

This information was provided by Vannie Mounier's granddaughters, Carrie and Natalie Mounier, following her death.

Both of Mummum's parents were born in Mexico. They immigrated to the United States in about 1918. Mummum was born in Los Angeles to Rafael Condé-Barragan and Carmen Yslas on April 19, 1920. In the 1920's and 1930's there was extreme anti Hispanic sentiment in the United States and "forced repatriation" of Mexicans to Mexico – even those Mexicans who were US citizens. Many Mexicans tried to "pass" as White – or Spanish – to avoid discrimination. Mummum was extremely fair skinned and it is likely she was taught very young to present as White and avoid doing anything that could be perceived as "ethnic". This may be why the word "Mexican" never passed her lips.

She said her father died when she was 11. When her father died, her mother was deeply bereaved and Mummum's perception was that her mother stopped being able to function. That year, Mummum had to manage the household. She described having to go to the bank on her own to pay the rent. She said a year later when her mother had recovered a bit, she realized what she had left Mummum to manage on her own and said, "What have I done to you?"

Mummum's father died in 1931, I think of a heart attack. He was a young man. Mummum connected the dots when granddaughter Elizabeth was studying the Depression in school. She realized that most likely her father's death was related to the stress of the financial crisis.

Mummum never talked about her family of origin. Mummum said that after her father died, her mother went to her family of origin and asked for help. She said that her mother's family of origin told her that they would help her mother, but that her mother would have to put her two children in an orphanage. Mummum's mother declined their help and told her children, "from now on, we have no family."

Mummum said that her mother, she and her brother were visited by social services during those years following her father's death. Her mother would host the workers and offer refreshments. The workers would ask if her mother needed help for the family and her mother would politely decline.

She said that she and her brother were required to play piano. They would play in recitals, both individually and as a duo. They would play on two pianos together, as well as together on one piano. She described her brother as being very confident and proficient on the piano, but that she struggled a lot. She said when she was 16 she played in a recital and she got stuck, had to stop, and

start again. Then she got stuck again and froze. When it was all over, her mother told her, “You don’t ever have to play the piano again.”

Mummum graduated from Immaculate Heart High School and began attending Immaculate Heart College but when WWII started she withdrew from school. Compassionate and passionate, Mummum threw herself into volunteering during WWII and continued her philanthropic efforts throughout her life, volunteering for schools, universities and projects supporting the military. She was a natural leader and held leadership positions for the PTA, school board, the district, and for Loyola Marymount University.

Mummum was proud of her work as a buyer for the children's division of a department store in the early 1940s, where she met her future husband John, who was an assistant manager at the same department store. The two courted for a year, were married and started a family quickly thereafter. She said that when they got married it was really hard to get a wedding cake because the government was rationing sugar during the war.

Married for 56 years to her Honey Bunch John “Big Pop” Mounier, who passed away in 2001, Mummum built an empire of love for her sons, John and Chris; grandchildren John, Carrie, Genny, Natalie, Matt and Beth; and great grandchildren Camille, Colton, Caydence, Charlie and Evie.

Mummum devoted her life to her children and grandchildren. Over the past several decades, she was a fixture in the stands for hundreds of basketball and football games, dance performances and track meets. Can’t find her? Just look for the woman cheering her heart out. Mummum always loved children – her own, her grandchildren, her great grandchildren, the neighbors, her friends children – everyone. She always said that when someone in a family dies, it is important to pay attention to the children- because no one ever pays attention to the children. Always sharing wise advice with her family, Mummum often said, “You make your own happiness,” and “You will never be lonely if you have a book.”

At 98 years old, she was still a force to be reckoned with and the life of the party. Her infectious smile, laugh, cheers and extremely extroverted personality could charm even the grumpiest person. She was loved by so many. Through the years she made such an impact on everyone who crossed her path – kids, grandkids, great grandkids, our friends and countless others. We feel so very lucky to have known her and to have had her as our beloved “Mummum”.