

Martin and Marilyn Fraga

Martin Fraga

Martin, the second youngest child of eleven, was born in Imlay City, Michigan in 1932. He was named after his mother, Martina. Growing up as one of the younger Fragas, he was close to his youngest brother, Daniel, and his brother, Jesse, three years his senior. As Uncle Dan shared in his memoir, Martin and Dan earned money working summer jobs together on farms in the area. Sometime around 1950, Martin joined the Air Force and was sent to the Korean War. Because of Martin's flat feet, he was assigned to serve as a cook at one of the military bases in Korea. When Martin finished his term with the Air Force in 1953, he moved back home.

Martin and Dan loved hanging out together. One night in late 1953, Martin and Dan went to a house party in Brown City. During the evening they both started dancing with a cute little gal named Marilyn Sohn. Dan had cut in on Martin dancing with Marilyn and, shortly after the dance, Martin told Dan that a friend was outside looking for him. Uncle Dan found no such friend looking for him and when he finally went back to the dance floor, there was Martin dancing up close and personal with Marilyn. Martin and Marilyn were married in Flint, Michigan in 1955. They lived in an apartment in Flint and Martin found work at the Buick Plant. Marilyn was very homesick, so she and Martin would drive to Brown City every weekend to visit her family.

Martin and Marilyn moved from Flint to Imlay City in 1958 and Martin worked as a butcher at Hall's Meat Market. Eventually, Martin followed in several of his brothers' footsteps and went into the electrical trade in 1959. Martin and Marilyn moved to Hazel Park and then to Pontiac as their family grew. From 1955 to 1965, they grew their family to seven, with five children: Terry, Edwin, Dawn, Laura and Kevin.

Martin's passion, second to his love and devotion to his family, was music. He introduced a wide range of music genres to his extended family, which they enjoy to this day. In 1981, Martin envisioned the Fraga Family Picnic and, with the help of his brothers, sisters, nieces and nephews, the first Fraga Family Picnic was held in 1983. It has been going strong for 40 years because of the help and support of the entire family.

Martin was kind, open-minded, generous, and loved conversation. Family and friends sought out Martin because he made them feel comfortable by listening, being non-judgmental, and by offering support and encouragement. Plus, he was just hip!

Martin and Marilyn were close to their grandchildren: Brian, Chris, Jon, Jessica and Katie. They loved to babysit them or just spend time together. Due to Martin's untimely death in 1996, he did not meet his other three grandchildren: Matthew Fraga, Martinique Tiffin, and Daniel Fraga. They also have 6 great grandchildren.

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Martin and his sister Margie, who he affectionately called "China," were very close and they grew closer in the 1970's when Terry bought a cottage on Harsens Island next door to Len and Margie. The two families spent many great times together as family and neighbors.

Martin's death at the age of 64 in 1996 of a heart attack brought great loss and sadness to his entire family. Since Martin was the second youngest in his family, no one expected he would be the first sibling to pass away. The extended family provided a great deal of love and support to Marilyn and their children and grandchildren.

Soon after Martin's passing, his son Terry experienced chest pains. He went to the doctor for a checkup and underwent emergency heart bypass surgery. All of Martin and Marilyn's children had heart checkups after Terry's surgery. Kevin learned he was born with a hole in his heart that was causing heart muscle weakness. Kevin underwent heart surgery as well. The family believes that Martin's sacrifice saved his two sons.

Provided by their children, February 2023