

## "LOOKING BACK THROUGH ROSE COLORED GLASSES"

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 20<sup>TH</sup> 1984:

"Aaron! Sis called! She said we better hurry! Mom is going fast." Pat and I quickly leave work at our Lab in South Philly and made our trip up the expressway to be with Mom as she departs this world. While driving, I remember a much happier time when Mom and I were going to California to visit my brother Anthony, his wife Donna, and their son, Little Tony. It was July of 1962 and flying was a momentous event in those days. The entire family had to see us take off, as the excitement was of epic proportions. Aunt Martha & Uncle Al were helping me finish packing as the phone rang. "It's Sis!" Uncle Al calls out, Aunt Martha takes the receiver off of the new beige plastic wall phone. They discuss the final plans of who is going with whom, and in what car. We have about four hours to get to the airport but we are all leaving in ten minutes for the thirty-minute ride to International Airport. You might have heard of traveling on "Lombardi Time" (15 minutes early), well this is known as "Panico Time". It means getting there the day before if possible! A lot of guys are on the corner of J & I. Ronnie Tucci, Petchie, Hom, Barbells, Harry Potato Chip Ears, Big Sal, Trains, Balloons, Butcher Crescenzo and his brother Franny. Petchie leads the crowd in wishing me a good trip. Uncle Al and I are loading the Samsonite suitcase into the trunk of his 1957 Chevrolet. Barbells comes across the street with a set of chrome, cone-shaped hubcaps and a rubber mallet. He sold them to me a few days ago. He puts them on the '57 Chevy that was recently painted a two-tone black and white color by Joe Riccardi. Pat Gallagher is walking by the corner with her sister Elaine. I dash across the street and quickly usher Pat around 24<sup>th</sup> Street. I give her a big kiss goodbye as the Dupree's are singing "You Belong To Me" on her transistor radio. We

picked up Aunt Anna and cousin Maryann. My cousin Al, Sophie, Aunt Pansy, Uncle Hatch and Uncle Jack are behind us in Al's '57 gray Pontiac. Coincidentally, as we arrive at the Fox Street entrance to the expressway, so did Cousin Mary and George Moccio, with Aunt Helen, Tsi Cosimo, cousins Philomena, and Steven. Uncle Freddy from Lansdale pulled up with the Farabella kids and my cousin Nicolena in his car. We are all waving to each other and laughing with great enthusiasm. George and Mary lead the way and as the caravan passes the City Avenue off ramp, George waves to Sis and Ang and the kids, Angelo and Larry in their Black Mercury. George slows up and rolls down his window and says something to Ang, but we can't make out what he is saying. George makes his way to the shoulder of the road and the caravan follows. Uncle Al and all of the men get out of their cars after several warnings from all the women to be very careful. The men are all hilariously laughing after a little pow-wow. Uncle Al returns to the car and says, "George discovered that Mary, (Mom) was not in anyone's car! We all begin to laugh because she was the one going to California with me. Sis and Ang returned to get Mom and Jim Farabella and we eventually had a wonderful take off to California. My daydreaming was disturbed by my wife, (the same Pat from 1962), who said, "What are you smiling about?" I said, "I was daydreaming about the time we all forgot to pick Mom up to go to the airport." Pat begins to smile also. "You know Pat there is another part to that trip I don't believe I mentioned to you. We had a six hour layover in Chicago. Mom and I had lunch and walked from one end of O'Hare airport terminal to the other and still only killed one hour. I asked Mom, if she minded me shooting some pool. Of course she had no

objection. After asking different people, I found out there were no pool tables in the airport. I asked this skycap, who told me that there was a pool room only a ten minute cab ride from the airport. Mom as usual obligingly came with me. The poolroom was no "Cats Club," but it was filled with neighborhood guys very much like the guys from our neighborhood. Mom got up on one of the high-armed chairs and watched as I joined a one-dollar Harrigan game. I can still visualize her short legs as they barely reached halfway down the chair. She sat there with her infectious smile and forever moving her fingers slowly back and forth between each other. She even gave me ten bucks to get into the game. It didn't take long before several of the guys were talking to her and even bought her a couple cups of coffee and some snacks. Pat stops me and comments, "Aron, she was quite a brave lady." On that note we pulled up to Mom's apartment in Roxborough. Too bad we couldn't have been on "Panico Time", because when we arrived, Mom had already gone!!!! Sis, Ang, Pat and I recently went to our cousin Josie's funeral in Staten Island, New York. At the cemetery one of the attendants asked us all to take two roses. One rose to put on the casket and a second rose to take home with us as a memento. This way each time we come across the rose it will remind us of this very special lady. Special indeed! She was the mother of fourteen children. I don't have a rose to remember Mom, as many of you also might not have a rose to remember your loved ones who have passed away. However, our mind is like a rose, as it slowly peels away the petals of thought. They provide us with the rose colored glasses to look back in time at these fond memories. These memories are infectious, like the scent of a beautiful fresh blooming bush of roses.