

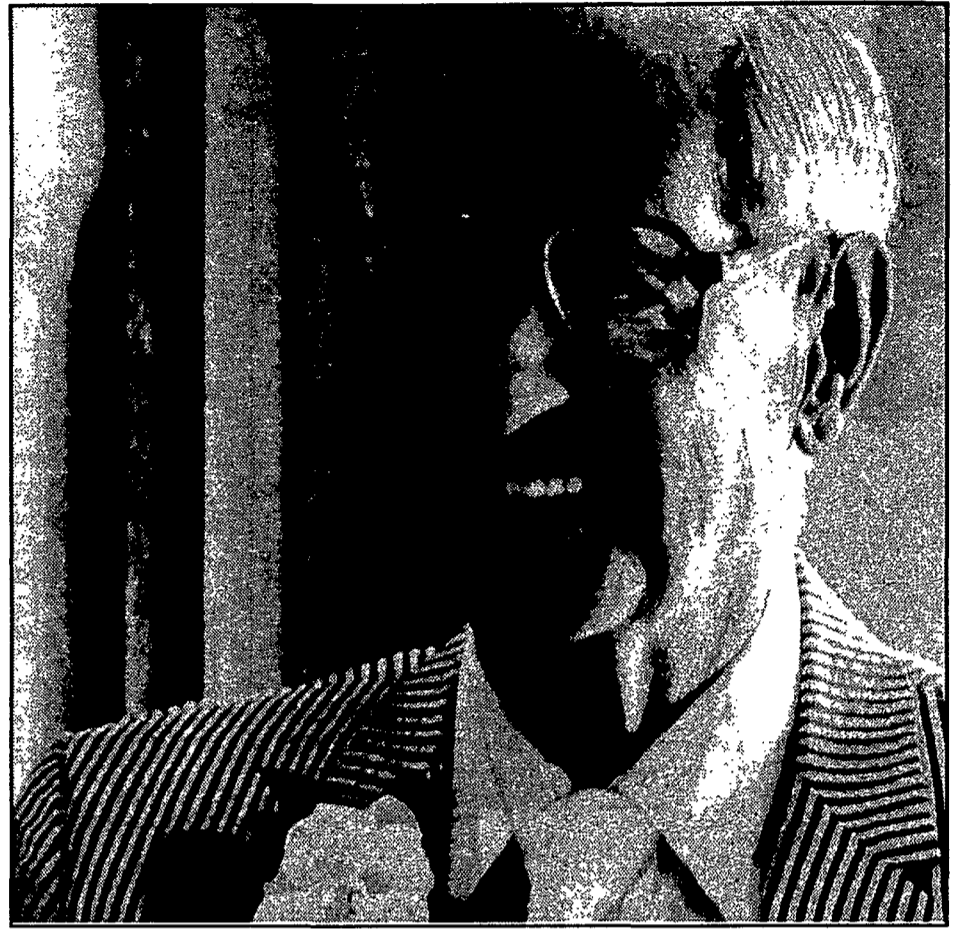
# SENIOR LIFESTYLES

## Greece man to 'usher' in his 95th birthday



Andrea Dixon/Staff photographer

Usher Harry Capadano, 94, takes up the collection July 1 at St. Lawrence Church in Greece.



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By Mike Latona  
Staff writer

GREECE — Harry Capadano must have the look of a church usher, wherever the church may be.

In 1964, for instance, he coordinated a work excursion to the World's Fair in New York City. He was attending Mass at St. Patrick's Cathedral, when an usher picked Capadano out of the congregation and put him to work.

"He handed me a basket," Capadano said with a chuckle.

Most likely, the cathedral usher wasn't aware he had lined up an expert in the craft: At that point in Capadano's life, he had already been ushering for about 35 years. And he remains an usher to this day — a stunning 72 years in all.

Capadano is a fixture at St. Lawrence Church, his parish since 1974. He serves as head usher at the noon Mass on Sundays, patrolling the two center aisles.

"I like to smile at the people, nod my head and try to remember them by name. A lot of them know my name," Capadano said.

As good luck would have it, Capadano will turn 95 years old on July 29, which is a Sunday — so he can celebrate in style by ushering. Later that day, Capadano will enjoy a big 95th-birthday party at the Brook House, just up the road from St. Lawrence Church.

Capadano was born in Canandaigua, the son of Italian immigrants. He was married at Rochester's Holy Rosary Church and began his lengthy devotion to ushering in 1929 at St. Anthony of Padua Church, at the age of 23. Three years

later he moved to Holy Apostles Church, where he would serve as usher for the next 42 years.

Noting that his early ushering days were during the Great Depression, Capadano recalled how some worshippers "would drop in a quarter, grab the basket and take 15 cents back. They expected us to make change."

For many years, he added, it was customary for women to wear veils over their faces. Once, this led to an incident right out of a slapstick movie: While ushering at Holy Apostles, his collection basket got tangled up in a veil.

"I was trying to tug and tug. Then I gave it a yank and pulled her hat right off her head," he said with a laugh. "The person behind her had to pick it up and hand it back to her."

Amid the humorous incidents, Capadano also takes pride in his roles of getting people seated, taking up the collection and handing out bulletins. Ushers are also the first contacts, he said, for directing Mass-goers to the bathroom or getting help when a medical emergency occurs.

He likes the diversity of the St. Lawrence community, one of the largest in the diocese. "You see a lot of families with babies — I like that," he remarked.

What he doesn't like are people who, in his opinion, feign attempts to reach for their purses or wallets but actually don't wish to contribute. He feels differently, however, when tiny church-goers fumble with money their parents have handed them to drop in the basket: "I wait for the children," he said.

Capadano's dedication to ushering is

reflected in his clothing: He still wears a suit and tie whenever he ushers at St. Lawrence. During his days at Holy Apostles, he recalled, he bought maroon ties for all the ushers to wear.

Church dress codes are certainly more lax than in previous generations, he observed. "Years ago, you couldn't come into church with shorts on," he said. "You had to come in fully dressed."

Capadano was employed for 45 years by the former Delco auto-parts manufacturing company, retiring in 1971 as supervisor of employee relations. He was active in such community promotions as collecting toys for children, overseeing recreation programs and lining up blood-donation efforts. He has spent much of his retirement on golf courses, coaching athletic teams, and eating at his favorite restaurants.

His wife, Estelle, died in the mid-1990s. He has two children, Harry Jr. and Marjorie Lombardini, as well as nine grandchildren and 12 great-grandchildren.

Though his daughter and son-in-law, Cos, transport him to St. Lawrence for his ushering duties, Capadano still moves quite well and entertains no thoughts of retiring.

"I'm going to usher until the day I can't walk," Capadano said. "I would be lost if I weren't ushering and meeting people."

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