

A Background of the Life and Accomplishments of John Rosatti

Written by Susan Chadwick, ©2008

Born and raised in the industrious city of Brooklyn, New York, John Rosatti was brought up in a loving, traditional Italian family. Reared by his father Edward John Rosatti, a city worker, and his mother Angeline, a seamstress, Rosatti lived with his parents and older sister Dorothy in a small, basement apartment. From early on, Rosatti was seen as intelligent, attentive, and had a smile that even today delights anyone who is around him. Growing up with strong familial ties to their Italian community, the two Rosatti children attended the customary Catholic schools and attended Mass on a regular basis. Family dinners were a vital part of their young lives, which always included spending time with extended family members, as well as close friends from within their tight-knit community. Rosatti took great personal pride and admiration in his paternal grandfather, John Adam Bassett, who was a decorated U.S. Naval Officer. Bassett, who changed his last name from Rosatti to avoid unjust work discrimination toward people of Italian descent, played a vital role in fighting off the enemy during WWII in 1944. His heroics are documented by Alfred B. Stanford in the book, *“Force Mulberry: The Planning and Installation of the Artificial Harbor of U.S. Normandy Beaches in WWII”* (Whitehead Press). Bassett received the Bronze Star for efficient expeditions and accurate placing of block ships and concrete caissons, while under constant enemy fire off the coast of France.

Rosatti's father and grandfather instilled in him a strong work ethic, and from the early age of 11 years old, he entered the work force delivering meats in the neighborhood via his bicycle. He acquired his mechanical skills by helping his father work on boats at the local docks, which eventually led him to use those same skills to venture into the automobile industry. What began with stints driving a dump truck and then a cab for a small car service, developed into a full-fledged career. With his first wife Joann by his side, whom he married at the young age of 21, he began to learn the intricate details of running a car dealership. Through hard work and a keen eye for opportunity, Rosatti purchased an Oldsmobile dealership in Flatbush in 1978. Using his knack for knowing how to “fix things”, as well as his sharp business sense, he would eventually create [Plaza Auto Mall](#). Awarded numerous times as a 'Top 100' dealership by *Wards Automotive*, Plaza Auto Mall's success gave Rosatti the opportunity to expand his businesses outside of New York, venturing into other states such as Nevada, New Jersey, and Florida. As recently as 2001, *The New York Daily News* named his dealership one of *The News'* '2001 Auto All-Stars'. At the peak of his ownership, Plaza Auto Mall carried more than 15 different and unique car brands.

While owning and managing an ever expanding automobile dealership required a great deal of time and effort, Rosatti still managed to enjoy his 'down time'. He and one of his oldest neighborhood friends, John Staluppi, began racing cigarette boats in 1976, which gradually led them to compete in the Benihana races that occurred all over the country. Together they won numerous trophies and awards, including 'Best Looking Boat'. Rosatti and Staluppi's love of the water, combined with their nautical experience and mechanical skills, gave them a distinct advantage over others. Little did they know at the time, but this shared passion for boating would evolve into a long-standing, prosperous business partnership down the road.

After 18 years of marriage, Rosatti and his first wife Joann, made a mutual decision to separate. True to his character however, they still remain good friends to this day. It was only after years of working long hours, and reaching a certain level of success, that Rosatti met and married his second wife, Bonni. Wed on the beautiful island of St. Thomas, and surrounded by loyal friends and family, the Rosattis started their new life together in a traditional Italian manner, by living close to their family in

Brooklyn. There they raised their three young children in the manner to which Rosatti was accustomed – attending Catholic school, and going to Mass on a weekly basis with their extended family members. During that unforgettable time with Bonni and their children, Rosatti enjoyed not only his busy work life, but was able to indulge in some of his personal passions as well. After years of taking private flying lessons, Rosatti was able to purchase his own *Beechjet 400A* plane, something which he had dreamed about for some time.

