



Jeannette Monteiro Leal

My name is Jeannette Monteiro Leal. I am a Cape Verdean American, married to Bradford Leal. And we have a daughter, Ashley Leal Sake. I was born in New Bedford, Mass on June 30th, 1947 to Antone and Corrine Montero. I have three brothers, Anthony, who is deceased, Eugene and Robert Montero. My maternal grandparents are Francisco and Maria Tolentino, and paternal grandparents, John and Maria Montero. They were all born in São Nicolau in the Cape Verde Islands. My grandfather, John Montero, was a whaler on the ship, the Wanderer, that was shipwrecked in Cuttyhunk. I grew up in Dartmouth in a strong Cape Verdean family, eating Cape Verdean foods like cachupa, galinha guisada, canja, jag, and other foods, listening to Cape Verdean music in our house and hearing the Cape Verdean language spoke in our house.

Both my parents could speak English and the Cape Verdean language, Creole. I lived on Milton Street in Dartmouth, where many Cape Verdeans who grew up in Dartmouth lived. A video of me and my brothers was made by the New Bedford Light about Cape Verdeans growing up in Dartmouth. I enjoyed doing that video very much. In Dartmouth, being the Cape Verdeans, we got along with many neighbors who were Portuguese and other nationalities. We didn't have much, but we were happy. I attended Dartmouth schools and graduated from Dartmouth High School in 1965. My parents were great role models who taught us to be respectful, kind, and thankful for what we have. We went to Our Lady of Assumption Church, which was the first Cape Verdean church in the United States, established in 1905, and is still going strong.

I was baptized there and made first communion and confirmation there. At Our Lady of Assumption Church, you get a good feeling of kindness, belonging, pride, love, and compassion. It's like a family. New Bedford and Dartmouth are great places to live and raise a family. We were lucky to live near the ocean with nice beaches to visit. There are many points of interest to see in New Bedford, with many cultural events throughout the city, like the Cape Verdean Recognition Week and Parade celebrating Cape Verdean independence since 1975, also the Portuguese Feast, and many other cultural events. I am very proud to be living in this area.