

Honorary Family Members

50th Family Party

"2019"

Mike Morelli

1910-1970

Family Party

1969-2019

Morelli/Ventura Family Party Story

The Morelli-Ventura story begins when Gaetano Morelli and Caterina Ventura came to Pueblo, Colorado. They both had immigrated to America from the same small town in Italy know as San Pietro in Guarano.

Gaetano arrived in America in 1899 at the age of 21, and Caterina arrived in America in 1903 at the age of 19. Upon their arrival in America they both traveled to Pueblo, Colorado where they had family members to live with. They met in Pueblo, dated, fell in love and moved to Green River, Utah sometime in 1905.

In 1969 their fourth son Mike Morelli at the age of 59 and living in Salt Lake City, Utah and was battling cancer. His brothers and sisters asked him if he had any regrets in life. He said yes, I am going to die and I don't even know all my nieces and nephews. It was at that time when his Brothers & Sisters said no you aren't, we are going to have a family party so everyone can meet and get to know each other's families.

So, in the fall of 1969 on a cold winter night the first party was held at Elks Lodge in Midvale, Utah. At that party each of the brothers and sisters stood up and one by one introduced their spouse and their family to all the other families. Everyone brought food, and there was music and we danced, drank and visited the night away.

That party was the start of something that has grown and become the biggest event of the year for our families. This year (2019) we will celebrate our 50th family party. Six generations it is our goal and pledge to all of our loved ones who have gone on before us that we will continue to build and unify this family forever.



(Mike Morelli passed away the following year (1970) in September)

Mike Morelli

Born: November 15, 1910 Died: September 13, 1970

Mike Morelli was the second son and the fourth child born to Caterina and Gaetano Morelli in Green River, Utah November 15, 1910. He passed away September 13, 1970 after a 3 month battle with cancer. Mike was a curious man with a scientific mind. He loved a challenge, or even a dare. Mike loved people, especially children. All his days, when there were gatherings, he was always found entertaining the children rather than conversing with the adults.

As a young boy, Mike fell in love with nature, geology and exploring. He loved playing in the Green River with his brothers and sisters. He could often be found fishing with Uncle Louie, and as a result, missed a spot in the family photo with his brothers and sisters, Mike worked hard, helping his family anyway that he could. When the family moved to Salt Lake City, he put in his fair share of hard labor on the "family farm", and implemented the value of honest, hard work the rest of his days.

In the early 1930's, Mike was introduced, through a mutual friends, to a spectacular young girl Verna Larsen, a housekeeper from Malad, Idaho, would be the girl Mike would stay together with for the rest of his life. Mike and Verna were married September 17, 1931 in Farmington, Utah. The young couple had interests in many of the same activities. They loved to take drives in the mountains, visit with family members and of course, they loved to bowl!

Mike had been working on the railroad with his father and brothers and learned many skills due to his probing mind. He entered into boiler-making apprenticeship in 1934 and successfully completed in 1939. He started his work as a foreman, was promoted to superintendent and then again promoted to an erector. Mike constructed all over the United States. While he was a superintendent in Montana, his brothers Frank and Henry were working along his side. His youngest brother Kenny wanted to be a part of the team but was too young, so Mike the superintendent, altered Kenney's age on his transcripts and Kenny had a job.

In 1934, Verna and Mike had their first baby boy and they named him Mike. Mike jr. only lived 6 months and died of what was believed to be pneumonia. Two years later on August 30, 1936 a second son, Ralph, (who is namesake of Uncle Ralph Morelli) was born on the kitchen table of their duplex behind Della's home. In continuing the Morelli tradition of sons, their third son, Guy, (who is namesake of Mike's father Gaetano) was born April 6, 1941.

When World War 11 began, Mike tried enlisting in the armed forces to aid in the defense of his Country, however, the U.S. Government declined his request. The Government believed his mind to be too critical and forced him to serve at a nuclear plant in the North. Mike was always thinking and he was curious about every subject, which enabled him to converse on basically ever level.

Mike enjoyed many hobbies in his lifetime. He was an accomplished horseman, who at 55 years of age was still breaking them in. He loved to fish and anyone was welcome to go with him as long as they were up by 3 a.m. Polishing stones was another hobby and he would make beautiful jewelry from the polished stones. Mike was a 32nd degree Mason, which is the highest degree in the Scottish Rite. Mike loved prospecting and he even had a small mine in Ruth, Nevada, which he mined by hand. The Government happened to own the land the mine sat on, so Mike would renew his contract with them yearly. One day, one of his partners mouthed off in a nearby saloon telling how rich the land was going to be. An affiliate of the Government caught wind of this and; to no one's surprise, the Government did not renew his contract. Currently there resides an open-pit copper mine comparable to Kennecott.

Mike was a spiritual man who was one with God through nature. He was non-judgmental and always fought for the underdog. He was a daredevil and loved to take risks. He would never back down from anything. To coin his favorite saying; "You may take the steer, but I'm going to get a few steaks."

Being the oldest living brother made Mike the family patriarch and a great one at that. Nearly the entire family lived within a six-block radius from one another, making it convenient to visit. In 1957, the construction on I-15 began and some of the homes were torn down, including Della's which was the hub, This concerned Mike, he thought the family would separate, so he came up with the idea of a family reunion some years later, Mike, Emery, Carl and Margie Ventura Category started the first committee for annual "Family Reunion" and honoring Mike's dying wish to keep the family relationship alive.

Everyone loved Mike and Mike loved everyone. He had a gift for reaching inwardly to people, especially children, He was intelligent, creative and bold. He would have been so proud of his his little family that is still growing. To this date, he has four grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren, who hold strong to his request of "keeping the family close",