

LONG ISLAND

Last respects paid to John "Sonny" Franzese in Brooklyn funeral home



Mourners attend visitation for John "Sonny" Franzese at the funeral home in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, Wednesday. He died Sunday at age 103. Credit: Newsday

By Newsday Staff
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Mourners came in the misty rain Wednesday afternoon to pay their last respects to John "Sonny" Franzese, a towering, if feared, underworld figure.

Dozens of people attended the first of two viewings of the Colombo family underboss at B. Anastasio & Son funeral home in Brooklyn's Williamsburg neighborhood.

Franzese, formerly of Roslyn, died Sunday after a brief illness at the age of 103, according to family members. He had been sentenced to 50 years in prison after being convicted of bank robberies across the country. He was paroled several times but was released 2½ years ago as the oldest inmate in the federal prison system.

On Wednesday, his body was dressed in a black suit and a red patterned tie with black brogues. His hands were folded holding a rosary, and an American flag folded into a triangle sat near his head.

The funeral parlor held about 20 seats and about 10 floral arrangements, which formed a semicircle around the room.

Some mourners had ash on their foreheads to mark Ash Wednesday, the first day of Lent.

After the viewing, some of them walked across the street for lunch at Sal's pizzeria, where Frank Sinatra songs were playing on a loop, including "It Was a Very Good Year" and "My Funny Valentine."

"He had a good run," one woman relative, finishing lunch with her family, told the man behind the counter at Sal's.