



## Richard Edward Merlino

December 25, 1925 - November 11, 2019

Rich passed away peacefully after a long illness on Veterans Day at the age of 93. Rich was predeceased by his parents, Domenic and Anastasia Merlino, and brother Enrico. He is survived by his wife of 60 years, Jeannine Merlino, and nieces and nephews (Pat Kroll, Mary Bayles, Betty Huppert, Diane Schroeder, Rym Maggiora and Cooper Maggiora) Rich was born on Christmas Day, 1925, in Fresno, California. When he was 4 years old his family moved to Oakland. Rich attended Edwin Markham Grammar School, Elmhurst Jr. High and Castlemont HS where he played football, baseball, basketball and girls, matriculating in 1944.

After graduation Rich was drafted into the army. A member of the "Greatest Generation", he served during WWII with the 13th Armored Division under General George S. Patton. His unit landed at Le Havre, France, on January 29, 1945. He was engaged in Normandy, Battle of the Bulge, Battle of the Ruhr and Bavaria.

After the European theatre Rich was sent to Fort Beale, CA, for amphibious training in preparation for the invasion of Japan, but the war ended before he was dispatched to the Pacific. Rich was awarded the Bronze Star and Combat Infantry Badge for his combat service.

Upon returning home in 1946 Rich enrolled at San Francisco City College and played semipro football. During that same time, he helped his father and brother build the new Alita pasta factory in Oakland.

Throughout the years Rich, Rico and Domenic worked 7 days a week at the plant. Alita kept up with the times, investing in the flavored pasta craze in the 1990's and constantly updating production and packing technology. Alita became a well-recognized brand throughout the Bay Area, supplying many retail and restaurant customers.

Rich and Jeannine married May 17, 1959, at St. Benedicts Church, Oakland. They built their dream home in Castro Valley in 1971 where they enjoyed entertaining for almost 40 years, most notably Rich's annual Christmas birthday celebrations. Rich enjoyed making his own wine and beer, sharing his bounty with friends and family. As much as Jeannine was in command of the kitchen, Rich was still in charge of cooking the pasta to the perfect al dente.

Rich was an avid golfer and member of the Sequoyah Country Club where they socialized

frequently. Rich was also an active member in the Columbo Club in Oakland where he enjoyed many friendships.

Rich and Jeannine enjoyed many years of traveling to pasta conventions all over the U.S. and attending 13th Armored Division reunions, including visits to Le Havre and other sites of Rich's military service.