

Albert L. Piccetti
1918-1998
R.I.P.

TRIBUTE TO ALBERT L. PICCETTI

HON. JACK KINGSTON

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 31, 1997

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, about a year ago, at the invitation of Rosemary Mucklow, I had the opportunity to go to San Francisco and speak to the National Meat Association. While there, Rosemary invited us to a reception at the home of Agnes and Al Piccetti. It was a wonderful house perched high on the slope of one of San Francisco's many hillsides. The view was spectacular, the food tremendous, and the host family as delightful and graceful as a California spring day.

The Piccetti, Gatto, and DeMartini family members made us all feel at ease. Their home was ours. Their generosity was ours to enjoy. Their obvious and apparent success was ours to celebrate.

How did one get to live such a life? How was it that the family of first generation of Americans could experience such a generous slice of prosperity and affluence? Was it luck? Desire? Hard work? Or belief in a greater ideal and that of the American dream?

I left believing it was the latter. Mr. and Mrs. Piccetti had put in their time, taken risk, worked long hours, persevered and succeeded, but throughout their highs and lows, victories and defeats, they believe in America. What it stands for and what an individual can accomplish in our great system of enterprise and government.

Their story is worth telling. Ms. Mucklow was kind enough to write a brief biography, and I am honored to enter it into the RECORD.

ALBERT L. PICCETTI

Albert Piccetti was born to John and Viola Piccetti in 1918 at their home in the North Beach Community of San Francisco, California. He grew up on Telegraph Hill, a working class neighborhood that was home to new immigrants from Italy and Spain. Eight-year-old Albert learned the value of hard work as soon as he was old enough to accompany his father on his garbage pick-up route through the streets of San Francisco. As one of his earliest work memories, Al remembers his father persuading a reluctant team of Clydesdale horses to back up on a wooden ramp to empty the wagon's haul for the day.

Surrounded by the strong work ethic of new Americans, young Al's first business venture was as a shoe shine entrepreneur. After painstakingly building his shoe box, Al was ready for his first customers in Washington Park. It wasn't long before he received a lesson in "sales territories" from the established shoe shine boys. It was to be Al's shortest business endeavor!

At the age of 16, Albert became the sole support of his parents and younger sister when his father suffered a debilitating stroke. Although not physically tall in stature, he survived the rigorous initiation of a partner-worker into the Golden Gate Scavenger Company working alongside men the age of his father as the primary breadwinner for the family.

He met his life's partner, Agnes Gatto, at the local Italian social club. She was chaperoned under the very watchful eyes of her brothers. When they return from their honeymoon, a draft notice from Uncle Sam was waiting. During the war years, Al was most proud of her certification as an instrument flight trainer and used his natural drawing talents to instruct new pilots.

Following the war, Al joined his wife's family in operating a local bar and grill in the produce and printing district of San Francisco. Al took this opportunity to sharpen his culinary skills, which are still widely appreciated today by friends and family!

In 1957, Al Piccetti, along with his brother-in-law, Felix Gatto, and his boyhood friend, Ernie DeMartini, purchased a family-run Italian sausage factory, and kept the name: San Francisco Sausage Company. They learned every aspect of their new business making traditional Italian salame. The company was, and is today, best known for its Columbus brand salame. Considered more an art than a science at the time, their growing success soon demanded a larger manufacturing plant. Moving a cured dry sausage operation entailed unknown risks due to the fastidious requirements of the white, Penicillin-type molds that grow on the surface of the salame as it matures. Those early years were a challenge to their fortitude in unraveling the mysteries of mycology. Albert was on the forefront of implementing new scientific methods to ensure the safety and tradition of the product that his forefathers introduced to the United States. After almost 30 years in the business, Albert retired from the San Francisco Sausage Company as President and CEO in 1985. He and his partners left the business in the hands of the next generation of Piccettis, Gattos, and DeMartinis.

Upon retiring and with his four children grown, Al, characteristically, moved on to pursue a new dream. Al and Agnes Piccetti purchased hillside acreage in the Dry Creek Valley of Sonoma County, north of San Francisco. Local realtors scratched their heads in puzzlement at his choice of undeveloped scrub brush property; but, Al already envisioned the slopes lush with grapevines. The newly retired couple spent their nights

in a small trailer, with Al busy designing and planting their first vineyard. In time, they built their home. Al's designs are evident in every facet of the AA Ranch: precise layout and trellising of the grapes; the functional beauty of the iron work in the ceiling beams; and, the careful placement of stone water causeways.

Al Piccetti's warmth, generosity and friendship have touched thousands of people in his communities, church, family, and business. Al's accomplishments are the story of the American Dream of hard work, love, dedication and respect. We're pleased to place this acknowledgement of his continuing life in the RECORD.

