



Mario Joseph Boiardi

November 24, 2007

QUEENSTOWN Mario J. Boiardi, son of the famous Italian-born chef whose line of food products Chef Boyardee became a household name, died Saturday at his home on Bennett Point Road after a long battle with Mantle cell lymphoma a rare type of cancer. He was 81.

Mr. Boiardi and his wife, Maureen, have lived on the Eastern Shore since moving here in 1984 and living in a grand home the Penderyn estate he built for them on a 17-acre peninsula on the Wye River in Queen Anne's County. Five years ago, Mrs. Boiardi said her husband was diagnosed with Mantle cell lymphoma a rare type that accounts for about 1 in 20 of all cases of non-Hodgkin lymphoma and which is three times more common in men than in women, according to a cancer Web site.

Mrs. Boiardi attributed her husband's long survival after being diagnosed to the care he received locally.

"I owe this and he does to the Easton (Memorial Hospital) and all the doctors and nurses who took care of him," she said. "He fought a valiant fight."

Mr. Boiardi was seen by local physicians, Dr. Richard Borgoyne, and Dr. Michael Fisher, who initially found the cancer, Mrs. Boiardi said. Two years ago, her husband suffered a stroke and nearly lost his life. But the quick

action by staff at the hospital who installed a pacemaker, saved his life. Following nearly eight weeks of rehabilitation on the 5th floor at Memorial Hospital, Mr. Boiardi was able to fulfill his wish to return home by Christmas.

She also credited the care he received from Queen Anne's Hospice, neighbors and her sister Christine Howard, who left her home in Great Britain in July and has helped her sister, who had hip surgery, to take care of her husband.

Mr. Boiardi was born to Ettore (Hector) and Helen (Wroblewski) Boiardi. His famous father passed through Ellis Island at age 16 on May 9, 1914 and took the name of "Hector." He started working in New York's famous Plaza and Ritz-Carlton hotels before eventually moving to Cleveland and opening a restaurant in the city's Little Italy.

His spaghetti sauce became so popular, he began selling it in carry-out bottles and the sauce eventually was sold under the label "Boyardee" to help Americans pronounce the name. According to the Encyclopedia of Cleveland History, Mr. Boiardi developed field rations for the armed services and by war's end, Chef Boy-ar-dee Quality Foods generated \$20 million annually. In 1946, he sold the company to American Home Foods for \$6 million and remained a company consultant until 1978. The brand is now owned by ConAgra.

The elder Boiardi died at age 87 in 1985. His wife died at age 90 in 1995. The couple is buried in Parma, Ohio. At the time of his death, he was survived by his only son, Mario, and two grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.

"His father made the American dream," Mrs. Boiardi said.

Mrs. Boiardi characterized her life with Mario as a "real love story." The couple

met in a "lift" (elevator) in the Intercontinental Hotel in London. She said she and some girlfriends were in the elevator heading to a sophisticated nightclub in the hotel but were held up by the bellman who was "holding the lift" for a special rider. She thought perhaps it was someone from the royal family. That's when she and Mario spied each other.

"We fell in love instantaneously," she said.

Without revealing who he was, one of the first conversations they had was about spaghetti. He wanted to know what she thought about it and how she prepared it for herself.

"I told him, "I love it,"" Mrs. Boiardi said. Thinking he was just another man who didn't know his way around the kitchen, she said she told him how she made her own spaghetti. She told him he needed to start with good fresh bread, cut thickly, toasted and slathered in butter. She said she preferred a sauce made by Crosse and Blackwell, heated and put over the toasted bread.

"I could see by the look on his face" that a connection was made, she said. "So, we laughed, right" ... Little did I know. ... I'm talking about a real love story."

For two years, the two were together, but she had no idea who he really was because he told her his name was Martin.

They lived in New Jersey for a time and that's where she learned his true identity.

"He told me he had something to tell me," she said. "We went shopping at the Acme supermarket at 1 a.m. I wasn't accustomed to shopping in the Acme at

1 a.m. As I was walking down the aisle, I picked up about a half a dozen cans of spaghetti (Chef Boyardee)."

Anticipating the worst after the ominous warning, she said she thought he was about to break off the relationship.

"I thought he was going to tell me it was a no-go and that he thought the relationship was a mistake, so I said, "Look, it's been great. Just remember one thing, let's part friends." He looked at me and said, "What the hell are you talking about"" He put his hand into my trolley cart, pulled out a can and said, "this is my father." We both cried."

Having lived in Greenwich, Conn., Mr. Boiardi began looking for other property where he could enjoy the beauty of the water. One day, Mrs. Boiardi said he called her in Great Britain and told her he wanted her to come and see something.

Leaving from New Jersey, the couple drove into Queen Anne's County from what Mrs. Boiardi later came to know as U.S. Route 301.

"I asked him to pull the car over," she said. "I saw geese flying. Hundreds and hundreds of geese flying. The sun was going down and there was the shadow of black over red. I told Mario "I loved it." He said, "The best is yet to come.""

That was 1984. She said friends in Delaware called and told them about property that was coming for sale from the Aspen Institute. While Penderyn named for a village in Wales was being built, the couple lived in a condominium at Perry Cabin in St. Michaels, where Mrs. Boiardi admitted hating to leave because she loved it so, but did come to know and love the Palladian lines of the English manor house that was built.

Mrs. Boiardi said her husband served in World War II and was a young captain when he was posted to Germany. She said he also served on the front lines in Korea.

Mrs. Boiardi said her husband will be buried in the spring when the dogwoods are in bloom at Valley Forge Military Academy, where he attended school as a young boy, a place he "loved with all his heart."

There will be no viewing, but a wake is planned at their home at a yet-to-be determined date.

"He was the perfect gentleman," she said. "He was the most gentle of gentleman. That's what we had."

Interment will be private at Arlington National Cemetery.

by Barbara Sauers, Staff Writer at the Star Democrat
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Tribute Wall



“ *Mario Joseph Boiardi*

October 26, 2023 at 06:42 PM



“ *Mario Joseph Boiardi*

January 28, 2023 at 12:44 PM



“ *Mario Joseph Boiardi*

January 28, 2023 at 08:03 AM