

We have lost a Faithful Member Annamaria Stefani

by Sergio Stefani

The FFS have lost a faithful, enthusiastic member, and Sergio Stefani has lost his wonderful companion and wife of 43 years. Annamaria died last May 2nd, in his arms, in St. Martin, French West Indies, where they were vacationing.

Annamaria and Sergio met at the court of Luciano Pavarotti (Annamaria was the famous tenor's secretary for a few years) and they discovered that, besides being opera fans, they both loved the sound of The Four Freshmen, having heard the Fab Four on the both sides of the Atlantic Ocean - Annamaria as a Bronx-born young girl - Sergio having heard them in his native Italy in the mid-Fifties, while being a member of his own singing group, his road to fame having been interrupted by his American love.

Our FFS friends must remember her in her wheelchair at many of the Conventions we attended. There was an Annamaria pre-Pavarotti, associate research scientist at Columbia University, and an Annamaria post-Pavarotti as a Director of the Foundation for Nutritional Advancement, in Washington D.C. (Nobel Prize winner Dr. Linus Pauling being one on that Board of Directors).

I remember her at the last Convention, exchanging a few words with Bob Ferreira, her favorite.

God bless her and keep her forever.



Annamaria with her favorite, Bob Ferreira.

News from the editor.

*We are seeking those of you who want to tell their story about
"How I first Heard the Four Freshmen."*

I will publish them in future Fresh News depending on room.

How I First Heard The Four Freshmen

Marlene Lobsiger - A friend told Dave Blackwell about a free, all-day jazz concert to be held in a park in Marshall, MI on Saturday June 2007. Dave and I packed up our chairs and cooler and headed for Marshall, about a 90 minute drive from Fort Wayne, IN. Upon our arrival we learned that there would be a different jazz group performing every hour. We heard some great jazz musicians throughout the day. As the afternoon was about to come to an end the MC announced that The Four Freshmen would be performing that evening. We had no plans to stay but we were curious. Was it The Four Freshmen that had performed back in the fifties at the Coliseum in Fort Wayne? If so, we did not hear them so we decided to stay for at least one song.

I said to Dave "I can't imagine that those old guys are still performing."

We walked downtown and found a sandwich and returned to the park waiting for four "old guys" to show up. Well much to our surprise a white van pulled up to the band shell and four "young guys" stepped out with their instruments, did a quick sound check and away they went. Brian, Bob, Curtis and Vince began with *Young and Foolish*..... how appropriate I thought! Dave looked at me and said, "We're not leaving."

During intermission I purchased a couple of CDs and then headed for the ladies room. Two women, whom I didn't know, were talking about where The Four Freshmen got their first professional booking. One said it was in Fort Wayne, IN. What a surprise. I did not know that. I told them I was from Fort Wayne and almost immediately a woman named Sara Lou Lantz handed me a card and told me that she and Neil would be co-chairing the annual Four Freshmen Society convention August 2008 in Indianapolis. She told me we could join for \$10.00 and become members of the Four Freshmen Society which would allow us to attend the convention in Indianapolis. The following spring we joined the Four Freshmen Society and attended the 2008 convention. It was a very exciting, fun-filled three days of music and meeting new friends, Dave playing *Moonglow* at the Jam Session and singing with the Wannabees every afternoon. Wow! We have become lifelong fans of The Four Freshmen and have followed their performance many times over the past 17 years.

In 2013 Dave and I co-chaired the 26th annual convention which was also the 65th anniversary of The Four Freshmen, "Where It All Began," September 1948 at the 113 Club, Fort Wayne, IN. Little did we know that day that "Jazz In The Park" 2007, Marshall, MI would lead us to some of the most exciting times of our lives. We met folks that have become our lifelong friends as well as The Four Freshmen themselves, who are one of the most outstanding international vocal jazz groups.

Thank you Bob Ferreira, for keeping The Four Freshmen singing together for 73 years.

Maurice Byrne - I loved Tom Kilbride's post in the *Freshnews* and want to add my comments. As a child living in Ireland, I contracted Scarlet Fever and underwent several ear operations that left me partially deaf in both ears. I used to sit beside the radio as a teenager and listen to AFN radio. By the time I was about twenty, I heard this fantastic vocal group called The Four Freshmen. I searched all the record stores in Dublin and was delighted to find several of their LPs. My best friend and I managed to collect all their albums. We were the only fans that I knew of at that time. I thank God every day for the hearing I have left to enjoy the wonderful sound of The Four Freshmen. Now sixty years later, I am still a member of the Lucky Ear Club.