



## Gino Piccirilli

January 9, 1927 - May 1, 2023

GINO PICCIRILLI January 9, 1927 – May 1, 2023 (Age 96) Beloved husband of the late Marisa and loving father of the late Jane (Wolfgang), Cynthia (Nino), and Michael (Antonella). Treasured grandfather of David (Mary), Daniel (Amanda), Gina (Bruno), Sonia (Anthony), Marisa (Grant), Gino, and Lorenzo. Wonderful great-grandfather to Celina, Amelia, Henrik, Caleb, Charles Maximilian, Alessandra Marisa, Bianca, Cristiana, Maximus, Romano, Joseph, and Stella.

Gino Piccirilli was born in the historic medieval village of Pacentro at the foothills of Passo San Leonardo in the Abruzzo province in Italy. Gino was the third in line of six children of the late Giuseppe Piccirilli and the late Carolina Casasanta and joins them and his late siblings Albert (Louise), Theodore (Assunta), Nina (Anthony), Lillian (Concezio), and Leo (Anna) in Heaven.

In 1934, Gino's parents made the tough decision to leave Pacentro behind with high hopes to find a place with better opportunities for their family. They sailed on the SS Conte di Savoia to the United States and settled in Detroit – right in the middle of the Great Depression. Times were challenging, but as the economy recovered, opportunities arose, and it became evident the decision to immigrate to America was a good choice.

The experience of serving in the United States Army during World War II

would play a defining role in the remarkable life of Gino Piccirilli. After receiving his draft notice on his 18th birthday and graduating from Detroit's Eastern High School, Gino took basic training at Camp Wolters in Texas where he trained for the invasion of Japan.

At the tail end of World War II, the love story of Gino and Marisa Piccirilli began. Gino was assigned to the 57th Medical Base Depot in Livorno, Italy. As a clerk, he was one of the few soldiers issued a Jeep which gave him freedom to explore along the Mediterranean coast, from Genoa down to Rome. One day Marcello Puccinelli, a mutual friend to both, thought to introduce Gino to Marisa since she was tutored in speaking the English language. When they met, it was love at first sight for Gino!

A courtship ensued. After getting the blessing of Marisa's parents – and of the United States Army – Gino proposed to Marisa. They were married on March 29, 1947, at Chiesa dei Salesiani in Livorno. Six months later, they traveled on the SS Henry Gibbins to the United States to begin their life together.

Gino and Marisa set roots in Detroit, initially living with Gino's parents. After moving to a new house that Gino built on Coram Street, they had their daughter Jane in 1948, daughter Cynthia in 1955, and son Michael in 1958. Marriages followed for their children and soon the grandchildren arrived: Jane and Wolfgang Koellhofer had David, Daniel, and Marisa; Cynthia and Nino Aiello had Gina and Sonia; and Michael and Antonella (Impemba) had Gino and Lorenzo.

In 1980, Gino and Marisa brought their children's families closer together by building four adjacent houses on three acres at Plumbrook and Schoenherr in Sterling Heights. It was an incredible environment to have all the cousins grow up together, especially with the weekend picnics in the backyard.

Gino and Marisa, affectionately called Nonno and Nonna by their grandchildren, made annual trips to Italy, bringing each grandchild in their teens as a tradition so they could experience firsthand the history, culture, and, of course, cuisine.

Growing up, Gino's favorite work experience was during high school at the Rialto Theatre on Gratiot in Downtown Detroit where he worked as a 17-year-old assistant manager. The beautifully designed Rialto was home to blockbuster films (and news reels) and was the place to be!

Gino had the entrepreneurial spirit! After returning from the war, Gino went into the building business – starting initially in concrete then advancing into commercial and industrial development throughout Metropolitan Detroit. He even had ownership in a car wash and a plastics factory.

While working full time, Gino studied and graduated from Lawrence Technological University in 1962 majoring in Construction Engineering Technology.

Gino was very active in Club Pacentro of Detroit and enjoyed the tradition and camaraderie at their gatherings. Gino organized the Pacentrani of Detroit Reunion 2000 with 1,000 people in attendance at the banquet including many from throughout the world. He was amazed at how such a small town of 1,300 people could produce so many successful immigrants on multiple continents. Gino led the production of the book “Storie di Pacentrani nel Mondo: Life Stories of Pacentrani All Over the World”, published in 2018. Gino was so proud of the Pacentrani community!

