



## Fay Vaccaro

July 25, 1929 - October 24, 2023

Fay Vaccaro of Centralia, loving mother, grandmother, great-grandmother and friend to many, passed away peacefully on October 24th, 2023 at her home surrounded by her loving family and close friends. Fay was known by most as “Grandma Fay” because she cherished and supported not only her many grandchildren and great-grandchildren, but also loved scores of other young people in her community. Her home was always open to those of all ages who needed her for her sewing ability, a quick meal of spaghetti and buyalatti, a glass of wine or those who just needed her wisdom and advice.

Fay was a dedicated advocate for girls’ and women’s sports and worked for many years with the Centralia Park and Recreation department to establish and maintain the girls’ softball league. She and Charlie, her husband, spent over 30 summers teaching young ladies the basics of softball and teaching them the many life lessons that mastery of competitive sports affords. Fay was dedicated to her five daughters and scores of other young women. She shared her athletic and leadership gifts with them in the hope of creating strong, confident, accomplished and independent young women.

Fay was well known as an accomplished seamstress and for the many spectacular May Fete gowns she created over the years for her own daughters and for many other members of the May Fete court. She kept a closet full of beautiful dresses that she created and generously shared with

any young lady who needed one for high school and sorority social events. She was the happiest and the most creative when she was sewing beautiful gowns with her well-used sewing machine.

Fay began her work career when she was hired in 1966 as Secretary to the Business Administrator for Centralia High School. She then worked as a legal assistant for Crain, Hall and Cooksey for many years. She ended her career as an Administrative Assistant at the Centralia Chamber of Commerce where she particularly enjoyed helping to organize the annual Balloon Fest.

Well loved by her community, Fay was honored to be selected as Grand Marshall of the 91st Annual Centralia Halloween Parade in 2017. She has been a member of St. Mary's Catholic Church for 66 years and her faith has always been a cornerstone of her life of service to others.

Fay was born July 25th, 1929 in Victoria, MO to Milton and Freda Hill. She was the second oldest of 11 children born and reared on their family farm. She married Charles S. Vaccaro on November 17th, 1951. He preceded her in death on March 11th, 2007.

Fay is survived by her daughters, Teresa Olsen and husband Peter of Cape Coral, FL, Carol Jo Brewer and husband Steve of Gainesville, GA, Mary Jane Cain and husband Tracy of Patoka, IL, Rita Thorne and husband Woody of Makanda, IL, and Annette Shores and husband Steve of Centralia; siblings Ruth Ann Barnett and Donald of Festus, MO, Doris Brooks of Festus, MO, Kenneth Hill and Karen of Festus, MO, Donald Hill and Vicki of Festus, MO; grandchildren Jeremy Olsen of TX, Erin Gill and Fred of Cape Coral, FL, Kevin Olsen of Cape Coral, FL, Patrick Olsen and Allie of Cape Coral, FL, Evan Brewer of Atlanta, GA, Charlie Gierten and Dana Trumbo of Centralia, Rita Jo Wright and John of Centralia, Samantha Kwiatkowski and RJ of Centralia, Mary Heltsley and Jarrod of Centralia, Chuck Lauder and Paige of Centralia, Michelle Murphy and Dugan of Ponte Vedra Beach, FL, Mitchell

Lauder of St. Louis, MO, Anica Etheridge and Travis of Centralia, Hannah Shores of Centralia, Drew Shores and Madeline of Centralia, 26 great-grandchildren and 2 on the way, and many nieces and nephews. Along with her husband, she is preceded in death by her parents and 6 siblings.

Fay's family would like to express a special thank you to her devoted caregivers who lovingly cared for her during her extended illness and to honorary daughter Kelly Schwartz and husband Jeff and honorary granddaughters Raigen and Kenadi Schwartz. We thank you for your devotion to our beloved matriarch.

A visitation for Fay will be held on Monday, October 30th from 5:00 to 8:00pm at Sutherland-Garnier Funeral Home and a Funeral Mass will be held on Tuesday, October 31st at 10:00am at St. Mary's Catholic Church in Centralia. Thirty minutes prior to the Funeral Mass, the Rosary will be recited. In lieu of flowers, memorial donations can be made to St. Mary's School and may be accepted at Sutherland-Garnier Funeral Home at 235 N. Sycamore Street, Centralia, IL 62801 (618) 532-3523, who is honored to be of service to the Vaccaro family. Online condolences can be made on the Funeral Home's website [www.sutherlandfuneralhome.com](http://www.sutherlandfuneralhome.com) or the Funeral Home's Facebook page

# Previous Events

## Visitation

OCT **30**. 5:00 PM - 8:00 PM (CT)

Sutherland-Garnier Funeral Home  
235 N. Sycamore Street  
Centralia, IL 62801

## Rosary

OCT **31**. 9:30 AM - 9:50 AM.

St Mary Catholic Church, Centralia, Illinois

## Funeral Mass

OCT **31**. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM.

