

Tony owned his own saloon on Greene Street for about 25 years until selling it in 1989. Even until recent times, when health allowed, Tarracino still would visit the bar to greet many customers who came back to see him as well as new ones.

Movies were made using Tony's bar as a setting, and parts of his life as action-based themes. He even played several small or walk-on movie roles.

Always in touch with the younger generations, Tony made "living history" tapes years ago for Florida International University, and more recently with students at Key West High School. He made guest appearances on fishing history at Florida Keys Community College and on local television.

A young musician whom he once encouraged, Jimmy Buffett, remembered his old friend over the years, and aided his successful mayoral campaign in 1989. Later, one of his famous songs would capture the man to whom there was "still so much to be done."

In recent years, Tony also made medical history, surviving time and again after health challenges including his heart and lungs. Just last week, Tony was able to spend an afternoon in the hospital boardroom signing copies of a new book memorializing his "Life Lessons." Until he was last hospitalized, Tony had been making notes at home for his own autobiography and remaining under guard of the family dog, Bootsie.

Anthony "Capt. Tony" Tarracino is survived by his wife, Marty, and many children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. He was predeceased by his parents, Luigi and Henrietta, his three brothers, Louis, Sal and Joe, former wives Mimi, Mae and Shirley LeClair and one son, Anthony (Shirley).

Surviving children of Tony with his wife Marty are Josephine M. (Josie) Tarracino of Ashburn, Va., and Tony W. (T.J.) Tarracino Jr., of Key West and new Symma Beach, Fla.

Other surviving children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren are: daughter, Alicia Oropeza (mother Shirley LeClair) and her husband, Todd Oropeza, grandchildren Brooke and Blake Oropeza, all of Key West; daughter, Coral Tarracino (mother Mae Tarracino) of Key West; daughter Toni ("Little Toni") Tarracino (mother Mae) of Key West, granddaughter Samantha Tarracino of Key West; and two great-grandchildren, Tommy and Alexis Corpion, both of Key West; granddaughter, Alexandra Naranjo of Mesa, Ariz.; son, Louis "Louie" Tarracino (mother, Mimi) of Key West and his wife, Peggy, grandson, Keith Tarracino of Cranford, N.J., great-grandsons James and Joseph Tarracino, both of Cranford, N.J., granddaughter Tonia Knoll and great-grandson Joseph of Caristadt, N.J., son Louis Tarracino Jr. of Key West; daughter Tonia Fulginiti (mother Mimi), of Toms River, N.J., grandchildren John and Michael Fulginiti, also of Toms River; son Richard Tarracino (mother Mimi) of Fort Lauderdale, Fla., and his wife Connie, grandson Anthony of Miami; son Keith Famie, of Novi, Mich., and grandchildren Alicia and Josh Famie, also of Novi; also surviving, a daughter JoJo, daughter of Naomi, and a son, Larry.

Viewing will be held from 4 to 8 p.m. Friday, Nov. 7, 2008, at the Dean Lopez Funeral Home. A funeral Mass will be held at 11 a.m. Saturday, Nov. 8, 2008, at St. Mary's Star of the Sea Catholic Church, with Father Baker and Father Tony Mullane officiating. A cremation will follow.

## FROM THE KEY WEST CITIZEN:

### Anthony "Captain Tony" Tarracino

Anthony "Captain Tony" Tarracino, former mayor and "Mayor Emeritus" of the city of Key West, a former charter boat captain, saloon owner and still a visionary character who for years brought world attention to Key West, died peacefully Saturday, Nov. 1, 2008, at the age of 92.

Earlier this year, Mayor Morgan McPherson formally proclaimed Aug. 10 "Captain Tony Day" in Key West, recognizing Tarracino's contributions to the island city over much of the last half of the 20th century and up to the present.

Tony, who at one time formally was designated the island's "Sidewalk Mayor," became the real mayor of the city of Key West, from 1989 to 1991. He later formally was designated as "Mayor Emeritus."

On July 20, 2003, Capt. Tony Tarracino was awarded the Mel Fisher Lifetime Achievement Award for both his personal lifetime achievements and also for his many years of friendship with, and support of, the late Mel Fisher in his quest for the richest-ever sunken Spanish galleon, the Atocha.

"The Captain," fishing captain and gritty-action guy, compassionate barkeeper and politician, true romantic, and a salty philosopher, spent hours Saturday with his wife, Marty, and many children when he passed at the intensive care unit of Lower Keys Medical Center.

