



# The Frangadakis Family -

## GENERATIONS OF PATRIOTS

By Genevieve Laucher

Photos by Teresa Trobbe and  
Provided by the Frangadakis Family



We would like to thank  
**The Villa Galleria**  
for bringing you this month's  
cover story.

Mike Frangadakis lives by the guiding principle of Philotimo, a Greek concept that doesn't have an exact translation, but roughly means doing the right thing and lifting up all those around you. Philotimo shines through in Mike's actions: honoring his heritage, our community, and our veterans.

Mike was born in San Francisco in 1947, and grew up in the Westlake suburb of the City. His father owned the downtown nightclub Barbary Coast and a number of bars and restaurants. When Mike was ten years old, his family moved to Cupertino, where he was the first class to attend Miller Junior High. The high school in Cupertino was full, so Mike was bussed into Sunnyvale, where he went to Fremont High School. There, he was very involved in sports, participating in cross country, wrestling, and tennis all four years.

Another huge part of Mike's life growing up was his family's Greek heritage and their involvement in the Greek Orthodox Church. All four of Mike's grandparents came from the Greek island of Crete, the oldest civilization in Western Europe. Although both of Mike's parents were born in Utah, where his grandparents moved to be coal miners, their paths never crossed as children. It wasn't until after Mike's father returned from four years serving in the Army Air Force in World War II that he met Mike's mother at a Greek convention in San Francisco.

Mike learned to speak Greek first, because his grandparents lived with his family and did not speak any English. His uncle, aunt, and cousins lived on the same street, and Mike lived in both households. Mike grew up with his younger sister, Deborah, and their three cousins, Dr. Kenny, Lonnie, and Marilyn, who were more like siblings. The family's social life consisted of time with relatives and heavy involvement in the church. Mike's grandparents instilled in him the philosophy of Philotimo and from a young age, he was hardworking and involved in his community.

After graduating high school, Mike moved to Milwaukee, Wisconsin to attend the top-rated dental technology school. His goal was to be a dental technician for his cousin, Dr. Kenny, who had just become a dentist. He graduated after a year in an accelerated program. In 1967 right after his graduation, Mike got his draft notice. The Vietnam War was escalating, and he had a month to either enlist or get drafted. Mike enlisted as a dental technician in the Army for three years.

Mike first attended medic training at Fort Sam Houston, then Fort Ord. For his last year, he was the first one in his unit to receive orders to go to Vietnam as a medic technician. He was stationed near the DMZ, and supported the 101st airborne and the 1st marine division. His duties included being a litter carrier,