



## Achille Arcidiacono (1934-2021)

Achille Arcidiacono passed away peacefully at home on January 12, 2021, surrounded by his devoted wife and children. His motto in life was *Amor con amor si paga*, meaning "love with love is paid" and this certainly proved to be true. His passion for life was infectious. He was a loving husband, exuberant and demonstrative father, affectionate grandfather and faithful friend to all who knew him around the world.

Born May 15, 1934 on the island of Sicily in Soverato, Italy to Carmela (née Leva) and Filippo Arcidiacono, Achille was the youngest of four children growing up in Sicily during World War II, first with the German occupation followed by the American liberation in 1944. Achille was groomed to follow his family maritime legacy, as *Capitano di Lungo Corso*, yet failed his eye exam which changed the course of his life. After the death of his mother, he moved to Rome before following his brother, Agostino, to Houston where he attended the University of Houston on a swimming and water polo scholarship. His endless energy, optimism and desire to succeed set him on a path towards a long, fulfilled life as a beloved member of the Houston community. On March 14, 1983, he also became a U.S. citizen.

In 1958, a college friend introduced Achille to native Houstonian, Patsy Cravens. They wed in 1959 and together raised four wonderful sons. As a family, they made numerous road trips around the country as well as family trips to Italy. Achille counted among his greatest blessings his nine wonderful grandchildren. "Papa", as he was affectionately known, was a constant force in their lives. Whether it was cheering them on at a sports game or teaching them to cook his famous carbonara, Papa was the epitome of a doting grandfather. Sleepovers, pancake breakfasts, gelato, homemade tiramisu and pasta dinners were among the kids' favorite early memories. Nothing gave him greater joy than sharing his beloved Italian heritage with them including colorful stories of home. His robust voice calling them by their Italian nicknames will be forever missed.

In 1999, Achille married Vivian McCasker and embraced "stepfatherhood" to her two daughters, helping raise them as his own. She in turn gained four wonderful sons and nine grandchildren. His unique personal life was a point of pride. He never missed an opportunity to share his values, passions and traditions. He taught them to dance, to live life and to be forever gracious. He passed down his musical heritage and was beyond proud of "his girls." Together, they built a loving home with their vast network of friends, regularly hosting their children, grandchildren, friends and neighbors, effortlessly demonstrating the perfect balance of informality and caring that made every occasion special.

Achille's professional career was diverse. He received a business administration degree in 1963 from the University of Houston and began his career in mortgage banking with Gulf Coast Investment Corporation. He later moved into corporate management as President of Beni Stabili Texas, eventually forming his own real estate firm. He was named Italian Trade Delegate in 1964 and appointed Honorary Consul of Italy in 1969. He held this position for more than a decade during which he founded the Houston branch of the Italy in America Association. He supported countless Italian citizens over the years, built relationships between countries, entertained dignitaries and was considered a pillar in the Italian community. As an ambassador for Houston's art scene during the early years of FotoFest, he was a favored host. He was awarded the Order

of Merit of the Italian Republic, Knighthood of the Order of Saint Lazarus, and Knight Commander of the Order of St. George's in Corinthia. In his later years, he embraced work as a mediator, employing his considerable diplomatic skills. This work was his natural calling and he often ended successful cases with an enthusiastic "Bravo!".

Achille will be remembered for many things, but first and foremost, his unwavering love of life. He was a champion of young people and encouraged them to strive for their dreams. An avid sports enthusiast, he took a special interest in tennis, bird hunting, soccer and water polo. His closest and longest friendships were developed around his passion for tennis, which he continued playing into his eighties. He was involved in numerous organizations including the Dispute Resolutions Centers, as a long-time patient volunteer at MD Anderson Cancer Center, and life member of the Consular Corps of Houston. He was a member of the Bayou Club, the Tejas Club, the River Oaks Tennis Club and the Houston City Club.

Achille was preceded in death by his parents, Filippo and Carmela Arcidiacono; his brother, Agostino Arcidiacono and his grandson, Johnny Arcidiacono. He is survived and immensely loved by his wife, Vivian Arcidiacono; his son James (Pepe) Arcidiacono and wife Kathy; son John Arcidiacono and wife Mary Beth; son Joe Arcidiacono and wife Jana; son Peter Arcidiacono and wife JoLea; daughters Antonia (Toni) and Amelia (Ami) McCasker and his grandchildren: Christopher, James Jr., Andrew, Joey, Will and wife Sarah, Allie, Emily and Nove Arcidiacono. He is also survived by his sister Anita Russo of Messina, Sicily, sister Leonarda Preziosi of Sao Paulo, Brazil, sister-in-law Mary Ann Arcidiacono of La Jolla, California and sister-in-law Ariane Edmundson of Houston along with numerous nieces and nephews around the world.

His love is his legacy and he will be everlasting in our memory.

A celebration of Achille's life will be announced at a later date.

In lieu of customary remembrances, memorial gifts for the purpose of refurbishing public tennis facilities may be directed to the Houston Parks Board, 300 North Post Oak Lane, Houston Texas, 77024 or at [Houstonparksboard.org](http://Houstonparksboard.org) or a [charity of your choice](#).

***Source: The Houston Chronicle Legacy.com***