

Sam and Mattia Campanello Marine Fisheries Endowed Memorial Scholarship

Established in 2021 by Laura '86 and Johnny Campanello '86



My dad, Captain Sam, operated his shrimp boat, the “St. Gerard”, in the Gulf of Mexico from 1955 to 1996. Dad was unquestionably a man’s man; he was tough and both mentally and physically strong. He taught me so many life lessons just by the way he lived life. Dad was loyal to his family, work, and friends - all with a sharp sense of wit! The best example of his character and loyalty was when my mom became disabled and sick. From 1996 to 2006,

Dad cared for Mom with honor and grace. He never wavered. Even when he was stricken with cancer in 2005 and going through chemo, he still cared for Mom full-time. He wouldn’t let anyone else take over for him. A week after mom died, we learned that he had terminal cancer, but Dad never flinched because he knew he had completed his role as her husband for 56 years. He died 45 days later. I always think of him and the lessons he taught me. Dad was my hero!

My mom, Mattia, was kind-hearted with a giving spirit who lived to serve and make people happy. She loved family, cooking (especially Italian feast!), gardening, embroidery, and ceramics. Mom could truly do it all! She immigrated to from Italy to the U.S. in 1948, married my dad in 1950 and together they adopted four kids. We grew up in deep Italian culture, which centers around family, food and faith. I



Mattia Campanello in her kitchen

feel extremely blessed Mom was such an important influence in my life and I think



Gig'Em!
 Johnny Campanello

about this blessing often. The picture shows my mom doing what she loved most, cooking from scratch! She would make me the chocolate cake you see every time my dad and I would come home from a week long commercial fishing trip. Great memories!