



Mr. Tommy I. Arakas

March 12, 1925 - November 18, 2014

Tommy Arakas, 89, passed away, Tuesday, November 18, 2014 and had a life filled with a loving family and many, many friends. Tommy was born to Mary and Isidoros Arakas on March 12, 1925, and was raised in Biltmore. He graduated from Lee H. Edwards High School before joining the US Navy during World War II. He met his beautiful wife, Catherine, while stationed in Norfolk, VA and they wed the next year. When his father became ill, Tommy took over the Plaza Café in Biltmore village and thus began a long career as a restaurateur. He co-owned and operated with his cousin, John Xenakis, Wink's Drive In on Tunnel Road. Following Winks, he operated Rak's Airport Restaurant for over two decades, and after his retirement, he operated Rak's Downtown Café. While continuing to operate his restaurant, he and his long time friends, the Zourzoukis brothers, founded Asheville Catering Service and served the greater Asheville community.

Tommy had a generous heart and worked tirelessly through a variety of organizations to give back to those in need. Tommy was a 32nd degree Mason and a member of the Biltmore Masonic Lodge as well as a member of several service clubs including the Land of the Sky Shriners, the Elks, the Lions, and AHEPA. He was the past president of the Asheville Shrine Club and the first president of the Land of the Sky Shrine Club. The Shrine club kitchen bears his name for his many years of service to that organization. He proudly and humbly served as Potentate of Oasis Temple in 1987. He was

also a member of the Country Club of Asheville for many years and loved playing golf with his Bandits.

Tommy was married for 68 years and had 3 children: Mary Arakas Chakales (John, deceased), Tommy Arakas (Sue) and Drucie Arakas Papafil (Ted). Tommy was adored and respected by his seven grandchildren, Catherine Chakales Dreessen (e. Gabriel), Stamati Arakas (Cyndi), Katina Arakas Kenyon (Scott), Kyra Papafil Poulos (Sam), Paige Chakales Nikopoulos (Sam), Elizabeth Papafil Miller (David) and Nico Papafil (e. Marina) and delighted in playing with his ten great-grandchildren.

A dedicated member of Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church, Tommy was a living example of his faith and served his church in countless capacities including president of the Parish Council. He was a pillar of the Holy Trinity parish and was a role model to many throughout his life.

Tommy was blessed with the richness that a loving family and many wonderful friends bring to a person's life. He will be greatly missed by so many who knew him and loved him.

A trisagion service will be held 7:00 PM, Thursday, November 20, 2014 at Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church, 227 Cumberland Street. Funeral services will be held 2:00 PM, Friday, November 21 at Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church. Father Michael Diavatis will officiate. Interment will immediately follow at Riverside Cemetery. Graveside rites will be presented by Biltmore Masonic Lodge #446.

His family would like to thank all of the wonderful people from CarePartners and the Golden Living Center who provided him with excellent care during these last months.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church, P.O. Box 8369, Asheville, NC, 28814 or to Shriner's Hospitals, c/o Oasis Temple, 604 Doug Mayes Place, Charlotte, NC, 28262.

Cemetery Details

Riverside Cemetery

53 Birch Street
Asheville, NC 28801

Previous Events

Trisagion

NOV **20**. 7:00 PM (ET)

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

Funeral Service

NOV **21**. 2:00 PM (ET)

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

Tribute Wall



“ *Mr. Tommy I. Arakas*

October 07, 2023 at 11:15 AM



“ *I worked for Mr. Arakas for many years. I just found out about his passing just now. It breaks my heart. He was more like a father to me. I have missed him ever since I changed jobs. I know the family will miss him deeply! I love you always! Celina Conner*



Celina conner - December 11, 2016 at 12:02 PM



“ *Dear Tommy,
We are so sorry to hear about the loss of your father. Our heartfelt sympathy to you, Sue and your whole family.*

Elaine and Ken Blanton

Elaine Blanton - November 26, 2014 at 08:47 PM

TM

“ Mrs. Arakas, Mary, Tommy, Susie and all of your wonderful family,

I am so very sorry to hear of the loss of Mr. Arakas. He was always one of the kindest gentlemen I ever knew. The generosity and love he showed everyone around him will never be forgotten. He leaves a legacy behind of what it means to be a humble man who brought so much joy to all of those he encountered, just by sharing his warm smile and big heart. He will be greatly missed by all those who knew him.

I am thinking of you and you are in my prayers. Teri Morris

Teri Morris - November 24, 2014 at 08:46 AM

KJ

“ To the Arakas Family,
So sad to learn of Tommy's passing. We will miss seeing him and his warm smile; especially at the Greek Festivals.

Klaus and Jean Jockwig.

Klaus Jockwig - November 23, 2014 at 11:08 AM

BB

“ Mary,
Robert and I send our love to you and all of your family especially your precious mother. Your dad and mom are certainly a part of the Ramblewood family. We have such treasured memories of Mr. A and his hospitality for all of us at a "moments notice" !
Beth Billington

beth billington - November 22, 2014 at 10:48 AM

LG

“ *Mary,*

So sorry to learn of the loss of your beloved Father. My thoughts and prayers are with you at this time of sorrow.

