

50 Years



United and Devoted: Aileen Gallo & Sue Coleman

By David Seymour

Newsletter

Mar 2023

Last month, the McHenry Museum & Historical Society (MM&HS) shared a forty-year history of the McHenry Mansion (1936-1976). The story concludes with the 1976 purchase of the home by the Julio R. Gallo Foundation, who generously donated the mansion to the City of Modesto. When touring the mansion today, it is hard to miss the portrait between the two parlors of the mansion's saviors, Julio (1910-1993) and Aileen (1913-1999) Gallo. One can cross Fifteenth Street and view the Julio and Aileen Gallo Rose Garden in McClatchy Square. Their names are synonymous with both wine and philanthropy.



Aileen Gallo

Sue Coleman

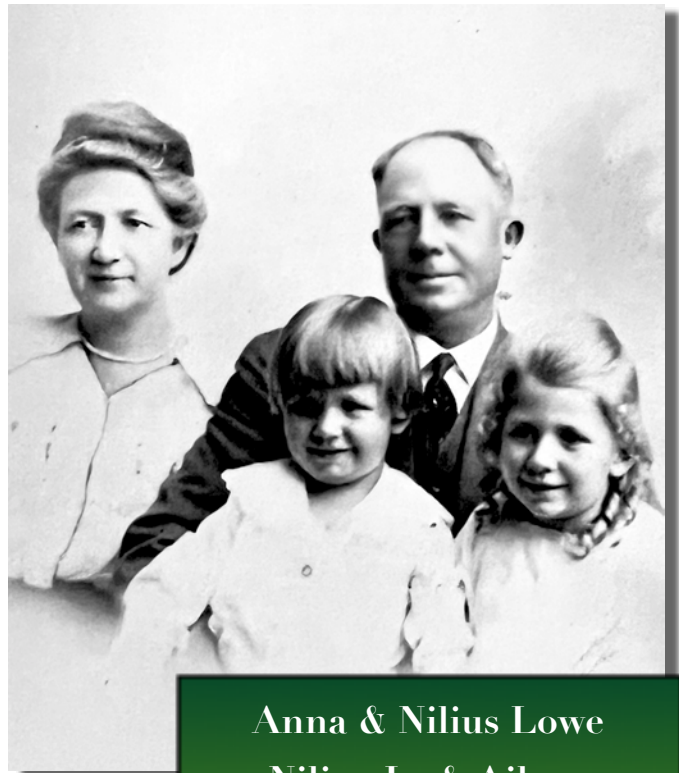


Mayor Lee Davies, Aileen & Julio Gallo
1976 on the roof of the McHenry Mansion

The year 2023 marks the ninetieth anniversary of E. & J. Gallo Winery (Julio is the 'J' in the namesake 'E. & J. Gallo Winery, and brother, Ernest – the 'E'), as well as the one-hundred fortieth anniversary of the McHenry Mansion. When news of Aileen Gallo's death broke in July of 1999, Modesto Mayor Dick Lang stated that Aileen "represented the soul of Modesto." She was remembered as "unassuming and family oriented." Aileen passed this sensibility on to her daughter, Susann Aileen Gallo Coleman (1936-2022). Both mother and daughter did not vie for pomp and circumstance when it came to their philanthropic efforts; they simply aided their community when a need arose, and all was not just monetary. They were generous with their time for family, friends, and the community. March is Women's History Month, and this is the story of the lives of Aileen Lowe Gallo and Susann Gallo Coleman.

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Aileen Marie Lowe was born in Manteca, California, on April 29, 1913, to Nilius (1874-1959) and Anna Milco (1876-1966) Lowe. Her father and grandparents were from Knights Ferry and because of this Aileen was very connected to her roots there, expressed in her support of the Knights Ferry Museum. Her family, which included younger brother, Nilius Jr. (1915-1993), moved to Modesto when she was seven. She met Julio Gallo at a dance following a Modesto High School graduation. He borrowed a pen to write her name on his shirt cuff. The couple eloped to Reno, Nevada, on April 8, 1933, for which Aileen made her own wedding dress. Of German and Austrian decent, Aileen was the first non-Italian in Modesto's Gallo family, and she and Julio were married for sixty years.



