

## Musical Memories Podcast: Louise Signorelli

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[00:01] **Greer McAllister:** Okay, so Johnny Mathis. So do you have any songs in particular that you like?

[00:05] **Louise Signorelli:** Every one of them.

[00:06] **G:** All of them! Okay, what about *Misty*? Do you know that one?

[00:12] **L:** Yes.

[00:14, music] ***Misty* by Johnny Mathis**

[01:08, narration] **G:** When I played this song, *Misty* by Johnny Mathis, Louise Signorelli closed her eyes and swayed back and forth, mouthing every word. Her husband, Lou, is sitting across the room, watching an old Western on T.V. and occasionally gazing over to us.

[01:26] **G:** So what about that song—you definitely connected to it. You were singing along. What about that song...

[01:32] **L:** All his songs really. I'm connected to all of them—I'm connected to him! As a matter of fact, he was born on September 30th and I was born October 26th. We're the same age, actually, 1935, 1935. I have a connection to him somehow. I don't know why!

[01:55] **G:** Yeah!

[01:56] **L:** But from the minute I heard his voice on one of his songs I fell in love. My children used to go out and buy me records as a gift and I stuck with him all the time. I just love his voice. Those songs bring back memories of when I was young and lived at home with my parents. They were alive and I was just happy.

[02:30, narration] **G:** Louise recalls a happy childhood in New York City and tells me about a time in high school when she won a singing competition.

[02:38] **L:** I had a good voice. I won an award in school for singing, but as I got older, the throat doesn't work anymore. But I won an award for singing a Nat King Cole song.

[03:00] **G:** Oh, wow! Do you remember what song?

[03:02] L: *Walking My Baby Back Home*.

[03:04] G: Walking my baby back home.

(03:06, music] *Walking My Baby Back Home* by Nat King Cole

[03:48] G: Were you in like a choir?

[03:50] L: No.

[03:51] G: Or just singing?

[03:52] L: They just asked who wanted to sing, and I, like a dope, I put my hand up. And I sang that song and I got the award.

[4:03] G: That's awesome!

[04:04] L: Yeah!

[04:05] G: I would be way too shy.

[04:06] L: Oh, no. I was a little nervous, but I did it.

[04:10, narration] G: At the age of sixteen, Louise moved to New Rochelle with her family, where she met the man who would become her husband, Lou.

[04:18] G: How did you two meet?

[04:22] L: The funny thing is...I had a best girlfriend. And he used to sit next door with his friend on the stoop. And he always looked at me when I came home from church with the big, wide hats, and he said to his friend, I'm gonna marry that girl. And his friend says, You haven't got a chance. And then my girlfriend said, Listen do me a favor. I have to go to a dance, but I want my brother to take me, but he needs a date. She said, Could you go out with my brother? Doesn't have to mean nothing, just go out with him. I said, Alright. Turns out it was him, the guy next door. I was shocked, but we went to the dance and we fell in love. Then, of course, I got married.

[05:24] G: Yeah, when did you get married?

[05:25] L: 1958.

[05:28] G: And how old were you?

[05:29] L: 22.

[05:31] G: That's how old I am.

[05:33] L: You don't look it.

[05:34] G: No?

[05:35] L: You look much younger.

[05:37] G: Oh, really?

[05:40, narration] G: After marrying, they had two children, Linda and Louis.

[05:45] L: And then five years later I had a boy. Five years after that I had a girl. Took me five years for each of them. And I got married May 4th, my son was born September 4th, my daughter was born November 4th.

[06:06] G: Wow!

[06:07] L: It was all— I don't know why, five years. Of course, five years apart, but the same number.

[06:15] G: Yeah, that's interesting.

[06:17] L: Very odd.

[06:18] G: Yeah.

[06:19, narration] G: They continued living in New Rochelle, no longer as newlyweds but as a family.

[06:25] L: We owned a home. The family, the mother and father passed away and was given to the children. So we had to split it between seven kids. But, I got the part— I got a good part. And I lived there for many years, two family house. My daughter lived upstairs with her husband. My daughter took off on her own because she had two kids and she only had four rooms upstairs.

One bedroom, two bedrooms. And I moved to Keogh Lane. It was a co-op, and that's where I stayed until I got sick, and my legs, and I moved here.

[07:22, narration] **G:** Throughout our conversation, Louise told me many times that she has lived a happy life, a life set to the beautiful, lilting voice of Johnny Mathis.

[07:34] **L:** Just was a happy life. I wish I could do it again.

[07:40, music] ***Misty* by Johnny Mathis**