In deepest sympathy,

Lawrence Greenberg

Lawrence Greenberg - November 21, 2014 at 10:43 AM



“ *Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Mr. Tommy I. Arakas.*



November 20, 2014 at 08:21 PM

TS

“ *Honestly, one of the finest human beings We've ever known! Played many around of golf with Tommy and always the perfect gentleman and sportsman! Truly a person that made this a better world to live in! Wish we could have a "scotchie" together! God bless the family...what beautiful memories of true integrity @ class! Tedd & Gail Smith*

tedd smith - November 20, 2014 at 06:36 PM

YA

“ It is with deepest sympathy that all your friends at Beverly-Hanks extend our love and prayers to your family during this challenging time. It is never easy to say good-bye to our loved ones, especially one who has meant so much to so many people. Tommy was a rare individual and his presense will be missed.

Your friends at Beverly-Hanks & Assoc. - November 20, 2014 at 12:25 PM

SB

“ Catherine , Tommy Jr. & Family,

We at FRS Asheville Showcase are so sorry for your loss and wanted you to know our thoughts and prayers go out to each of you. May God be your comfort and your strength in this time of sorrow, and may your memories be a balm to your hearts.

Sheila Bivins & Team FRS Asheville

Sheila Bivins - November 20, 2014 at 08:35 AM

MD

“ Growing up in Biltmore, my Mom worked for Tommy at the Plaza Café.. There would have been many nights that I would have gone to bed hungry if it had not been for this man. Thank you Tommy for being the kind of man that a "poor kid from Biltmore" could look up to.. May the good memories and the prayers from the people you touched thru your life, prayers from friends, and family get your family thru these sad times..

With loving memories, and prayers,
Margaret Carter Duncan

Margaret Duncan - November 20, 2014 at 08:19 AM

BH

“ *My wife Sallie and I have very fond memories of times spent with Tommy. We send heartfelt condolences to the Arakis family.*

Bill and Sallie Houser - November 20, 2014 at 07:40 AM

HF

“ *What a kind man with a wonderful family . Even though we were not related, he always made us feel like family.
Our thoughts and prayers go out to the extended Arakas family during this most difficult time.
May his memory be eternal.
Helen and Larry Flowers*

Helen S. Flowers - November 19, 2014 at 05:13 PM

SP

“ *Dear Catherine, Tommy and Family,
May God watch over and Bless all of you...
Our hearts go out to you for the loss of Tommy. He was such a SPECIAL man; loving, caring, giving, friends to Everyone he met. It was such a special day when he came in to Apollo to eat... he made my day to see him and give him a kiss on the cheek. May you all feel comfort knowing Tommy is in Heaven and He will always be in your Hearts and Thoughts for Eternity. With All our Love,
Susan & John Poulos
Theodora Poulos*



susan poulos - November 19, 2014 at 04:14 PM

MD

“ Ms Catherine, Tommy and family - We were so blessed to have known Tommy. He took my Mark under his wing and really made him feel special and needed. He is the utmost example of what a friend is. His dedication to the Shriner's was amazing. Even when most people would stay home and suffer, he came out to support every event. Still wanted to supervise the cooking and what a cook he was. I can still hear him fussing at Bill about the garlic, or how many tomatoes go on the salad. Loved him and will miss his smiling face until we meet again.
Mark & Debbie

Mark & Debbie - November 19, 2014 at 12:46 PM

JJ

“ Dear Catherine and Tommy, jr,
We lost one of the Very Best. He was a good man, lived a good life and had more good friends than one can imagine.- and we count ourselves among those.
He will be missed for a long, long time. He was our BUDDY.
John and Martha Jackson----and when I see him again, he can still call me Fred!! JJ

John Jackson - November 19, 2014 at 10:43 AM

TU

“ We are sorry to hear the passing of Tommy. May the memories and times the family shared together bring comfort to all. May God Bless your family in your time of sorrow. Zoie se sas.

Mr. and Mrs. Angelo Dotsikas and Family
Mr. Theodore Dotsikas

Tula - November 19, 2014 at 09:25 AM

LL

“ Tommy and Sue,

Our thoughts are with you at this time of loss.

Sandra and Larry Layton

Larry Layton - November 19, 2014 at 05:47 AM

HK

Dear Catherine and Family,

We were so lucky to have know this wonderful family.we will surly miss our sweet little buddy . it was always a joy to see Tommy and to visit with him and Catherine. may God bless you and we will keep you in our prayers.

Love Shirley and Howard

Howard and Shirley Keyes - November 20, 2014 at 10:15 AM

GG

Tommy and Sue,

So very sorry for your loss. "Mr. A" was one of the kindest and most generous people we have ever known. He will be remembered and missed by many people. Our thoughts and prayers are with you and the family.

Gary and Jan Garner

Gary Garner - November 20, 2014 at 10:24 PM