The son of Italian immigrants, Tony was born Aug. 10, 1916, in Elizabeth, N.J., one of four brothers. An observant Catholic priest there told a very young Anthony that he would one day "belong to the world," but the growing up was hard.

On the run after being beaten and left for dead in New Jersey, Tony arrived permanently in Key West in 1946 at the age of 30, hitching a ride on a milk truck into history.

For the next 62 years, the island of Key West was Capt. Tony's "utopia," the place where he earned his way on the sea and ashore as an icon of the 20th century. He was a friend of the mighty, the needy, and the creative, and was equally drawn to beautiful women and the other men of action whose adventures he sometimes joined.

Tony earned his captain's hat operating out of the charter fishing docks of Key West, and on dangerous journeys to places as far away as Cuba and Haiti.

Tony's charter boats over the years were called "Greyhound," and he loved the action at the local greyhound dog racing track when he couldn't make it to Hialeah horse racing, or to Las Vegas, Haiti or the Bahamas on gambling trips.

The boy who had paper in the soles of his ill-fitting shoes grew up to treasure his hand-sewn leather ones bought in Las Vegas -- along with a new silk suit. He smoked Lucky Strikes until he had to quit.

~~FATHERS DAY~~

FATHERS  
DAY

DAD

Valwarp

~~JOSIE~~

JOSIE

2nd block

Favorite Piece

I was upstairs doing my weekend homework, when my phone rang. Too lazy to strain her voice, my mother was calling to tell me dinner was ready. I hurried downstairs and plopped down in my chair.

I noticed my dad's place at the table wasn't set and I was wondering where he was. No sooner had I had that thought he came down the stairs in a pair of tuxedo pants and a white dress shirt. He went to the mirror and began combing back his wet hair. He slicked it back and then made sure he had a clean shave around his grey beard. It was Fantasy Fest night and my dad was to be on a float playing the one and only Capt. Tony. As he fasten the cufflinks on his shirt he panically yelled, "Where's my tie?"

"Right here," I said, waving it in the air.

My mother helped him put on the tie and he smoothly slipped into his jacket. He added some Old Spice cologne, he has to smell good for the woman, looked in the mirror one last time, and replied more to himself than to us, "Your old man doesn't look bad." I secretly rolled my eyes. This was Capt. Tony the hustler and womanizer. He placed his top hat on his head and with a twinkle in his eye, walked out the door.

The next morning I came downstairs to get breakfast. And as always there was my dad. A cup of coffee and the Key West Citizen sat in front of him on the table. A cigarette was secured between his lips and the Weather Channel was on the T.V. He had been transformed over night. Capt. Tony was now the skinny old man in pin-striped pajamas that I saw every morning. His hair never combed and his main concern being what the lotto numbers from the night before were. "Good morning daughter," he'd say in an annoying New York accent, nagging at me because I was getting up at noon. "Good morning," I'd have to yell because he keeps his hearing aids off until he's done reading the papers.

I never really look at my dad as a famous figure of Key West, he's just my dad. Every now and then I get a glimpse of Capt. Tony and it amazes me how well he plays the part.

TJ Tarracino  
03-07-2005

### To My Father

I am currently eighteen years old, and when I was born, I had no idea that my family would be so odd, and different. My father is currently eighty-eight years old, and was seventy when my mother had me. I grew up my whole life with a father who could have been my great-grandfather in some other families. But there is a difference between my father and other people his age. His body is old, but his mind is as sharp as mine, if not even sharper. I agree that people do stereotype others by their ages, for example I know that the person who is reading this, probably at first thought, "Wow, that's so weird, how could this person's father be so old." I know this because I have heard it my whole life, over and over again. Growing up I would make new friends, and they would find out how old my father was, and they would begin to make presumptions about how he lives his life. Most people, like my friends would start to create images in their heads about what my father looked like, they would picture an old man hunched over with a cane, no hair, and suspenders. But after they met him, they ended up thinking he was really cool, and how he wasn't how they expected him to be. That is because my father never let himself fall under the stereotype of an eighty-eight-year-old man, he has always been, and always will be Capt. Tony, and nothing else.

The point that I am trying to make, is that in all of my father's life, he never looked at an opportunity and said to himself, "I'm too old to do this, or I'm too young to do this." He always did what he felt, and said what he wanted to. I have come to strongly believe that the reason why people find him so interesting is that he has never followed the same path as others have done his age. He found his own path, cleared a way, and has always fought through every obstacle until he could over come it. He is the definition of, "When the going gets tough, the tough gets going." I think he fought his whole life, just to be his own person, and to show people that it's ok to be yourself.

*Tony W. Tarracino Jr.*