

## Celebrating Our Grandparents!

*Join in sharing memories of your grandparents by sending your story to us.*

*Here are the first three contributions:*

I never had the chance to meet either one of my grandfathers but was blessed to have both of my grandmothers in my life and make them great-grandmothers! And then they died within 9 months of each other...

Dad's Mom was "Big" Grandma, primarily because her mother was still alive when I was young and she was "little" Grandma because she was so tiny. Big Grandma Charlotte was one of five in a German/French family—four girls and a brother who died in World War II. She didn't have an easy life and faced difficulties and sadness with incredible strength. She lost her best friend—her older sister—to cancer at a young age and nursed her son, my Dad, through a serious injury and life-threatening infection; moved her two young children back to an apartment near family when her husband was drafted and then raised them alone when he left the family after returning from the war. She worked hard to support the family as a school custodian and in a local German bakery from where she always brought us the most delicious goodies. She was always trying to give to others, never thinking of herself.

Nana, Kathryn Brennan, was my Mom's Mom and she also had a challenging life. Two failed marriages that each produced two daughters and she raised them on her own—nursing, ushering in Broadway theatres and clerical work in a large fabric company. She was one tough Irish broad who could be very stern but also had a great sense of humor. While she was recuperating from back surgery I spent the summer in her Bronx home (Pelham Bay) with one of my cousins helping her with household chores. She also took each of her grandkids on a solo special outing—mine was to Radio City to see a movie and lunch in a NY restaurant!

Now that I am a Nanny of four, I hope that I can create some wonderful memories with my own grandchildren. ♡

*Kim Geipel Grande*

I knew 3 grandparents as my mom's mom died when she was young. Her father lived with us late in life. He and my mom spoke Italian to each other but regrettably I learned very little.

Somewhere there's a picture of him in uniform. We were told he was a general in Garibaldi's army.

I knew both of my dad's Irish parents. My grandmother was blind from glaucoma and cataracts before modern medicine would have prevented this. Dad's dad was quiet but always kind. They lived with their daughter, my dad's sister. I grew up surrounded by family, something I miss today.

*Cathy Thabit*

My mom's mother passed when I was 2 and I do not remember her but I from the pictures I have I seem to resemble her. Her dad lived in NY and we only saw him a few times a year briefly. He passed when I was about 12. My dad's parents lived in Dumont, only a short walk from my house. I saw them all the time. I loved them very much. My grandma had about 20 grandchildren but she made me feel so special. Because I was so small she called me "Her Peanuts". She was a marvelous cook and baker. She was a loving wife and catered to my grandfather always serving soup before every meal and having his special fork and knife and a warmed plate ready for his main course! I remember her asking me over for dinner one night when I was visiting when I was a young adult. I remember she had only leftovers but she managed to mix things up and I had one of the most delicious meals of my life. (I think the bacon grease she used to cook with did the trick- who knows what the magic was?) I also remember how she thought the panty hose were so funny when I first wore them over her house one day. We celebrated the holidays each and every year with my grandparents. My grandpa was very serious and quiet but my grandma was always so much fun! I just regret one thing that happened when she was watching me a young child. She sent me out to my cousin's house, who also lived in Dumont. Most of all my relatives lived in Dumont. I got caught up with the joy of playing with my beloved cousin and lost track of time and got back too late to have a baking lesson with her. The opportunity never arose again- so that was that. I think of that very often. And many times I wish I knew how to make that delicious Hungarian pastry that tasted soooo good.

My dad and I were the last to visit and say goodbye to my grandmother the evening before she passed. I will never forget that evening. I miss you so much grandma!!!! How wonderful to reminisce about my loving grandparents!

*Toni Beyer*