St Mary Catholic Church, Centralia, Illinois

# Tribute Wall



“ *Sutherland Funeral Homes, Cemetery and Cremation Services created a Tribute Video in memory of Fay Vaccaro*



**Sutherland Funeral Homes, Cemetery and Cremation Services** - October 31, 2023 at 09:48 AM

VH

“ *Our thoughts and prayers are with/for family and friends!*

**Vickie & Wayne Houser** - October 31, 2023 at 07:43 AM

BP

“ *Great memories of a wonderful neighbor and lovely lady. I was truly blessed to live next door to Fay & Charlie and the girls. Fun times. You all have our sincere sympathy and we are keeping you in our prayers.*

**Barb & Mark Paine** - October 30, 2023 at 09:37 PM

MM

“ *Rita and family. so sorry for your loss. May God give you His love and peace, love from Marilynn and Robert Martin*

**Marilynn Martin** - October 28, 2023 at 06:35 PM



“ *Country Basket Blooms was purchased for the family of Fay Vaccaro.*



October 28, 2023 at 01:51 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Fay Vaccaro.

October 28, 2023 at 01:51 PM



“ *Jo, Monte told me of your mothers passing and I was so sorry to hear this. She sounds like a wonderful woman and mother to all. My heart goes out to you and your family. If you need anything you know where to find me.*

**Judy Howell** - October 27, 2023 at 11:20 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Fay Vaccaro.

October 27, 2023 at 12:45 PM



“ *Sweet Tenderness was purchased for the family of Fay Vaccaro.*



October 27, 2023 at 12:45 PM

JM

“ *What an amazing woman! So dedicated to her family, school, church and community and such an advocate for girls' sports. If born in another era, I have no doubt she would have excelled in women's sports herself. When I came to Centralia, I knew no one, and as a beginning teacher and cheer coach, she took me under her wing. She was like a second mother to me. So caring and helpful. And I remember her laugh. So much fun! She and Charlie were also an example to me of what a good marriage was all about. What a legacy she leaves behind in her wonderful family! I feel so fortunate to have had Fay in my life. My sympathies and love to you, Rita, and to all your sisters, and whole family. Your mom was very special to me.*

---

**Janene Mattingly** - October 27, 2023 at 08:53 AM

KC

“ Mrs Vacarro, Faye, Coach,  
all one in the same!  
She shaped St. Mary’s Parochial girls track  
team to be a competitive Force against all the  
public schools in the annual All City Spring  
Track Meet.



Holtkamp Field should be called Vacarro’s Front Yard! For all the  
hours spent , year after year, together Faye & Charlie developed  
both softball skills while instilling a passion for the game!

Lion’s Girls’ softball field should be Renamed: Coach Faye’s  
Mound!

She not only taught skills & Good sportsmanship but be not  
mistaken she came to Win & empower her team to believe in  
themselves, be competitive & learn how to be Proud with humility  
Faye was awe inspiring (dressed in her Women’s 12” Fast Pitch  
Travel Team PAYDAY uniform) warming up with Jane Kinder & Jane  
Ethrige . Her pitching speed, form & accuracy was enthralling.  
Coach Faye was the Best Ambassador of Title 1X, well before it  
was politically conceived & advocated for.

Teresa, JoJo, Mary Jane, Rita & Annette thank you for sharing your  
mom with all of us! Please know how much she was admired &  
loved & part of each of our fondest memories growing up along side  
your family!

---

**Karen (Burge) Chianakas** - October 27, 2023 at 12:48 AM

LP

“ Our sympathy to the Vaccaro family. We’ve  
known the family for many years and went to  
school with her girls. Fay was a very special  
person and will be missed by all who knew  
her. So sorry for your loss.  
Steve and LuAnn Pugh



---

**LuAnn Pugh** - October 26, 2023 at 04:02 PM

JK

“ To the Vaccaro family. I have thought of your mom several times. I am deeply sorry for your loss. spent many hours in your home just visting all of you, and traveling with her to many softball games.



Jane Kinder - October 26, 2023 at 03:32 PM

DH

“ Surely a wonderful example of service for Christ in action throughout her life. A vibrant personality full of LOVE.

Donald Hill - October 26, 2023 at 12:52 PM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Fay Vaccaro.



October 26, 2023 at 12:04 PM

HD

“ I remember Faye very well during my principalship at St. Mary School along with her enthusiasm for life and positive attitude. She was a great lady and girl mom, much like my own mom who had 8 daughters, and she will be missed by many.



Helen Donsbach - October 26, 2023 at 10:02 AM



“ *Gracious Lavender Basket was purchased for the family of Fay Vaccaro.*



October 26, 2023 at 09:58 AM



“ *Full Of Love Bouquet was purchased for the family of Fay Vaccaro.*



October 26, 2023 at 07:35 AM



“ *Faye was one of a kind!! Great lady! My aunt and her Charlie worked together for many years. Great family! She will be missed!*



**Peggy Myers Beal** - October 26, 2023 at 03:38 AM