

Annette Funicello Fans' Forum



PRIMO's 2011 Christmas edition had as its cover feature a tribute to America's favorite sweetheart Annette Funicello.

She was the Italian American girl next door who won worldwide fame as one of television's Mouseketeers in Walt Disney's Mickey Mouse Club. Funicello then became a teen idol when she starred opposite Frankie Avalon in a host of beach movies of the early 1960s.

Redefining herself and her image through the television lens, Funicello connected to a whole new generation as the spokesperson for Skippy peanut butter. A perennial guest star on television sitcoms, dramas and mysteries, Funicello became ingrained in America's collective psyche. She is rightly considered one of the top 20 stars in television history.

Diagnosed in the early 1990s with multiple sclerosis, Funicello today lives out of the spotlight with her husband Glen Holt, working together in their foundation to raise funds and awareness of the disease.

PRIMO recently invited some of Funicello's most loyal and devoted fans to share their thoughts and recollections they have of their favorite star. Here is what they had to say about America's Anette...

Editor's Note: A close friend of Annette Funicello is Lorraine Santoli, a communications expert from Baldwin, New York.

Lorraine penned PRIMO's cover feature on Annette in last year's Christmas edition. In addition to her article, Lorraine offered an insider's view of Annette's family background and how Annette became spokesperson for Skippy peanut butter.



PRIMO feature writer Lorraine Santoli with Annette Funicello and husband Glen Holt.

On Funicello's Family Background...

Annette's parents, Virginia and Joe Funicello (both have passed on) have their family roots in Naples, Italy. Joe, her dad, was born there and came to the United States with his parents in the 1920's. Virginia was born in New York but her parents were from Naples as well. Virginia's maiden name was Albano.

On Funicello & Skippy...

Best Foods contacted Annette because they were seeking a spokesperson for Skippy Peanut Butter. They were looking for someone who had a sweet and motherly image and thought Annette would fit the bill. Annette went in for an interview with Best Foods and luckily, loved peanut butter. In fact one of her favorite things to eat was peanut butter; peanut butter and celery, peanut butter and cheese and peanut butter toast. And Skippy Peanut Butter was actually her favorite brand! She had eaten Skippy all her life. Needless to say, they hired her as the spokesperson for Skippy and she was under contract to them for nine years. She even used her own three children in some of the TV commercials in the first year of the contract.