**Anna & Nilius Lowe
Nilius Jr. & Aileen**



**Aileen & Philip Gallo,
and Nilius Lowe,
c. late 1950s.**

**Julio & Aileen Gallo
April 8, 1933**

Susann Aileen Gallo, known to all as 'Sue', was born in Modesto on May 28, 1936, and was followed two and a half years later by brother, Philip (1938-1958). At age sixteen, she announced to the family her desire to become a nun. Her parents encouraged her to finish school before finalizing this big decision. After graduating from Modesto High School, she followed her brother, Bob, to Oregon State University in Corvallis, Oregon. There, she majored in Home Economics, was a song leader, and joined a sorority Kappa Alpha Theta. While at OSU, she fell in love with Jim Coleman, and the couple married on September 1, 1957. Jim and Sue would go on to have eight children, 28 grandchildren, and 21 great-grandchildren.



Susann Gallo

Julio's mother, Assunta 'Susie' (1887-1933), quickly taught Aileen how to cook many Italian recipes. Julio and his brother Ernest (1909-2007) opened E. & J. Gallo Winery within months of Julio's marriage to Aileen. The following year, the couple welcomed their first child, Robert ('Bob'). Aileen's love of cooking and gardening grew, she cultivated her own organic garden, and she shared its bounty with loved ones.



Aileen Gallo
Mid 1980s

It would be impossible to mention all of Aileen and Sue's contributions, as they were known to often donate anonymously. In 1976, Aileen notably convinced her husband to purchase the McHenry Mansion as a gift to the City of Modesto, in a cooperative effort with Mayor Lee Davies, a gesture which remains held in high esteem by local citizens. She also served as a director of the McHenry Museum Society for several years in the early 1980s. Aileen was a fifty-two-year member of the Modesto Garden Club, and the Garden Clock at Modesto's Centre Plaza is dedicated in her memory for her efforts to the organization and community, including her founding of the annual Camellia Show in Modesto. A tireless campaigner and benefactress for the Salvation Army, both Aileen and Sue were supporters of the Modesto Gospel Mission, including contributing to fund a larger new location for the organization, and champions for Community Hospice. It was with Aileen's support that the Julio R. Gallo Foundation 'Tree of Lights' has become a tradition at Christmas time in front of Sutter-Memorial Medical Center, at the corner of Briggsmore and Coffee in Modesto. Aileen was also active with the Women's Progressive Club and the Modesto Symphony Guild. She was integrally involved in the Gallo family's invested time and effort to benefit St. Stanislaus Catholic Church, including aid to construct a new church on Maze Boulevard. The new church opened in 2008, nine years after Aileen's death, July 21, 1999.

Loving, authentic, caring, and devoted, were character strengths both Aileen and Sue exuded. According to the family, whether during prayer, a meal, or any family gathering, Aileen stressed the importance of family unity, which became a core value. Both Aileen and Sue were role models for the values they instilled in their growing family. This modeling, especially of service to community, remains engrained in the family today.



Aileen & Sue
10th Anniversary Modesto Charity
Antique Show



Aileen Lowe Gallo
April 29, 1913-July 21, 1999

Along with raising her family, Sue was a true entrepreneur. She had a love for art history and took classes at Modesto Junior College, which furthered her passion for eighteenth and nineteenth century antiques. In 1985, she opened Vine Cottage Antiques on 'G' Street in Modesto. Later moving the business to San Francisco, she changed the name to Garden Court Antiques, and spent close to forty years in the industry. She founded the Modesto Charity Antique Show, which ran for nearly two decades. According to her daughters, "She had impeccable taste and had a knack for selecting antiques which she felt had 'soul'." She followed in her mother's philanthropic ways, aiding organizations including the McHenry Mansion, Modesto Symphony, Townsend Opera, and Modesto High School. She was instrumental for years with the BASH fundraiser, which supported Central Catholic High School. To add to this, she also helped back the Gallo Center for the Arts (whose efforts were started by Sue's sister-in-law, Marie Gallo (1935-2021)), the State Theater, Catholic Social Service Guild, Daughters of Charity, and Sisters of the Cross. The Coleman's worshiped regularly at St. Joseph's Catholic Church for over fifty years, and Sue attended daily mass for many years.

More recently in 2021, Jim and Sue Coleman mourned the passing of their third child, son Bradley. In 2022, Jim and Sue celebrated sixty-five years of marriage. Two months later, Sue passed away – on November 25, 2022. In her eulogy, daughter Anne shared, "Mom aspired to live an extraordinary life, setting high expectations for herself, and often questioned whether she was doing a good job, all the while impressing others with her poise, tremendous strength, fortitude, conviction, and gracious heart."

Both mother and daughter demonstrated genuine devotion to family, friends, and community. Aileen Lowe Gallo and Sue Gallo Coleman have left inspiring legacies.



