



Catherine Vourlas Arakas

March 9, 1926 - May 25, 2023

Catherine Vourlas Arakas, 97, fell asleep in Our Lord on May 25, 2023. She was a beloved wife, mother, grandmother, great-grandmother, aunt, and godmother, as well as a friend to so many who will feel her absence. She was born on March 9, 1926, in Portsmouth, Virginia, the third of four Vourlas children.

A graduate of Maury High School, she married the love of her life, Tommy I. Arakas, in 1946 and arrived in Asheville as a new bride. They settled in Biltmore, where they built a beautiful life together for 68 years until Tommy's passing in 2014.

She is predeceased by her parents, Drosoula and Efstathios Vourlas; in-laws, Mary and Isidore Arakas; and has now joined her brother, Nick Vourlas, and his wife, Mary; sister, Angeline, and her husband, George; sister, Frances, and her husband, John; and her loving son-in-law, John Chakales.

She is survived by her three children: Mary Arakas Chakales (John), I. Tommy Arakas (Sue), and Drucie Arakas Papafil (Ted). Seven lucky grandchildren got to call her "Noni," her special name as grandmother: Catherine Chakales Ortiz (Gabriel), Stamati Arakas (Cyndi), Katina Arakas Kenyon (Scott), Kyra Papafil Poulos (Sam), Paige Chakales Nikopoulos (Sam), Elizabeth Papafil Miller (David), and Nico Papafil (Marina).

A true joy of her life was to be a great-grandmother to John and Ben Dreessen, Maria Ortiz, Eleni and Sophia Arakas, Nina and Thatcher Kenyon, Demetra Poulos, Theodore and Johnny Nikopoulos, Zoe and Philomena Miller, and Katerina Papafil. She will be remembered fondly by many nieces, nephews, and godchildren.

She relished her role as a mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother, never missing one of their graduations, weddings, baptisms, and other special celebrations.

A lifelong member of the Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church in Asheville, she was active as a Sunday School teacher, choir member, and Ladies Philoptochos Society member – a philanthropic organization where she served as local chapter President and on the Atlanta Diocesan Board.

In the 1960s, she began the food services at Asheville Biltmore College (now UNC Asheville) before it became a residential university. Even after graduation, she would see the students she fed for years to come, and they always remembered her fondly.

As an active Shriner family, she was a member of the Ladies' Oriental Shrine organization. Over the years, her husband rose to Potentate of the Oasis Temple in 1987, and she supported Shriner community initiatives over the past 50 years.

You could always see her smiling face at any of the family's many restaurants over the years, including the Plaza Café in Biltmore, Wink's Drive-In on Tunnel Road, Satellite Restaurant on Merrimon Avenue, Captain Tom's Galley on Tunnel Road, Rak's Airport Restaurant in Arden, and Rak's Downtown Café in Downtown Asheville.

The family will receive friends on Monday, May 29, 2023, from 5-6:30 p.m. at Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church, followed by the Trisaigon (Prayer) Service at 6:30 p.m. A Funeral Service will be held on Tuesday, May 30, 2023, at Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church at 11:00 a.m. Father Michael Diavatis will officiate. Interment will be at Riverside Cemetery following the Funeral Service.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church or the Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Foundation, 227 Cumberland Avenue, Asheville, NC 28801.

Morris Funeral & Cremation Care, 304 Merrimon Avenue is in charge of arrangements. Condolences may be sent through the website www.morrisfamilycare.com.

Cemetery Details

Riverside Cemetery

53 Birch Street
Asheville, NC 28801

Previous Events

Reception

MAY 29. 5:00 PM - 6:30 PM (ET)

Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church
227 Cumberland Ave.
Asheville, NC 28801
<http://www.holytrinityasheville.com/>

Funeral Service

MAY 30. 11:00 AM (ET)

Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church
227 Cumberland Ave.
Asheville, NC 28801
<http://www.holytrinityasheville.com/>

Tribute Wall



“ *Catherine Vourlas Arakas*

October 07, 2023 at 11:15 AM



“ *She was such a beautiful and classy lady. Always so sweet and kind. Her beautiful smile will always stay in our heart. May she rest in peace.*

Patrcia and Ilias Sellas - May 29, 2023 at 04:26 PM



“ *Country Basket Blooms was purchased for the family of Catherine Vourlas Arakas.*



May 29, 2023 at 04:20 PM



“ *Country Basket Blooms was purchased for the family of Catherine Vourlas Arakas.*



May 29, 2023 at 04:20 PM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Catherine Vourlas Arakas.*



May 29, 2023 at 10:03 AM



“ *Tommy and Mary: I have memories of your mom and dad. My parents were friends with them. My prayers and thoughts are with you and your family. — Roger Mitchel*

roger Mitchel - May 27, 2023 at 10:51 PM



“ *Catherine was a kind and loving person. Her focus on family and church was inspiring and constant. She and her husband Tommy were excellent neighbors to Creekside. Her warm presence will be missed.*

Julia Williamson - May 27, 2023 at 07:52 AM



“ *Sweet and kind Catherine. Always a lady... a true gentlewoman. I will miss her, and always remember her when I visit the church in Asheville.
Sending love, prayers, and deepest sympathy to her devoted children.*

Maria L. Collias - May 26, 2023 at 10:07 PM