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West Milford had a great loss on this date in 1992



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It was 22 years ago today on Jan. 9, 1992 that Arthur Dante Louis Zampella, M.D. was stricken with a heart attack while caring for the patients in his Idylease medical office in the Newfoundland section of the Township of West Milford.

Zampella's accomplishments in serving the municipality and its people were already notable. At the time of his death he had proposed and planned to do so much more. But this was not to be.

The winter weather was bitterly cold on Jan. 9, 1992. It was a typical day at Idylease with a waiting room full of patients in the doctor's office. As usual Zampella was taking time with each one – never tiring of listening to what they had to say and offering fatherly advice along with administering needed medical care to them.

The nursing home in the main building was operating smoothly and the patients were being tended to by the caring staff chosen by Zampella. As Idylease staff public relations person I was in the business office preparing advertising copy for the facility with Business Administrator Neil Malloy.

As I was leaving, a concerned man in the parking lot told me that he had seen a black Lincoln or Mercury leaving the office with the doctor in the back seat on the passenger side. The man – whose name I do not recall – said the doctor tried to lift his hand to wave at him – but obviously could not – and the hand came up about half way as the car sped off. Information received later that day said the doctor died at age 74 of a massive heart attack at Mountainside Hospital in Montclair.

Word of the doctor's death spread throughout the shocked community during the day. At a township council workshop that night the local governing board honored Zampella with a moment of silence. Mayor Thomas Parisi said the doctor was certainly a township father and one who helped to shape the town.



The Idylease building is draped in black in 1992 to mourn the death of Dr. Arthur Dante Louis Zampella, M.D. (May 15, 1917 to Jan. 9, 1992).

Councilman Carl Richko commented that Zampella was a kind and intelligent man and always a gentleman. He said that it was a fact that five percent of the population does its community work and the doctor was always on top of that list.

A service in celebration of Zampella's life was held at the United Methodist Church of Newfoundland. Burial was at the Newfoundland Cemetery on Route 23 in back of the original church building.

The Rev. Frank Fowler led the service. Other participating clergy included the Rev. Mychal Judge of St. Joseph Church. All speakers stressed Zampella's dedication to help others. Fowler recalled that people who were ill and could not afford to pay a doctor were treated by the physician anyway. An overflowing crowd filled the church and sang familiar hymns and recited "The Lord's Prayer." Soloists Doris Osterhoudt and Ruth Townsend sang "The Holy City" as their special tribute.

Zampella served as physician for township schools and was police and fire surgeon. He was Board of Health

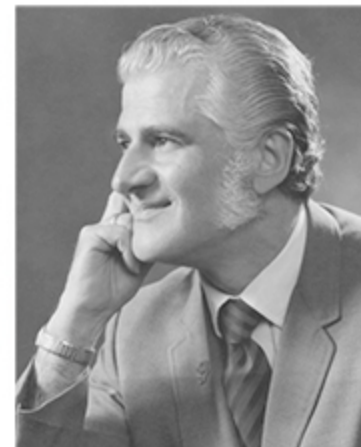
president, director of the West Milford Day Care Center for Senior Citizens, served on the township's youth and advisory board, was on the Boy Scouts executive board, and was on the West Milford Youth and Family Counseling Board. He belonged to the West Milford Rotary Club and served as Crop Walk chair for West Milford and Jefferson Townships. He was named Citizen of the Year in 1990 and also received the West Milford Police Benevolent Association Community Service Award.

When he first came from Jersey City Zampella did not have an easy time. He was perceived as an outsider by some people in the then close-knit rural community. His undeniable positive attitude and kindness to others were eventually accepted and he even won over the respect of some of his harshest critics. Zampella arrived in Newfoundland after he bought the Idylease building (circa 1902) complex in 1972. He then established his medical facility, private practice and the nursing home. He later

married the late Alice Seeley Zampella, who was his once nurse. Their family included five children.

One of the doctor's unfulfilled dreams was to build a series of housing cottages for senior citizens - with medical services, a restaurant, hair dresser and other offerings to enable these residents to get the services they needed without leaving the property. This was at a time when thoughts of housing strictly for senior citizens were just beginning. Although he was unable to get necessary approvals from township boards, Zampella never lost hope that his senior citizen housing project would someday be built.

The doctor also saw the need to construct a local hospital in the township. He offered to donate property for a facility next to Idylease on Union Valley Road. Dedicated people worked on that project with him but obstacles kept it from happening. The township today remains without Lakecrest Hospital ever having been built.



DR. ARTHUR ZAMPELLA
1917-1992