



Olga Kwasnjuk

February 29, 2016

Olga Kwasnjuk (nee Jackowa) was born December 29th, 1922 to Nikolaus and Sofia, in Proskurow, Ukraine. At 17, she was separated from her family and was forced labor in Germany. As the second world war neared an end, she met her future husband, Jaroslaw. They married and settled in Siegetsbrunn- Hochenkirchen , outside Munich Germany. They had four sons , Nikolaus, John, Peter, and Wolodemir, before emigrating to the United States in 1956. They had another son, their youngest, Emil. Jaroslaw passed from this life and his beloved Olla , in 1971. Olga had a green thumb, she loved her garden. If you gave her a plant, it was still thriving twenty years later. She also loved music. As a young girl, she hoped to be an opera singer. She passed this love of music to her children and grandchildren. Olga worked hard her entire life, as a knitter in Philadelphia's mills, long since boarded shut, and beside her husband, raising their children. Olga is survived by her five children, Nikolaus (Jeanne), John (Eunice), Peter (Alice), Wolodemir, and Emil, 15 grandchildren, 26 great-grandchildren, and 2 great-great grandchildren. Olga was a special, strong lady. She was a survivor. She passed from this world February 29th, 2016 surrounded by her family and loved ones. Special thanks to Doris and Herb Fredericks who hosted Olga in their home for many holidays and didn't leave her side. She now rests in the palm of our Lord Jesus Christ. Rest in Peace, Olga, know that you are loved, cherished, and will be missed deeply.

From Nik's eulogy at the viewing:

A long time ago, a young seventeen year old girl left her home in the Ukraine as forced labor for Germany, working on a farm, never to see her home or family again. This was something that she dealt with her entire lifetime.

Despite the devastation in the aftermath of war, hunger, and the shortages of everything, my parents met, married and started a family. I was born first, in 1946, followed by John, Peter, and Wolodemir. Life in war torn Germany began to improve. We settled in and lived life as Germans. Mom and Dad had a garden with chickens, rabbits, and an occasional pig. My dad even grew his own tobacco. They worked at any job they could get, mom even worked as a welder. The one job she always wanted was to be a singer. She had a

beautiful voice, but they didn't have American Idol then and that dream never became a reality.

She also loved nature, flowers, and gardening. Some people have a green thumb, she had ten green fingers. Whatever she planted thrived, including myself and my brothers. I personally think that I had a great childhood. I learned to be happy with the simple things of life; like pulling our big sled into the woods and bringing back our Christmas tree and decorating it with real candles and tinsel, or gathering real moss to line Easter nests for the Easter bunny, my mother's knodls, Bavarian dumplings with roast beef and gravy, and Olga's famous pierogies and apple strudel, and a big wooden barrel of her sauerkraut in the cold cellar.

In 1955, many of their friends were emigrating to America, Canada, Australia, and South America. She wanted to do the same. We finally got our visas, and with three wooden crates, we too moved to America. My parents found work at various places, then at a knitting mill, where they both worked, my dad until he died, and my mom until she retired. The owners of the mill were a German family who took them under their wing. They helped them fill out required paperwork and helped them to find a home. They soon welcomed the baby of the family, Emil. We all settled in and lived life as Americans. During the past few weeks her stories that I heard over and over growing up, sometimes getting annoyed, all of the sudden became words of gold. We brought a recorder to her bedside to record every word. I had to feed her, a spoonful at a time, and she said softly "I used to feed you, now you have to feed me." I held her hand for hours and we talked and sang till the end. I made complete peace with my mother.

My mother didn't become an opera star, but she did leave many memories, some good, some not so good. She left five sons, fifteen grandchildren, twenty-six great grandchildren, and two great-great grandchildren. And you know what, that's better than winning American Idol anytime.

Mom Rest in peace in the arms of our Lord. I love you.