Unfortunately, in the year 1997, Rosatti's father died in a terrible car accident while en route home from spending the winter in Florida with John and his family. Within 3 years of his tragic death, Rosatti's wife Bonni also lost her life in a heart-breaking automobile accident, while they were living on the Eastern Shore of Maryland. Leaving him with three young, beautiful children to raise, he received an outpouring of tremendous support from his family, especially his mother, and sister Dorothy and her family, who moved in with them to provide comfort and to help take care of the children. Even while enduring the pain of such a loss, Rosatti channeled his grief the only way he knew how - by concentrating on working extremely hard in order to provide his children and himself with a sense of normalcy. In time, he eventually came to the decision to permanently move his family south to Florida, and begin focusing more specifically on his yachting business ventures. No longer residing in the New York area, he sold a large portion of his auto dealerships, taking the number of car brands offered from 15 down to 5, yet still managing to maintain the dealership's 'Top 100' status.

Soon after settling in Florida, Rosatti met his devoted and long-standing girlfriend Dawn, while on a business trip in Las Vegas. Dawn was able to fill a void in Rosatti's life that had been quite empty since he lost his loving wife, Bonni. What began as a friendship, has over time turned into a lasting relationship; one which allows Rosatti to enjoy all of life's pleasures again. One such pleasure in particular, sailing, is something Rosatti, his children, and Dawn can partake in whenever they would like – while on board their 157-foot yacht, the *Nice n' Easy*. Built by [Christensen Yachts](#), Rosatti and Dawn helped to choose everything from the sleek exterior to the glamorous interior. With the ability to sail for days at a time, Rosatti is able to travel with ease, whether it be to their favorite spot in the Bahamas, or as they did in 2007, to the Cannes Film Festival.

Rosatti is not just a client/owner of a yacht, but he and his close friend John Staluppi are co-owners of [Millennium Super Yachts](#). Based out of North Palm Beach, Millennium Super Yachts take luxury, class and speed to a whole new level. Staluppi and Rosatti continue to out-do themselves year after year; striving to make their boats faster, lighter, and more beautiful. Their passion for never settling has made their business one of the most respected in the yachting world. Millennium has been mentioned numerous times in yachting publications such as *Showboats International*, *Yachting Magazine*, and *Power and Motor Yacht*.

While running multiple businesses and raising a family can take a considerable amount of time and energy, Rosatti still continues to be actively involved as an avid benefactor to several charitable organizations. Motivated in part by memories of his own family working hard to make a better life for themselves, Rosatti began donating his time and money to organizations that he felt would benefit greatly by his personal participation. Three such organizations include [The American Heart Association](#), the [Boys and Girls Club of Broward County](#) and [The G & P Foundation for Cancer Research](#). Thanks in part to Rosatti's donations and support to the latter organization, he “..helped make this year's *Angel Ball* our most successful to date, raising over \$5 million dollars.” As The G & P Foundation's co-founder Denise Rich added, “it was a record-breaking year for the Foundation and a triumph for cancer research. We could not have done it without your support.” With annual donations exceeding \$50K a year benefiting the Boys and Girls Club, as well as his continued support of the

American Heart Association through his participation in the [Northern Palm Beach Heart Ball](#), Rosatti continues to give back to those in need.

Perhaps his largest donation to date was his generous gift in 2002 to his children's school, The Benjamin School. Located in North Palm Beach, Florida, [The Benjamin School](#), founded in 1960, offers students a challenging, yet diverse college preparatory experience. Rosatti pledged \$1,000,000 to fund the *Rosatti Administrative/Library and Media Center*, which was named in honor of his late wife Bonni. Said Interim Head of School Jim Young, “the Administration Center benefits faculty, students, alumni, administrators, parents and visitors alike. We are pleased to name this building in memory of Bonni Rosatti and we know that this building will benefit the Benjamin family for generations to come.”

With many more productive years ahead, John Rosatti has set a course for himself, his business endeavors, and his charitable ventures to be admired by many. Persevering through many personal tragic events, Rosatti has proven over time his passion for living, his adoration for his loving family, and his never-ending pursuit of the American dream. His drive for success blends seamlessly with his constant devotion and connection to his close-knit family - indeed proving that one can have it all.