



Dora T. Sibia

April 6, 1927 - January 18, 2021

Dora Fiorentino Sibia

April 6, 1928 – January 18, 2021

Obituary

She lived her life with beauty and grace, and carved a deep path of unique experiences, fueling an ambitious life agenda.

Before she was born, her parents washed ashore with over four million Italians seeking a better life. When they arrived, the United States had recently ratified the rights of women to vote, began an economic expansion known as the 'roaring twenties' and fell into a Great Depression when she was born and bounced back following the repeal of Prohibition. She was the oldest of one brother, Johnny Fiorentino now deceased and three sisters, Anna Sheehan, Josephine Laude and Antonette Thivierge. They lived the life of a traditional Italian American family.

At the High School Commerce Class of 1944 she studied Stenography, was President of her Home Room and led the Modern Dance Team as its Squad Leader. As the war waged, her friends found time to roller skate at the Rialto Skating Rink on Walnut Street, dance at the Riverside Park Ballroom, and promote war bonds and volunteer.

After the war, she fell in love with her first husband, Emilio J. Sibilia a decorated war hero and aspiring entrepreneur. They had two sons together, Teodoro and Emilio Jr. and divorced. Courageously, she became a single mother with the support of Holy Cross Church.

She lost herself in books, music, opera, live performances, seminars, talks, readings, college courses, bowling, swimming and other forms of civic engagement and education. Her library boasted many first editions, annotated used copies, textbooks, cookbooks, art history, philosophy, religion, operas, self-help, woman's biographies, history, literature, business manuals, and the occasional romantic novel. She seemed to avoid the lessons learned in the cookbooks but tried to integrate self-help and religious principles into her daily routine.

An independent woman with support from her sisters and mother she found time to visit New York City frequently. Walking to Times Square from Penn Station she stretched her neck to see the signs for shows and tickets available in the 'halfers' line. If she figured it correctly, she might see an Opera or Play for half price or less if it was closer to Showtime. She'd end up dashing through the lobby to slide through the doors. On other days she'd wait in line to get a first edition of a recent New York Times bestseller, signed by the author following his/her reading, to be placed in her extensive library.

When she wasn't going to shows in New York, she traveled to the City to make her way to downtown Chinatown, cross the street and land on the steps of Pearl Paint. Pearl Paint was the foremost destination for active, famous and aspiring artists. Paint samples, half tubes, unacceptable colors and discontinued brands filled her shopping bag. She fashioned herself a 'colorist' and her multiple self-created colors adorned her prolific output of flower paintings. She painted flowers every day in the twilight of her life.

Amazingly, it wasn't until 1988 and the Women's Business Ownership Act was passed that women were granted the right to obtain a business loan without a male cosigner. Dora had managed to buy a two family house and a small cottage without a male cosigner. Again, it wasn't until 1974 when the Equal Credit Opportunity Act was passed that woman were granted the right to have a 'credit card' without a cosigner. Dora had been using her credit card for years, by this time.

In 1967 Mariel Siebert became the first woman to own a seat on the New York Stock Exchange. That same year Dora became the first woman in a local investment club. Her passionate desire to be independent and her unquenchable desire to learn, combined with her natural instincts, led her to purchase single shares of prominent publicly traded companies. Among the companies she invested were IBM, AT&T, gas and oil companies, a sprinkling of precious metals mining and blue chip utilities.

She was on the payroll of Marty's Soda Mix for many years, applying her persuasive skills collecting overdue balances for her son's aspiring beverage business. She was able to live a comfortable senior lifestyle from these sources. She gave away toasters and radios she received from savings and loans certificates of deposit promotions and religiously contributed to the collection box at Holy Cross Church.

Even though the Married Women's Property Act was passed in 1839, giving women many rights related to real estate, the reality of the real estate brokerage marketplace was dominated by men. Her experience in buying and selling real estate highlighted the exclusive male real estate brokerage business. With a female counterpart, they applied to take the brokerage test, took and passed the test and became two of the first women in Massachusetts with real estate brokerage licenses. She furthered her

education and received two Associates Degrees from two community colleges – Springfield Technical Community College and Holyoke Community College.

Her many nieces and nephews had special relationships with her and she dazzled them with her ideas and actions. She had six grandchildren – Theodore Sibia, Anthony Sibia, Kristen White, Sharon Sibia, Kendra Bennett and Kayla Sibia and seven great grandchildren – Casey Sibia, Eleanor White, Maeve Bennett, Gavin White, Katherine Sibia, Meaghan Sibia and Lauren Sibia.

In lieu of flowers please make a donation to the Shriners Hospitals for Children —Springfield, Development Office, 516 Carew St., Springfield, MA 01104, in Dora's memory.

Her private funeral will be held on January 27, 2021 at 11AM at St. Michael the Archangel Mausoleum. New Funeral & Cremation Center, LLC, 25 Mill Street, Springfield, MA 01108 has been entrusted by the family with the arrangements. For expressions of sympathy please visit www.nefcc.net To send a flower arrangement or to plant trees in memory of Dora T. Sibia.

Tribute Wall

LV

“ Joe and Family, We are saddened to hear of your loss. You’re Mom was a trendsetting pioneer in her day. How nice it was to read of all the accomplishments. It was a pleasure to know her. God Bless you all.

Lloyd and Denise Vaudrin - February 14, 2023 at 10:02 AM

GG

“ To my beautiful godmother you will forever be in my heart! we shared so many special times together I will always have beautiful memories of you
Love Gina ❤️

Gina Gesualdo - February 14, 2023 at 10:02 AM

JS

“ Love you

Joe Sibilia - February 14, 2023 at 10:02 AM

WP

“ Our Deepest Condolences to Ted and Joe and all their family. We will keep you in our thoughts and prayers at this difficult time. God Bless. Wayne & Heidi Parker

Wayne + Heidi Parker - February 14, 2023 at 10:02 AM

MD

“ Joe and Family I met Dora a few times at Gasoline Alley where she always impressed me with her great personality as well as the way she seemed so full of energy and fun. I’m sorry for your loss and I hope you find peace in knowing that she is safe and watching over you and your families.

Melissa Discher - February 14, 2023 at 10:02 AM

HV

“ To the family of Dora -- She was a bright spot and I remember having a few lunches and Symphony dates with her and my good friend Julie Robarge who goes way back with Dora. I was so impressed with her many interests, music especially and we had Art in common, too. Her obituary was very impressive, and your family was fortunate to have such a stylish, exciting, and talented person in your glamorous Mom.

Helen Vaselacopoulos - February 14, 2023 at 10:02 AM

CY

“ I remember Dora well, she was a beautiful woman and a good friend to my mom, Dot Hammond. We would see her often at the 4:00 Mass at Holy Cross Church and would always stop after Mass and talk to her. We are very sorry for your loss, I know she will be sorely missed. Christine and Bob Yvon

Christine yvon - February 14, 2023 at 10:02 AM

AM

“ I'm so sorry for the loss of Mom, Gramma Dora. A fiercely loyal, kind and loving woman. May she not only rest in peace, but rejoice in the reunion of loved ones gone before her, and a most joyous reunion with her Creator

Alice Monticello - February 14, 2023 at 10:02 AM

MH

“ My condolences to Ted, Joe and family.

Mark Houlihan - February 14, 2023 at 10:02 AM

SH

“ To Joe and Teddy. Sorry to hear of the loss of your mother. Through reading her obituary, she was quite exceptional, with many great accomplishments.

Steve Houlihan - February 14, 2023 at 10:02 AM