In 2016, Gino was honored by the Comune di Pacentro and the Mayor of Pacentro for his life-long work in the promotion and preservation of Pacentro's

culture and traditions, and for the important role he has played in keeping open the lines of communication between Pacentrani around the world and their native land.

Gino was also a proud member of Lucchese nel Mondo (Tuscan Society) supporting Marisa's heritage.

When it came to athletics, Gino excelled in baseball, playing second base on the US Army team that toured throughout Germany – all while staying in castles! Throughout his life, Gino enjoyed bowling with the Knights of Columbus and Club Pacentro, biking, weight resistance training, and going for evening strolls with Marisa in Italian towns. He was known to have an intense nightly workout routine in his basement through his early 90s!

Gino was driven, determined, analytical, clever, innovative, meticulous to detail, and a peacemaker. He was a great listener, keen observer, and sharp as a tack. When he spoke, you listened – and he was true to his word. He enjoyed political analysis and conversation. His hobby of videography went back to the 1950s as he shot an extensive catalog of family and even historical videos – often with Marisa as his director. He loved to eat and was blessed to have a master chef in Marisa as his wife. Gino was a man of deep faith and was proud seeing and hearing Marisa sing in the San Francesco Church choir. He loved to dance with Marisa – they even won the 1984 San Carlo Borromeo dance contest in Pacentro!

Gino and Marisa had a deep love for each other and the sacrament of marriage. They renewed their vows five times with the most recent at 71 years in Pacentro, Italy, with their family in attendance. In March of 2022, Gino and Marisa celebrated their 75th wedding anniversary.

On May 1, 2023, Gino made his peaceful journey to Heaven surrounded and

embraced by loved ones at his side.

Visitation Sunday 3-9pm with 7:00pm Rosary at Wujek-Calcaterra & Sons 54880 Van Dyke at 25 Mile Rd. (SHELBY TOWNSHIP). Funeral Monday Instate 9:30am at San Francesco Church 22870 S Nunneley Rd. (S. of Metro Parkway & E. of Gratiot) until time of Mass at 10:00am. In lieu of flowers donations are welcome to Tunnel to Towers. Entombment Resurrection Cemetery. Share memories with the family at their "On Line Guest Book" @ [WujekCalcaterra.com](http://WujekCalcaterra.com)

# Cemetery Details

## Resurrection Cemetery

18201 Clinton River Road  
Clinton Township, MI 48038

# Previous Events

## Visitation

MAY 7. 3:00 PM - 9:00 PM (ET)

Wujek-Calcaterra & Sons - Shelby Township  
54880 VanDyke Ave  
Shelby Township, MI 48316

## Rosary

MAY 7. 7:00 PM (ET)

Wujek-Calcaterra & Sons - Shelby Township  
54880 VanDyke Ave  
Shelby Township, MI 48316

## Instate / Funeral Mass

MAY 8. 9:30 AM - 10:00 AM (ET)

San Francesco Church  
22870 S. Nunneley  
Clinton Township, MI 48035



# Tribute Wall

DK

“ 1 file added to the album Media



David Koellhofer - January 31, 2025 at 12:06 PM



“ Emerald Garden Basket was purchased for the family of Gino Piccirilli.



May 06, 2023 at 10:50 AM

BS

“ Mr. Piccirilli was an excellent videographer. He recorded a month long Italy trip for Gina and I, and gifted me a video of it all. I will always be grateful for the beautiful memories that he captured. Wishing your family peace and comfort,  
Barb

Barb Sawosko - May 05, 2023 at 10:10 PM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Gino Piccirilli.



May 05, 2023 at 09:38 PM



“ *Fairest of All was purchased for the family of Gino Piccirilli.*



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May 03, 2023 at 01:27 PM



“ *I am so sorry to hear about Gino.  
He was a wonderful man and I will always remember him for his passion promoting Club Pacentro and his enthusiasm  
He was a great mentor for the Club.  
My deepest condolences to the entire family  
Sincerely  
Joe Rubino*

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**Joe Rubino** - May 03, 2023 at 01:05 PM



“ *Full Of Love Bouquet was purchased for the family of Gino Piccirilli.*



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May 02, 2023 at 10:51 PM