

MARIE ANNA DUCA DiCARLO: 1923-2005

She and husband started Jimmy's grocery

By **JOE SIMNACHER**
Staff Writer

Marie Anna Duca DiCarlo worked largely unnoticed in her family's Old East Dallas grocery for nearly 50 years before she and her meatballs were discovered.

When word got out about Mama's Meatballs, customers flocked to Jimmy's Food Store, the business that she started with her husband.

Mrs. DiCarlo, 81, died Saturday

of congestive heart failure at Baylor University Medical Center in Dallas.

A rosary will be said at 7:30 tonight at St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church, 6306 Kenwood Ave. A funeral Mass will be at 10 a.m. Wednesday at St. Thomas Aquinas. She will be entombed in the mausoleum at Calvary Hill Cemetery.

Chef Adelmo Banchetti of Adelmo's Ristorante happened to

be in the family's landmark store one day when Mama's Meatball sandwiches arrived for family and staff, said her son Paul DiCarlo of Dallas. The restaurateur suggested that Mrs. DiCarlo make her delicacy for the public.

"She started the meatballs because she couldn't see anymore," Mr. DiCarlo said. Macular degeneration had reduced Mrs. DiCarlo's daily participation in the family store.

Mrs. DiCarlo learned to make meatballs from a recipe handed down from her grandmother, a native of Sicily. When her vision failed, she didn't need to see to pinch off just the right size of meatball, having done it countless times for family and friends.

"She was a great mom, a typical Italian mom who cared about her family and food," her son said.

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FILE 2002/Staff photo

Marie Anna Duca DiCarlo used her grandmother's recipe to make her meatballs at Jimmy's Food Store.

Jimmy's meatball creator dies

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"She enjoyed cooking the big spreads. If you came to her house and you just had dinner, she'd still cook for you."

Born in New Orleans, Mrs. DiCarlo moved with her family to Dallas before her first birthday. She was a graduate of Forest Avenue High School, now James Madison High School.

About 1950, she and her husband founded Morningside Super Market on Second Avenue. In 1967, the couple moved the business to Bryan Street

and Fitzhugh Avenue and re-named it Jimmy's Food Store.



Marie Anna Duca DiCarlo

The business, which burned in October, has operated out of Sigel's liquor store in the Quadrangle since November.

The family plans to re-open the grocery store this year.

Mrs. DiCarlo was an active member of St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church.

In addition to her son, Mrs. DiCarlo is survived by her husband, James DiCarlo of Dallas; a daughter, Mary Martha Francis of Richardson; two other sons, Vincent DiCarlo of Simpsonville, S.C., and Michael DiCarlo of Richardson; a brother, Lewis Duca of Dallas; 10 grandchildren; and one great-grandchild.

Memorials may be made to St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School, 3741 Abrams Road, Dallas, Texas 75214.

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