

# Yolanda 'Lindy' Dunn dies at 99

Dunn was member of prominent Stagnaro fishing family

By Wallace Baine

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**SANTA CRUZ »** Yolanda "Lindy" Dunn, the last surviving member of the founding generation of Santa Cruz's prominent Stagnaro fishing family, died Saturday at her home in Santa Cruz. She was 99 and just five months shy of her 100th birthday.

"She was known as the 'Beauty

of the Santa Cruz Waterfront," said her son, Santa Cruz journalist and filmmaker Geoffrey Dunn. He noted his mother was named "Lindy" in honor of Charles "Lucky Lindy" Lindbergh who flew solo across the Atlantic Ocean the year she turned 12.

"One of her older brothers gave her that nickname," Dunn said. "She was part of a big Italian family where nicknames prevailed."

Lindy Dunn was the fifth of 11 children of Italian natives Cottardo and Batistina Stagnaro. Her siblings dominated the fishing industry at the Santa Cruz Municipal Wharf, the names of which graced popular restaurants on the wharf for a generation, including Malio's and Gilda's.

Her son said Lindy was more interested in fashion and the social scene than cutting fish at

the wharf. But Lindy became well known as the face of the family's speedboat business at the Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk's Pleasure Pier, which no longer exists.

She would take tickets and greet people as they went out for speedboat rides from the 1930s to the 1950s.

She worked as secretary for Finn & Finn Insurance in the



Dunn

1930s and as a cosmetologist at the Santa Cruz Pharmacy. She also worked as a hostess at her brothers' restaurant Malio's, and would often fill in for her sister Gilda at Gilda's restaurant.

Geoffrey Dunn said his mother was a big baseball fan her entire life, beginning with her devotion to the Italian ballplayers from California that played for the minor-league San Francisco Seals and later the New York Yankees, especially the San Francisco-born "Yankee Clipper" Joe DiMaggio.

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When the New York Giants moved to San Francisco in the 1950s, Lindy became a devoted Giants fan.

During World War II, she became engaged to a serviceman who was killed in action shortly before the two were to be married. "My mom grieved for many years for him," said her son. Several years later, she married Frank Dunn, a Pennsylvania native and WWII native who used to swim out to the end of the Pleasure Pier to flirt with her. Frank Dunn died in 2005.

Geoffrey Dunn said his mother suffered greatly at the loss of her siblings, to whom she was very close. Some of her siblings died in the 40s and 50s.

"Seeing her siblings die one by one was very hard on her," he said. "She was just devastated every time. It just didn't seem right to her that here she was, the middle child, and she turned out to be the last survivor." She also survived another son, Norman James Dunn.

Lindy figured heavily in her Geoffrey's writings, particularly his two volumes of "Santa Cruz Is In the Heart." He paid tribute to her in the 1989 original volume in an essay titled "Happiness is an Italian Mama." She appears with her sisters on the second volume's cover.

She is survived by her son Geoffrey and his wife Siri Vaeth Dunn, and

## YOLANDA "LINDY" STAGNARO DUNN

Born: May 28, 1915

Died: December 27, 2014

**Family:** The fifth of 11 children of Cottardo and Batistina Stagnaro, she was raised on the West Side of Santa Cruz and was part of the generation of Stagnaros central to the fishing community at the Santa Cruz Municipal Wharf.

**Education:** Santa Cruz High School Class of 1934.

**Survivors:** She is survived by her son Geoffrey and his wife Siri Vaeth Dunn, and her daughter Marguerite "Peggy" Dunn Heil and her husband Joseph Heil, as well as grandchildren Tess and Dylan Dunn, Cameryn Judd and Sierra Heil.

**Memorial:** A memorial service will be at 11 a.m. Saturday at the Pacific Garden Chapel, 1050 Cayuga St., Santa Cruz. Memorial contributions may be made to Cystic Fibrosis Research Inc. (CFRI), 2672 Bayshore Parkway, Suite 520, Mountain View, CA 94043.

her daughter Marguerite "Peggy" Dunn Heil and her husband Joseph Heil, as well as grandchildren Tess and Dylan Dunn, Cameryn Judd and Sierra Heil.

A memorial service is scheduled for 11 a.m. Saturday at the Pacific Garden Chapel, 1050 Cayuga St., Santa Cruz, with the time to be announced. Contributions in her memory can be made to Cystic Fibrosis Research Inc. (CFRI), 2672 Bayshore Parkway, Suite 520, Mountain View, CA 94043.