Gabriel "Gabe" Bruni, 81, passed away Wednesday, Jan. 9 at his home in Yucaipa.

He was born Sept. 9, 1931 in Calabria, southern Italy. As a young man, he made his way to America on a ship called the "Buon Compleanno." A few years later, a friend took him home for dinner and introduced him to his sister, Josephine Palazzolo. It was a thrill for Gabe to learn she had crossed on the same ship only a year later. Two years later they were married and soon came west to a small town called Fontana. Quickly he went to work for the Fontana Unified School District in the Maintenance Department. He worked there 30 years until he retired, and then went on call for an additional 10 years just for good measure. Gabe and his wife also owned and operated Rafiela's Beauty Center here in Fontana for 30 years. They lived the first 24 years