

# **“Dear Michael Angelo...”**

## **By Pat Andrews**

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There was never any favoritism in the Trenton home of Mickey and Ruth Caruso. Four sons were raised with strictness, lots of love and a foundation that would ensure each of them future success.

For Michael, 43; Joseph, 41; David, 40; and Rob, 38; the words of their parents were always taken to heart. In recent years it was Michael who took a second look at the printed messages of his father.

Mickey, like every well-meaning parent, gave his children lots of advice. Michael realized that the prophetic words could be applicable to a wider audience. When his father died after a sudden, but brief illness, Michael went to work, partly out of a sense of tribute, more out of personal therapeutic value.

“Dear Michael Angelo” became an audio program featuring the letters Mickey wrote to all his sons and read by Michael.

Mickey was the youngest of 12 siblings and many of the letters were a step back in time to his early days growing up in small town Wyandotte. Small in stature, but large in confidence, Mickey was the darling of the family and the neighborhood. He was also a talented musician who passed on his creative genes to his sons.

Mickey, according to Michael, never kept a diary, yet the patriarch often chided his children for not putting their thoughts to paper in journal form.

When the matriarch of the Caruso clan died in 1992, family life was never quite the same. Mickey instituted an informal family dinner for his boys each Sunday and he would play host. It was an opportunity to test his spaghetti sauce.

That year, Mickey began to send his letters. He sent copies to each of his four sons, even though they lived no more than 20 minutes from him. One even lived in his house. The letters began “Dear Michael Angelo...” “Angelo” is Michael’s middle name.

Michael said he always enjoyed an open relationship with his father, but the son got to know the father better through written words.

In the summer of 1997, Mickey talked with Michael, then the head of a communications firm, about publishing the letters. It was not to be. That September, family life changed again. At the age of 73, Mickey was suddenly gone.

Michael went forward with the project, realizing that there was a greater audience for the “world according to Mickey.”

The first cassette version went almost exclusively to family and friends, but Michael knew that a wider audience existed. He went ahead with plans for an expanded version in convenient compact disc form.

“Dad’s letters were a method of passing the benefits of his life lessons on to his family. When a new person experiences his letters, in a way, Mickey’s family grows,” says Michael.

Borders Books & Music has become part of that family and Michael has been appearing at several of their sites for audio book signings. His first local appearance will be at 7 p.m. tomorrow at the Taylor store, 23000 Eureka Road, in the Southland Center. The session will include a free seminar on how to document your own family legacy and a prize giveaway.

Michael, as founder and president of The Edison House, an international consulting firm specializing in corporate and personal improvement, has delivered more than 1,000 presentations and keynote speeches on conflict resolution, team leading and pro-active communication.

His clients include Nortel Networks, Bank One, Rayovac and Hallmark.

Michael is a member of Optimist International and Rotary International and is a faculty member at Rockhurst University in Shawnee Mission, Kansas. He currently resides in Royal Oak, Michigan.

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**Michael Angelo Caruso is President of the Edison House, a Detroit-based communication company. He is the author of “5 Cool Ideas for Better Working Living & Feeling,” “Hmmm . . . Little Ideas With BIG Results” and the audio book, “Dear Michael Angelo – A Father's Life Lessons To His Son.” Mr. Caruso delivers 180 presentations per year. Click [here] to request booking information. Mr. Caruso can be reached at 248/546-9140 and at [www.EdisonHouse.com](http://www.EdisonHouse.com).**

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