**Dr. Gaetano G. Spinnato**

A person smiling for the camera

Description automatically generated with medium confidence

Loving family man, doctor and teacher. This Valentine's Day, February 14th, 2022, beloved father, grandfather, father-in-law, friend, doctor and teacher, Dr. Gaetano G. Spinnato, 83, took his last breath after a hard-fought battle with cancer. He leaves behind his daughter Gabriella Hamilton, her husband Mark Hamilton and their sons William and Luke, his daughter Elisabeth Spinnato, her husband Amos Bigler, and their soon-to-be daughter, his devoted dog Plato, and countless family members and friends. He was predeceased by his loving parents, Vincent Spinnato and Elizabeth Spinnato (nee: Orlando), his cherished sister Maria Mangold (nee: Spinnato), and his brother-in-law, Terry Wayne Mangold. It is impossible to encapsulate the man our father was in so few words; he was joyful, loving, kind, brilliant, selfless, generous, gracious, hilarious, hard-working, honorable, loyal, strong, stubborn, brazen and challenging. He loved long dinners with loud laughter, singing to Frank Sinatra, dancing as much as possible and running. He would never pass on a glass of Strega, the opportunity to tell a joke or the chance to challenge someone to a push-up contest. He taught us to always help the less fortunate, to put our children first, to love unconditionally and without regard, to never lose childlike wonder and curiosity, and to never give up. Our father was a man of his own rules – and he lived and died by them. To know our father, was truly to love him. Born in Jersey City, New Jersey on November 26, 1938, it was his parents' hard work and sacrifices that helped define the man he would become. He started working in grammar school and worked until he no longer could. He delivered newspapers, set pins in a bowling alley, sold Bibles door-to-door, worked on building construction, shipyard construction, made pizza, drove and loaded trucks, bounced at bars, worked as a lab tech in the Margaret Hague Maternity Hospital, as a social worker for Hudson County Welfare Services, as a general dentist in both New York City and New Jersey, as an Oral Maxillofacial Surgeon serving Bayonne, Hoboken and Jersey City, and as a clinical Professor at Rutgers School of Dental Medicine. He remained a full-time clinical professor of Oral Maxillofacial Surgery at Rutgers until his passing. He was a graduate of Snyder High School, and St. Peter's College, and completed six months of active duty and six- and one-half years of the Army Reserves. He received an acceptance to the University of Bologna Medical School in Italy, but decided instead to attend Seton Hall College of Medicine and Dentistry (which would become the College of Medicine and Dentistry New Jersey), followed by the completion of an internship in Oral Surgery at Metropolitan Hospital Center in New York City. In 2003, he received a medical degree from The University of Health Sciences in Antigua. He was a Diplomat of the American Board of Oral Maxillofacial Surgery, a Fellow in the American Association of Oral Maxillofacial Surgery, and a Fellow in the International College of Oral Maxillofacial Surgery. He also held several positions in the New Jersey Society of Oral Surgeons, including President. In his spare time, he painted, sculpted, ran marathons, hosted parties and spent as much time with his family and friends as possible. Our lives will never be the same without him, but we will raise our glasses to him each night. We take comfort in knowing he is at peace and are eternally grateful to his doctors, nurses and nursing assistants at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center and Morristown Medical Center, who allowed him to live his final days on his terms, fighting until his last breath, with dignity and grace. Visitation will be held Monday, February 21st from 4pm to 8pm at Higgins and Bonner Echo Lake Funeral Home in Westfield, New Jersey. Relatives and friends are invited to attend the funeral on Tuesday, February 22nd, with a mass beginning at 10am at St. Francis Roman Catholic Church in Hoboken. Interment will follow at Holy Cross Cemetery, North Arlington. We ask that in lieu of flowers, you please donate in his honor to St. Jude Children'sa Research Hospital. <http://giftfunds.stjude.org/Gaetano_Spinnato> Higgins & Bonner Echo Lake Funeral Home 582 Springfield Ave. Westfield, NJ 07090 (908) 789-7400

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