on Al-Crest (near Highcrest shopping center in 1955), and when that became too small they moved in 1965 to a new home on Bordeaux Dr. (by Guilford High School).

Frank and Doris thoroughly enjoyed 3 trips to Europe in 1977, 1981, and 1987. Frank found relatives in Italy on the first trip and began speaking Italian effortlessly to them. Doris was amazed by this since he had not spoken Italian during their first 23 years of marriage. He became acquainted with a young distant relative, Ambrosina, and she eventually came to visit the Delia family on two separate trips to the U.S.

Frank lived his life with tremendous moral integrity. His kindness, caring, unselfishness, and compassion were exemplary. His smile was warm and sincere. Although he was never highly-educated, and never achieved great financial success, he related to all types of people. He dedicated his life to his family, and his family is eternally grateful to him for that. Frank had a great deal of patience (a rarity for a full-blooded Italian!). He would

spend a lot of time working on projects around the house until they were to his satisfaction. His favorite saying was “where there’s a will, there’s a way”.

Frank passed away on May 22, 2006 at age 83 from kidney failure and congestive heart failure.

Submitted on August 11, 2014 by Bob & Marcy Delia for the Genealogy Project for Culture and Education Committee of GRIAA “Immigration Histories of Rockford Italian Families”.