Della Vanacore

April 9, 1921 - June 6, 2022

Della Vanacore, 101, passed away on June 6, 2022, of natural causes, at home surrounded by her family.
Born on April 9, 1921, on the family Lake Penasa (Dean's Lake) homestead southeast of LeRoy, Michigan. She was the fifth of ten children and the last surviving child of Charles and Mildred (Harwood) Dean. Her early life was spent attending school and helping care for her younger siblings. Growing up in a rural home with no gas, electricity, indoor plumbing or phone service, and only a wood stove and kerosene/oil lamps, she had time to play, hike, swim, read and ride the family pony after she had baked bread and finished the chores she shared with her older brother. They were responsible for tending the garden plot. Her parents were teachers and musicians and stocked their home library and provided musical instruction for their children. From a very young age Della could clean and dress a rabbit, chicken, duck, fish or pig for the family table. She walked two miles to a one room school until high school when a bus became available. She graduated from LeRoy Agricultural High School on June 2, 1938 at age 17. A favorite memory was performing in the senior class comedy play as the Maid in "Bashful Bobby." Immediately after high school she was employed by her father's friend to be a caregiver for his wife who had become disabled in an automobile accident. That responsibility brought her to Tampa, Florida where she met her future husband Mike Dino Vanacore when he delivered ice to her residence in Hyde Park. They married in 1939 and spent 60 years in Tampa raising four children. Her husband

predeceased her in 1999.

One weekday morning in Tampa, when most people were at work, Della was outside and heard a cry for help from a neighbor’s son who had become trapped under a car when a jack failed. Della summoned another neighbor and together the two lifted the car enough to allow the young man to escape unharmed.

Della learned to cook Sicilian and Italian food early in her marriage from Mike’s immigrant parents Angelina Dino and Vincenzo Vanacore. Her cooking was greatly enjoyed and appreciated by her children, family and friends. After raising her family, she learned to paint while attending classes at Hillsborough Community College. She also wrote song lyrics which were published in Nashville.

Della lived in Bushnell with her daughter and son-in-law for the last 17 years where she painted, gardened, wrote music lyrics and cooked for friends and family.

On her hundredth birthday the elementary school children of her converted former high school wished her Happy Birthday via a YouTube video.

She is survived by her daughter Ann (Brad) Shepherd, and sons Vincent (Nancy) of Boulder, Colorado, Mike (Sauken) of Bushnell, and Louis of Marianna, in addition to grandchildren, great grandchildren and great, great grandchildren as well as numerous nieces and nephews and friends. She was Nana or Aunt Della to everyone.

Graveside services were held at 11:00 a.m., Thursday, June 9, 2022, at Centro Asturiano Cemetery Memorial Park in Tampa.