



**PROCLAMATION POSTHUMOUSLY HONORING
ARROYO GRANDE NATIVE
ELSIE M. CECCHETTI**

WHEREAS, the Arroyo Grande community mourns the loss of native resident, community volunteer, and mentor, Elsie Cecchetti, who passed away on March 11, 2021; and

WHEREAS, Elsie was born on March 16, 1922, on the Carroll Ranch in Edna, and was the oldest of four children; and

WHEREAS, Elsie started out milking cows at the age of 5 until she was 15 and worked at numerous dairies to buy her school clothes. When attending Arroyo Grande Schools, she only spoke Portuguese, but taught herself English and graduated from Arroyo Grande High School in 1943; and

WHEREAS, Elsie met the love of her life, George Cecchetti, while working on the Cecchetti Ranch picking beans. George and Elsie were married in Arroyo Grande on September 15, 1945. They enjoyed dancing on Saturday nights at the Portuguese Hall, Square Dancing together and were members of the Hill Toppers Square Dance Club, Dave's Pairs 'N' Harmony and Mesa Twirlers clubs for many years. They spent 47 years together; and

WHEREAS, in 1957, Elsie became a school bus driver which, at the time, was a 1957 yellow Ford pickup and included a canvas-covered camper shell and bench seats in the bed. She drove the pickup for 2 ½ years until the California Highway Patrol said it couldn't be used for a bus. Elsie then taught herself to drive a 22-seat bus, purchased by Branch School, and continued driving larger buses for the Lucia Mar Unified School District until retiring in 1993; and

WHEREAS, Elsie was the Grand Marshall for the Arroyo Grande Valley Harvest Festival in 2016. She was a member of the Luso-American Fraternal Federation since 1946, Cabrillo Civic Club, Historical Society, Farm Bureau Association, a member of the St. Patrick's Catholic Church, honorary member of both the Arroyo Grande FFA and Arroyo Grande Sportsman Club, and many other organizations; and

WHEREAS, Elsie was a long-time coordinator of the Portuguese Celebrations and was often seen carrying the flags and marching alongside the queens and their courts. Many said she was the Portuguese celebration; and

WHEREAS, Elsie loved tending to her garden, canning the fruits of her labor and raising her cows and chickens. She adored her dog Shiloh, who she called her companion. She loved her children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren, along with numerous close friends whom she treated like family.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that I, Caren Ray Russom, Mayor of the City of Arroyo Grande, posthumously honor Elsie Cecchetti and acknowledge her long-time community and civic service, and dedication to the City of Arroyo Grande.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Seal of the City of Arroyo Grande to be affixed this 13th day of April 2021.

CAREN RAY RUSSOM, MAYOR



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