Susann Gallo Coleman
May 28, 1936-November 25, 2022

*Information for this article comes from various *Modesto Bee* Articles, *Ernest & Julio: Our Story*, Ernest & Julio Gallo with Bruce B. Henderson, (1994). Other information was provided and edited by the Coleman Family and Keith Highiet.

A Legacy to Honor



2010 Community Hospice Honor

TRUSTEES
 Julio R. Gallo Foundation
 City of Modesto
 Bank of America
 Beard Land Management Co.
 Design and Studio (Tramuel)
 Fred T. Franzia
 John Franata, Jr.
 Joseph S. Franzia



THE JULIO AND AILEEN GALLO ROSE GARDEN
 A garden reflects the beauty of God's creation. Julio and Aileen spent many happy hours tending their own beautiful garden. The people of Modesto dedicate this rose garden to them in appreciation for their many generous contributions to our community. May life continue to be a reminder of their love for each other, their family and the people of Modesto.
 October 12, 1995

BENEFACTORS
 Tom P. and Shari Barron
 Joseph W. Carlo Co., Inc.
 The Dammell Family
 The DiMare Family
 William and Frances Eakin
 Albion and Lynn Feinbergson
 John and Celesta Podesto
 Jon and Natalie Shastid
 R. V. "Bud" and Patricia Stone
 Tom and Diane Stone

Portrait in McHenry Mansion

McClatchy Square



Garden Club Clock in Centre Plaza, dedicated in 2001 to the memory of Aileen Gallo

To Our Friend and Fellow Gardener
Aileen Gallo
 Modesto Garden Club
 April 7, 2001
 Julio R. Gallo Foundation • City of Modesto

A SALUTE TO SUE COLEMAN
 WIFE, MOTHER, GRANDMOTHER, BUSINESSWOMAN
 FOUNDER AND DIRECTOR
 OF THE CHARITY ANTIQUE SHOW

 THE CATHOLIC SOCIAL SERVICE GUILD
 GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGES YOUR OUTSTANDING
 CONTRIBUTION TO THE SUCCESS OF THE
 CHARITY ANTIQUE SHOW.
 GOD BLESS YOU, SUE.

Charity Antique Show Founder Sue Coleman

*Photos of Garden Clock and plaque by Keith Hightet, photos of McClatchy Square and McHenry Mansion memorial by David Seymour, other photos on this page and others provided by the Coleman Family and used with their permission.

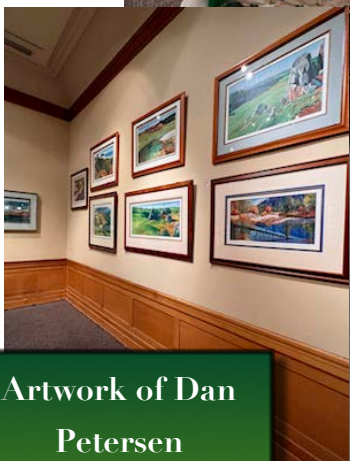


For Further reading on the history of E & J Gallo Winery, please re-visit our Fall 1983 write-up on the fiftieth anniversary of their founding. The piece was written by Jeanette Gould Maino (1912-1995). It is available for download on our website, www.mchenrymuseum.org. Simply click on publications, and then Stanislaus Stepping Stones Archives. Look for 1983, and scroll down the file until you get to fall, it will not disappoint.

Updates



- The McHenry Museum Store is decked out for St. Patrick's Day, come by, and find that special "lucky" trinket.
- The Changing Exhibit Room now features of the watercolors of artist Dan Petersen (1937-2021). Mr. Petersen taught for many years at Modesto Junior College, this exhibit was organized by his widow Lila to honor his memory and display is amazing talent.
- The Board of Directors of the McHenry Museum & Historical Society met on February 28, 2023.



Artwork of Dan Petersen

IT HAPPENED THEN...

- On March 11, 1923, *the Modesto Bee* reported that "Latz's Department Store" was opening new departments to their forty-year-old business. A new cloak room and basement ready-to-wear sections were added to the store. Simply four years later, Latz's would be sold to the Loeb Brothers, read our May 2022 article for more Loeb's.
- Beware the Eides of March and be aware of the 1970s trends. On March 15, 1973, "Waterbed Kingdom" opened its second location at 318 McHenry Ave. Alas, this store no longer exists.
- 10 Years ago, Modesto Centre Plaza went super green at the third annual "Lucky Fest," billed as the largest pub-crawl in Northern California. The March 17, 2013 event, saw the addition of twenty-five pubs to the event.

