



# Baratta, Thomas Tindaro

OCT 9, 1938 - JUL 5, 2025



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## **Baratta, Thomas Tindaro**

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**T**homas was born in 1938 in the Bensonhurst neighborhood of Brooklyn, New York, to two Italian immigrants. He was, by every measure, a kid from the neighborhood—scrappy, stylish, and full of stories even before he'd really begun living them.

From an early age, it was clear he had a knack for standing out. Whether it was stealing his parents' car and accidentally running over a cousin, or dressing up his sister in their mother's clothes to impersonate a parent at school—Tommy didn't follow the rules so much as rewrite them in real time.

At 17, he "exaggerated" his age to join the Air Force and become a mechanic. It was the first time he left the world he knew—and he never stopped exploring after that. His time in the service introduced him to new cultures, new people, and a lifelong desire to see the world.

After his service, he wasn't quite sure what he wanted to do—but he knew he loved chasing beautiful women. That led him to become a hairdresser, a field in which he quickly rose to the top. He styled some of the most well-known models and actresses of his time, and it was in that glamorous world that he met the love of his life, his wife, Judy.

Eventually, he and his sister Marylou opened Marylou's, a restaurant in Manhattan's West Village that became a beloved local spot, a celebrity haunt, and a secret speakeasy for those in the know. This success led to the launch of other successful restaurant & nightlife ventures including the Be-Bop Cafe, Conscience Point, Hunter's, and the Biz Bistro. His food and charisma left an impression on many, but



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perhaps none more than Jack Nicholson, who became a close friend and unofficial employer—flying Tommy around the world as his personal chef, giving him cameos in films like Prizzi’s Honor and Hoffa, and sharing a million stories together.

Tommy’s life became a whirlwind of legendary moments: fighting off paparazzi in Paris with bamboo sticks, summering at Lorne Michaels’ house in the Hamptons, being a Miss Universe judge, dining at the White House with President Clinton, and even dating Nancy Sinatra (to Frank’s great displeasure). Whether he was traveling through Morocco with royalty or partying with Jimmy Buffett, his stories always sounded too wild to be true—until you realized that, with Tommy, they probably were.

But he wasn’t just defined by celebrity or spectacle. He was ahead of his time in his thinking—especially about food and health. His cookbook *Cooking for Jack* is filled not only with great recipes, but with insight into his thoughtful, creative mind.

He was also endlessly fascinated with aesthetics, especially fashion. In Brooklyn, they called him “Sharpie Shit” because he was always dressed to impress. His wardrobe was massive, eclectic, and somehow completely cohesive despite spanning every style imaginable. He wore what he wanted and always made it look good.

In the last couple of decades of his life, he took up golf—not so much for the sport itself, but for the fashion (and for the drinks and banter at the 19th hole). His golf attire became iconic: a puffer vest in the Miami heat, round purple sunglasses, and UV-protective arm sleeves that looked like full biker tattoos. He was a walking conversation starter.

He was never shy, never embarrassed, and never afraid to say exactly what he thought. He had a gift for saying things that no one else could get away with—and somehow making it land with a laugh instead of a slap.



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Later in life, he found joy in construction and design, managing projects and telling others how things should be done. He had a sharp eye and an even sharper opinion. In Italy, there's a word—Umarell—used to describe retired men who stand around construction sites with their hands behind their backs, supervising the work with great importance. That image feels just right for him. Somewhere, he's watching over the pearly gates, telling the angels how to rearrange the marble.

Through it all—through the style, the stories, the boldness—there was a man who loved deeply. A father who showed his love through food, through humor, and through presence. A man who never stopped asking, “Do you need anything? Can I help?” and always meant it.

His life was extraordinary. But more than that—it was full of heart.

Chapel Service will be held on Friday July 18, 2025, at 2:00 p.m. at Levitt-Weinstein Blasberg Rubin Zilbert Memorial Chapel located 18840 W. Dixie Highway, North Miami Beach, FL 33180. Arrangements by Levitt Weinstein Blasberg Rubin Zilbert Memorial Chapel (305) 932-2700





# Events


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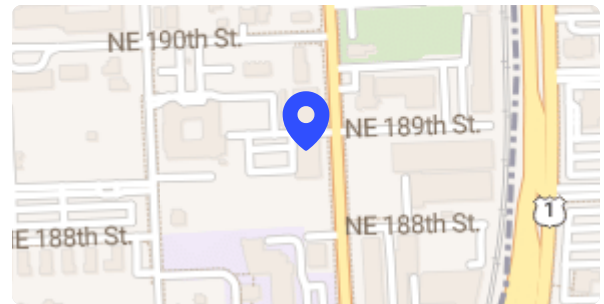
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## Chapel Service

 **Friday**, July 18, 2025

 2:00 PM ET

 **Levitt-Weinstein Blasberg, Rubin-Zilbert Memorial Chapels**  
18840 W. Dixie Highway, North Miami Beach FL  
33180





## Tribute Wall

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LL

**Lidia Lechtman** posted:

So sorry for your loss Judy. Our condolences to you and the boys. Thomas sure had a great life.

August 17 at 12:26 PM

BR

**Billy Roland** posted:

Too many great memories to write..... Maybe a great dinner and long night at Marylou's on 9th st then over to Turkish baths on 10th where we enjoyed the old fashioned steam room, into the 60 degree pool followed up by eucalyptus leaf rubdown. In our robes bagels all the way upstairs with the finally being a nap on the cots..... Then off to work... Refreshed Or maybe one of the never ending New Year Eve's at Marylou's.... No maybe the beach house... listing to Ave Maria watching you sail on the slowly wind surfer on the Ohh just too many choices.. only the tip of the iceberg. Watching superbows at the Ritz or my apartment... Having our families together and Judy the beautiful lady always to reassure me that I was loved... I've only scratched the surface... See you soon Tom give TJ a hug... carry on my dear friend and brother... XOXO Billyace

July 13 at 8:35 PM



## **Memories only last if you share them**

Join us in honoring Thomas by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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