



Obituary

Maria Teresa Marabini Moevs died peacefully at home, at Blackwell's Mills, New Jersey, on February 23, 2021, having recently turned 95. She was a well-known classical archaeologist, lover of culture, history, nature, beauty, and her family.

Maria Teresa grew up at Dozza Imolese, near Bologna, Italy, the oldest of the three children of Tosca Toschi and Giuseppe Marabini. Precocious in study, and despite the ravages of war, she graduated young from the University of Bologna with a Laurea in Lettere in 1947, received her perfezionamento (doctorate) summa cum laude from the University of Rome in 1951, and won a fellowship for postgraduate study at the Italian Archaeological School in Athens. She served briefly as an Inspector of Antiquities in Rome, Padua, and Syracuse, before winning a special Fulbright Fellowship in archaeology at the American Academy in Rome in 1952. That was the start of a lifelong association with the American Academy, and with its excavations at the ancient Roman town of Cosa, on the coast of southern Tuscany.

Her career as one of Italy's most promising young archaeologists took a turn when she met, at lunch at the American Academy, a brilliant, handsome young American composer with exquisite manners (she said it was how he passed the grated cheese to her that caught her attention), pilot, pianist, with perfect French (six years in Paris), Harvard graduate, winner of the Rome Prize, soon to have perfect Italian too. His name was Robert Moevs. Theirs was a romance and love for the ages, born in a Rome, and in a world, emerging in new hope from the devastation of World War II.

They married in 1953, in the Toschi family chapel. Robert was teaching at Harvard then, and they decided to start their family there, in Cambridge, where Marina was born in 1955, and Christian in 1958. Maria Teresa had sacrificed another fellowship and her career in Italy, but a two-year fellowship from the Radcliffe Institute at Harvard, and another American Academy fellowship (the Rome Prize) in 1963, allowed her to restart her scholarly work.

In 1965, Robert took a position at Rutgers, and the family moved to a historic farmhouse at Blackwell's Mills, New Jersey ("The Brookie"). Restoring that house, which was built in two parts in 1735 and 1815, and furnishing it with period antiques to make it an oasis of history

and beauty, became one of Maria Teresa's passions. Unable to obtain a position in Classics because of nepotism rules at Rutgers, she was hired at Douglass College (then not fully absorbed by Rutgers) to teach Italian and Italian literature. She wrote two books on Italian literature, on the poets Giosuè Carducci and Gabriele D'Annunzio; the first won the Carducci Prize of the University of Bologna, the second the Goffredo Bellonci Special Prize. In the meantime (while also teaching five courses per semester and raising a family), she continued her major work, which was a systematic study, reconstruction, attribution, and dating of the ancient Roman ceramics excavated at Cosa. Her book on Roman thin-walled pottery, the product of twenty years of work, is now used in excavations across the ancient Roman empire.

In 1977 she became a Member of the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, where she continued her research for the rest of her career. In 1981 she became Professor of Classics at Rutgers. Her later research and books (supported also by a National Endowment for the Humanities grant in 1986) branched into other classes of ancient Roman ceramics, and into questions of iconography and culture in the Hellenistic world.

Maria Teresa had a keen intelligence, unparalleled and witty mastery of her beloved Italian ("the most beautiful language on earth"), a formidable humanistic culture, and an endless playful curiosity and openness to everything around her, expressed in part through her desire to travel and see the world. Above all, she had a great love for her family, for her students, for all she encountered. She loved all living creatures, animals and plants too, and they flourished around her. The love she brought into the world flowed back to her, from all who knew her.

Maria Teresa is survived by her daughter, Marina and husband Steven, and by her son, Christian and husband Luke, and by her sister, Anna Marabini Svegliati, and nieces and nephews.

There will be a funeral Mass at her parish church, Saint Joseph's in Millstone, New Jersey, on Wednesday, April 7, at 12 noon Eastern Daylight Time.

Those wishing to make donations in Maria Teresa's name might consider the National Trust for Historic Preservation, or the charity of their choice.