

71-year-old woman dies in Naples Park house fire

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NAPLES — A Naples Park woman died in her home after it was gutted by flames Tuesday afternoon, according to North Naples Fire Rescue District Deputy Chief Sal D'Angelo.

Barbara Bonny, who celebrated her 71st birthday last month, was a lovely, hard-working and church-going mother and grandmother who worked at the Naples Ritz-Carlton for many years, according to a close friend who knew her for 10 years.

"She was a wonderful friend to everybody," Roseanne Zimmerman said.

The fire broke out before 2:46 p.m., when North Naples fire crews and the Collier County Sheriff's Office were dispatched to the 804 98th Ave. home. Within six minutes, firefighters arrived to find smoke pouring from all around the house, D'Angelo said.

"They were unable to make access at various points," D'Angelo said. "They basically went into a defensive mode."

All the flames had been quelled by 3:15 p.m., when crews entered the home to discover Bonny's body in one of the home's bathrooms. A cat was also found dead in the home, D'Angelo said.

The State Fire Marshal's Office is investigating the cause of the fire, while the Collier County Sheriff's Office investigates the death. A crime scene van was parked outside the home Tuesday evening.

D'Angelo said the fire investigation involves the entire home, but specifically mentioned the home's rear rooms, which appeared at the scene to have received heavy damage from flames. D'Angelo said the home was a total loss.

"The investigation is ongoing," D'Angelo said, adding that samples taken from inside the home by the State Fire Marshal's Office will be sent to a laboratory for analysis.

Zimmerman said Bonny rode her bike to her job coordinating room service at the Ritz-Carlton, arriving at 5 a.m. many mornings throughout her time with the company. Bonny loved her job, and when she was let go a year ago her life changed, Zimmerman said.

"She was not in good health for the last year," Zimmerman said. "She was pretty much homebound."

Bonny came to Southwest Florida from Grand Haven, Mich. nearly two decades ago to be closer to one of her two sons and her grandson, Zimmerman said.

"She loved her grandson and her son," Zimmerman said. "She was a very, very positive, nice person."

Zimmerman said Bonny loved to swim, and regularly attended Saint John the Evangelist Catholic Church on Immokalee Road. Zimmerman is part of a small group of friends of Bonny's.

The team attended each other's birthday parties, went to movies and watched after each other. When she heard of Bonny's passing, Zimmerman informed the other friends and came to Bonny's home to leave a rose.

"It was a yellow rose," she said. "That's for friendship."