



Mr. Andrea di Montegnacco / Nicholson

October 23, 1947 - March 16, 2020

Family and Friends,

Thank you all so much for joining me to bid farewell to my dear Andrea. My spouse, my life companion, my best friend of 44 years.

This is not a normal setting for a eulogy, but these are not normal times.

Andrea died prematurely. He had been in relatively good health and full of energy and gusto for life. We had many plans for the future which alas were not to be.

Nonetheless in his 72 years, 4 months and 22 days on this earth, he had packed in so much both by himself and with me.

Andrea was a modest man, not one to bang his drum publicly. On this occasion, I would like to bang his drum as loudly as I can: he deserved it!

First, I'd like to call out his name and family title fully in Italian and in English, which virtually nobody has heard:

Conte Andrea di Montegnacco, Signore di Montegnacco, Cassacco e terre annesse, Nobile

Count Andrea di Montegnacco, Lord of Montegnacco, Cassacco and adjoining lands, Nobleman.

Andrea was the head of the third of five branches of a family that was first noted in written records in 1234 and first recognized as nobility in 1257, more than seven and a half centuries ago. The di Montegnaccos became lords of the Friulian Parliament in 1570 and served until this body's dissolution in 1797 along with that of the Venetian Republic.

Typically of Andrea, he found his background historically fascinating, researched it in detail, and decided to completely update his family tree which no other member of his family had done for decades. Starting in 1986 (34 years ago) when we traveled together to northern Italy for the first time, he undertook to meet every living di Montegnacco, roughly four dozen people carrying his surname and in this he succeeded, notwithstanding some suspicion and incomprehension, let alone linguistic difficulties. On more than one occasion he literally had to put his foot into a relative's doorway - and hold it there!

Andrea was an only child who came from economically modest immigrant parents in Sydney, Australia. His father Andrea, a CPA, was born in Milan in the North of Italy, and his mother Anna Polverino, a florist, in Brooklyn, of parents who originated from the Island of Salina, one of the Aeolian Islands, off the northeast coast of Sicily. From an Italian point of view, they were a "mixed" couple, and their marriage was not a success. His parents divorced during Andrea's early childhood, and he grew up with his mother. He never had a room of his own while growing up in Potts Point, sleeping on a sofa in the living room of his mother's small flat. Several decades later, during our first immigration struggle, a psychologist diagnosed Andrea as a survivor of emotional abuse.

There was little counseling or psychological support available in the 1950s in Australia, so Andrea just had to get along with life as best he could. He certainly rose to the occasion!

His intelligence, intellectual curiosity, and capacity for hard work, not to mention a distinct talent for research, eventually led him to earn five university degrees in three countries: a Bachelor of Science in Industrial Chemistry from the University of New South Wales in Sydney, a Master of Science and a Ph.D. in Chemical Engineering from Loughborough University of Technology in England, a Master of International Business Administration from Temple University in Philadelphia, and a Master of Science in Technical and Professional Communication from Southern College of Technology, now part of Kennesaw State University in Georgia. Andrea would have liked to pursue an undergraduate degree in architecture, but circumstances unfortunately did not permit.

We officially met in Philadelphia on the evening of December 5, 1975, the Feast Day of St. Nicholas, patron saint of children, also of Russia. We kept separate apartments until he moved back to Australia in 1980, though we shuttled constantly from one to the other. After several visits to Sydney, I moved there in the summer of 1982, and we lived together for the rest of his life. We resided subsequently in Melbourne (Victoria), Atlanta, Udine (Friuli, Italy), and amusingly for us, beautiful suburban Sandy Springs during the past 22 years.

Our personalities were different but complementary, and we fitted together remarkably well, enjoying each other's company to an unusual extent. In Italy we were referred to as *i ragazzi*, the boys or lads. It helped that we were both unconventional, at least inwardly, flexible and open to the world with many,

many common interests.

