

Carmella Mary Sulenta Vavold – May 30, 1931- Sept. 19, 2019 (88 years old)



In the morning hours on Sept. 19, 2019, Carmella M. Sulenta Vavold was welcomed into the gates of heaven with open arms. She passed away at her home surrounded by her family. Carmella was 88 years old. She was a very strong, vivacious and determined lady and held on as long as possible. It was clear she did not want to miss a thing and wanted to enjoy her life to the last possible minute.

Carmella was born 100 percent Yugoslavian on May 30, 1931, in Rock Springs, to Andrew K. and Carmella Sulenta from Drasnica, Dalmacija Yugoslavia. She came into this world full of determination, beauty and strength and left the world a better place. She graduated from Rock Springs High School in 1950 where she excelled at all she did. She was a straight A student, a cheerleader (whose nickname was Rah-Rah), a member of the pep club, prom queen, annual staff, editor of the Sagebrusher, student director of the All-School play and was selected for Girl's State. She loved school and her many lifelong friends. She met her husband Fred on a bus after riding back to Rock Springs from a roller-skating rink (another sport she loved) and married him on Nov. 22, 1953, at Ss. Cyril and Methodius Catholic Church.

Carmella was a businesswoman from the very beginning. Even as a child she would interpret for her mother in their hotel business. She grew up in the Rex Hotel that her parents owned and worked there, their family bar and the Lou Bens Bakery. She was a busy woman who continued her career working for Mountain Fuel Company until having her first beautiful baby, Eileen. She moved to Pinedale at this time where she resided until her death. After moving to Pinedale, she opened the first Chamber of Commerce with Vernon Delgado and other business professionals

and was a very active and an integral part of the business community. She owned the Bi-Lo grocery store and managed the Half Moon Lodge for her mother from 1957 to 1975, delivering amazing hospitality to all who met her. Her husband Fred built her a lovely home where she moved to in 1975. She later worked in insurance for a brief time, held her real estate license and was president of the Business and Professional Women's Club. It wasn't until July 1979 that she and Fred built and opened their own motel, The Wagon Wheel, which many know her from today. Her charismatic personality was to the delight of many. She lit up the room everywhere she went! She taught her daughters and granddaughters so many of her fabulous traits of being strong, kind, and to be a leader in this world. She shared her love of lollipops with her granddaughters and always gave gold stars on the forehead when they learned a new task, making it extra fun! It was an honor to have her as our mother and grandmother. She was quite the "wheeler and dealer" as she would call it. She never bought a thing without asking for a better deal, a better seat, a sooner time or an upgrade of sorts. "Sharpen your pencils," she would say and they did ... every time. She taught us all about business and being kind to people. She was a gourmet cook and always invited friends and strangers alike to the dinner table. She had so many great recipes but her fried chicken and potato salad,



pineapple cupcakes and amazing turkey dinners with the famous macaroni will never be forgotten. She was first to fry a batch of chicken and make potato salad when someone's loved one was sick or had passed and offer her motel rooms free of charge to help accommodate all. She loved Christmas and Midnight Mass. It was a time of all the beautiful music, lights and all her homemade candy and cookies she gave to friends and family individually wrapped with such precise presentation. She was always generous and never believed in leaving anyone out. The more the merrier even if that meant inviting our entire class to every birthday party. She loved music of all kinds but really shared a love for Elvis! Whether it was the music or his awesome dance moves, we may never know! She just loved to have fun!

In her early years she was on a bowling league where she won the State championship, belonged to dance clubs, loved roller skating and ice skating, basketball and volleyball, and found delight in all things social. Carmella was a very religious woman who was a lifelong Catholic and spent much time praying and teaching her family about the importance of God. She loved teaching her children and grandchildren the importance of reading, the Pledge of Allegiance, the importance of voting and to always respect adults and authority, reminding us of what a privilege it is to live in this great country. She taught us all to speak Yugoslavian but we only remember the important words such as Kirstie (making the sign of the cross), and Volim tebe (I Love You). She believed and taught us to live life to the fullest and never miss a moment or opportunity! She loved to go swimming and walking anytime she could. She loved to read books and had no problem staying up all night to read an entire Danielle Steel novel just because it was good! Yes, she still got up and started her day at 5 a.m. or earlier. For anyone who worked for Carmella or knew her, they know how much of a perfectionist she was. You don't know how to clean a room until she has taught you and you will never forget. She made everything fun! She was known for the cleanest rooms and the kindest service. She was always positive, loved life and taught us to make anything and everything happen! She was our rock, our inspiration, and our one in a million mother!

In 1992, the Secret Service for President Bush stayed at her motel, allowing her front-row seats and the VIP treatment to meet the President. A day she won't forget and maybe he didn't either! She later was invited to attend the Inaugural Ball for President Bush, Jr. along with all the great Wyoming representatives. She had many celebrities she met and that stayed at her motel such as Caroline Kennedy, Dick Cheney, Al Simpson, all the Marriott family and many more. She loved to vacation in her later years but was just as content having an ice cream cone or cup of coffee with a new friend or her treasured family. She had a great love for the Utah Jazz and did not like missing a game. She did get to meet Stockton, Hornasek and even attend Malone's birthday celebration. Carmella had a way of working things until she got her way. Believe us, there were times we wanted to hide under the table but that's what made her so genuine and so fabulous.

Carmella was known for her million-dollar smile and her bigger-than-life personality. She loved to dress up from her early days right to the end. She always wanted to look her best. She wore her signature brooches, earrings and bracelets that were usually Swarovski design. Her beautiful jewelry matched her amazing personality. She always smelled wonderful too! I'm pretty sure Oscar de la Renta or Giorgio Beverly Hills should have asked her to promote their fragrances! She also really loved to drive. Not just drive but drive very fast! I think she became a pro over the years talking and using her charm to get out of her speeding tickets! She had a lead foot and loved driving with those who did as well. She has always been extremely outgoing, and we will miss her so much. She had a special relationship with each of her daughters and granddaughters and participated in all they were involved in – the most selfless, giving and hard-working woman out there. What a role model!



Carmella is survived by her three daughters Eileen Vavold of Pinedale her caregiver for many years, Eileen's daughter Preslie and husband Jordan Hower, of Sandy, Utah; Dr. Karla Vavold and her husband Dr. Brent Sigler, of Denver, Colo.; and Lynn Freebairn and her husband Kevin, and their daughter Paris, of Sandy, Utah; and many nieces and nephews. She was preceded in death by her husband Fred Vavold, her parents Andrew K. and Carmella Sulenta and of all her siblings.

A rosary for Carmella will be conducted at the church they were married at in Rock Springs, the Ss. Cyril and Methodius Catholic Church, at 6 p.m. on Friday, Oct. 11, and a memorial service at 12 p.m. at the same church on Saturday, Oct. 12.

May you rest in peace and we will see you again in heaven one day. Thank you for being the best mother ever! As our family has always said, "Love ya see ya"!!! Love you big and lots Mom! You're the best! God BlessXXO.

We want to thank our wonderful caregivers for all their love and care especially Diana, Ann and Raymundo. An extra special thank you for the extraordinary care and love Eileen, Carmella's daughter provided for our mother for many years. We can never thank her enough for her dedication, kindness and love. She clearly is just like our mom. A special thanks to all the Pinedale Medical Clinic and staff for all your care over the many years and to Dr. Kappenman and Amy Deeds for being her personal doctor and nurse. Special thanks to Curt Covill for the extra special kindness in meeting our family's desires. Please send condolences to Lynn Freebairn and family, 8036 S. Lodgepole Dr, Sandy, Utah, 84094.

