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Johnny Mathis Makes Villagers' Wish Come True

Tony and Jan D'Aquisto reach their goal of getting Johnny Mathis to sign their wedding photo.

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THE VILLAGES

For years, Jan D'Aquisto carried a wedding photo of her and her husband, Tony, to Johnny Mathis concerts, hoping the singer would autograph it.

It seemed their chances were dwindling.

With their 54th wedding anniversary several months away, the D'Aquistos gave it one more shot when they went to see the famed vocalist Jan. 12 at the Sharon L. Morse Performing Arts Center.

"It was a last-ditch effort," said Tony, of the Village of St. James.

The framed photo brings two of Jan's loves together: her husband and Mathis' hit single, "Chances Are."

"That song has become a part of me," Jan said.

Jan first heard Mathis' romantic voice sing that ballad in an ice cream shop in Brooklyn, New York. She was 12 at the time. Tony, who happened to be in the same shop, was 16.



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Tony and Jan D'Aquisto, of the Village of St. James, hold their wedding photo with the sheet music to the Johnny Mathis hit "Chances Are" in the background. After 54 years of marriage, the D'Aquistos finally had Mathis autograph the photo.

"I see (Tony), and I fell in love," Jan said. "Like the words in the song, 'If it's gonna happen, it's gonna happen.'"

They saw each other off and on for a few years. In the middle of her senior year, Jan called up Tony and asked him to marry her. Tony, who was serving in the Navy as a medical corpsman, said yes.

In September 1963, Tony and Jan got married during his leave in San Diego. They danced their first dance as a couple to "Chances Are," with Jan's father leading the band.

Jan's neighbor, Joe Goldfeather, got a copy of the sheet music for "Chances Are" and placed a portion of a wedding photo in the center.

Through the years, the D'Aquistos bought several eight-tracks, cassettes and CDs featuring Mathis' music.

They saw Mathis perform in New York, as well as on several occasions in Kissimmee.

All the while, Jan brought the photo with her. One time, the D'Aquistos waited near Mathis' tour bus hoping to see him, but they were asked to leave.

The D'Aquistos, who had moved to The Villages in 2011, wanted to see Mathis when he first performed at The Sharon in January 2016, but by the time Tony sat in front of a computer to look for tickets, the concert was sold out.

This year, Tony got two seats up in the balcony, one in front of the other. Tony ended up sitting in a folding chair when he discovered his seat was missing.

They both were in musical heaven.

"I couldn't believe he's 81," Tony said.

"He was so good," Jan said. "He couldn't get to the high notes, but it was beautiful."

Tony enjoyed hearing "Misty" and "The 12th of Never," while Jan said all the songs were great.

"The orchestra did wonderful things with his songs," Jan said.

A few weeks before the show, at the suggestion of a friend, Tony had emailed Jason Goedken, The Sharon's operations manager, to ask about getting the photo autographed.

Goedken passed on the email to house manager Rebecca Morse, who then told the D'Aquistos she had passed on the request to Mathis' people.

Morse said each performer is different when it comes to audience requests.

"Some will say they won't do autographs," she said.

The night of the concert, the D'Aquistos gave Morse the photo, then hoped for the best.

After the show, Morse met the D'Aquistos in the lobby, where she handed them back the photo.

"She said, 'I have a surprise for you,'" Tony said. "Janet

burst into tears."

The photo was signed, "All my love, Johnny Mathis."

"We're in awe of what (Morse) did for us," Jan said.

"It was awesome," Morse said. "It was so cool we were able to make that happen."

The autographed photo now sits among other photos on a shelf.

"I can see it from the couch," Jan said. "It's my favorite picture."

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