Andrea was the homemaker: he set up and maintained our living establishments. Everything we acquired whether large or small, he first researched, sometimes to the nth degree - no spur of the moment impulse buying for him!

His main passion when not travelling was gardening. He followed Voltaire's famous closing edict in *Candide*: "Il faut cultiver notre jardin!" It is sadly fitting that he was in our garden when he left this world.

On a happier note, I recently calculated that in 22 years, we must have moved at least a couple of tons of top soil from Lowe's or Home Depot to our Trail Point property. He had what I jokingly termed a Paul Bunyan streak, cutting off tree branches large and small, planting trees and bushes, sawing away at fallen trees and moving the resulting heavy logs around the grounds. In recent years, he frequently had to chase increasing number of damn deer off our property.

As you all know, we managed to travel extensively, all around the U.S. and internationally to all continents except Africa and Antarctica. Both of these were in our plans for the future. He was a Million Miler with Delta, as I am. Delta's SkyTeam alliance permitted us to fly a lot on KLM Royal Dutch, which during the last decade became our airline of first choice.

As a memento, KLM offers each of its intercontinental business class passengers a small gift of Bols Dutch gin in a house-shaped Delft blue porcelain bottle. In Dutch they are called huisjes, "housettes" to use a seventies term. One new huisje was issued every year, so there are now 100 - reflecting KLM's hundred years existence. Andrea had acquired 56 of these which gives you an idea of the extent of our travels with KLM, the equivalent

of 14 overseas round trips for each of us.

You will all have heard of our immigration struggles, but it's worth repeating that we won three immigration cases, one for me in Australia, one for Andrea in the U.S., and one for our dear friend Moise.

Andrea ended up with three citizenships: Australian, Italian and U.S. with three passports to prove this. Beyond this, we both felt like citizens of the world, willing and able to adapt very quickly to the circumstances of every country we visited, recognizing our common humanity everywhere, and delighting in the differences we found.

The time has come to say farewell to my dear Andrea, never to be forgotten while I live.

I'll carry on for us both with your help and that of Moise.

A graveside service was held on Friday, March 27, 2020 at Milton Fields Cemetery.

Cemetery Details

Milton Fields

1150 Birmingham Rd.
Milton, GA

Previous Events

Graveside Service

MAR 27. 1:00 PM (ET)

Milton Fields
1150 Birmingham Rd.
Milton, GA

Tribute Wall



“ *Mr. Andrea di Montegnacco / Nicholson*

October 08, 2022 at 11:37 AM



“ *May you rest in peace Andrea knowing that you were loved by our family. You were always so kind, generous to the children as they were growing up, creating wonderful memories for us all. We were so fortunate to have had you in the family. Jeremy and you were always wonderful uncles and we always appreciated that. We count ourselves so happy to have shared a meal recently, with the stories you brought!. We will miss you and until we meet again. Graham and Gay*

graham nicholson - March 26, 2020 at 03:06 PM



“ *1 file added to the tribute wall*



graham nicholson - March 26, 2020 at 02:52 PM



“ *Mio caro Andrea,
Ti ricorderemo sempre con affetto . Ciao. Roberta, Paolo, Riccardo
e Massimiliano.*

Roberta Cogoi - March 24, 2020 at 10:05 AM

AR

“*Andrea, you were the best of friends. From our time working for Factory Mutual in Philadelphia in 1974, you were always the one to give great advice. Our lifestyles and interests were so different, yet we could talk about anything and still find common ground. Even when I moved away and we lost touch for years, you took the initiative and tracked me down, for which I am so grateful. I will miss our phone calls because you always stole my thunder, where I am usually the one asking "How are you doing and what's new"? You always would email "links" regarding our topics of conversation if you didn't have the answer and you knew I would be too busy or lazy to look it up myself. I know we will meet again and until that time "rest in peace my friend".*

Al Rinn - March 22, 2020 at 09:42 PM