

Angelo Di Girolamo, Old Fisherman's Wharf patriarch, dies

Bruce Ariss Wharf Theater open to pay respects

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Angelo Di Girolamo (Photo courtesy of Bruce Ariss Wharf Theater)

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Correction: An earlier version of this story said Angelo Di Girolamo became ill Saturday while watching a football game, in a statement attributed to the president of the Old Fisherman's Wharf Association president. Di Girolamo's family says that is untrue.

MONTEREY >> Angelo Di Girolamo, Bruce Ariss Wharf Theater operator, Wharf patriarch and World War II veteran, died this weekend, according to several business owners and friends.

He was 93.

"He was truly a pioneer of Fisherman's Wharf and really the last of the old-timers," said Chris Shake, owner of Old Fisherman's Grotto.

For nearly 70 years, Di Girolamo had been doing business on the wharf. He opened the restaurant Angelo's in 1946, which is now Nino's Wharfside.

In addition to running a bait shop and other ventures, he decided to fulfill a dream he had since the war to start what is now the Bruce Ariss Wharf Theater in the mid-1970s.

"I had just turned 50 and I was sitting in the window of the restaurant, looking across at the warehouse," [he recounted to The Herald in 2011](#). "I knew if I didn't start building now I wouldn't do it period."

Di Girolamo was in good enough health to still be walking to work last week, with a smile on his face and wearing his trademark large winter jacket.

Shake said not seeing Di Girolamo every day was a major loss to the wharf because of his friendly personality and knowledge of Monterey.

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"He was here when it all started," he said.

Employees of the three jewelry stores below the theater are devastated, said Monterey Bay Silver Co. co-owner Mary Delecce.

"For a little man, he certainly left a great, big imprint on our lives. He was larger than life," she said. "He was a true Christian. He was a humble soul, a gentle man. He was a great light for all of us."

It was unclear what the cause of death was.

Joe Anastasia, owner of the Ocean Front and Dockside, said Di Girolamo was one of the people who welcomed him to the wharf 38 years ago.

"The wharf is like family," he said. "It's a big loss. I'm so sorry."

Di Girolamo is survived by his wife, son and daughter. The family is still making funeral arrangements.

The Bruce Ariss Wharf Theater at 1 Fisherman's Wharf will be open from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. from Monday to Thursday for people to pay their respects.

"Angelo would want his doors open, and we will honor him by continuing to encourage everyone to come see his stage," read a post on the theater's Facebook page. "Feel encouraged to bring cards for the family, or any memento you'd like to leave on the stage in his honor."

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