Previous Events

Viewing

MAR 5. 9:30 AM - 11:30 AM (ET)

Foley Funeral Home
1132 Cottman Ave.
Philadelphia, PA 19111
(215) 342-7380

Interment

MAR 5. 11:30 AM - 12:00 PM (ET)

Sunset Memorial Cemetery
County Line Rd.
Feasterville, PA

Tribute Wall

“ *Fortitude, resilience, spirit, backbone.. just some of the synonyms related the noun- Strength.*

I look around this room and see many lives that share and exhibit the synonyms of strength, fortitude, backbone, spirit, resilience. A miracle that so many of us are the result of this woman's life we remember here today.

If someone came up to me and said, "Eric, please describe you grandmother Olga in a word?"

Well if I had to choose one of many. My word would be, "Resilient" - the ability to become strong, healthy and successful again after something bad happens.

I would like for us to consider today these enduring traits we inherited from 'her' Resilience, spirit, fortitude, courage.

We never had the chance to or witness her upbringing. The happiness, the laughter, joy, dreams, tears. Her loving parents who kissed her when she fell down.. "Olga are you ok?"..and praised her when she got good grades. Who held her hand all those years ago,, so many miles away. In that peaceful Ukrainian Village.

Resilience, valiant, brave, spirited.

The innocence of a child, the sole focus of her loving parents. Graduation? Where? War is getting closer. The celebration of a kind and loving young woman, open to all of the glorious possibilities of life, learning, dating..just being.

The war is getting closer. . Imagine barbed wire blocking your entrance to happiness. Imagine soldiers blocking you from ever being kissed again by your family when you felt wounded.

Resilience, lionhearted, grit, determination.

Yet she had to leave those that she trusted because of men who made bad things happen.

Resilience. Humility, Passionate, brave

Her heart did close through forced hard labor in a German country side. Hunger, threats did not slow her down.

Instead a work ethic was created. Resilience. She attracted a man named Jarislow to love her and marry her.

A gentle man to hold her hand.

Resilience became her main attraction. Along with her beauty & strength. And she was loved for it.

Despite destruction all around you, there is always love if you let it in. At it's core. Marriage-birth...Nikolaus. Johan, Peter, Walter. A family endured. Resilience

Mother hood- Resilience. A better life despite.

Surviving a war. Your country of birth in ruins. Millions gone-departed.

Resilience. A better life.

I need to add another word now- Inspirational

Sacrificing for a better life. You can't sum up a life in a word. too unfair! Our journeys are abundant if we realize it or not. She was not just the apparent. She was so much more.

That resilience was transported overseas. A entire family intact despite war...torn. America. Hope.

She worked hard on a meager salary of minimum wage in a factory. Knitting. Creating a home. Remaining honest, never cheating anyone or asking for handouts. Inspirational, resilient. Raising her sons.

The surprise of newborn Emil. The love, devotion to him. Until he could walk. Holding his hand.

Watching a father/husband leave us far too soon. Who now would hold her hand?

A widow- Resilience.

Cooking from scratch. Feeding us. Entertaining us. Loving us. Holding are hands as we crossed the street. I will always remember her holding my hand.

She hardly complained even as she lay so small under the covers these past weeks. Like a beautiful Ukranian girl. Her eyes misty with the reality and acceptance of what was to come. Nikolaus her first born. Holding his mother's hand. Holding her hand. Holding her hand. She breathed no more.

Resilient to the end of this life. I imagine she was met in heaven by the husband she loved, the family and country men she lost all on a beautiful hill of a village in her beloved Ukraine. Dancing, singing Ukrainian Folk songs and sharing her resilient journey of 93 years.

In the words- of famed Ukranian Poet, Taras Shevchenko-

*"Such is our glory, sad and plain,
The glory of our own Ukraine*

NK

“ 9 files added to the tribute wall



Nik Kwasnjuk - March 06, 2016 at 09:16 PM

“ To those who don't know me, my name is Nik, the eldest of Olga's sons. On behalf of myself, and my family, Jeanne, Jason, Sarah, Nikolaus, Eric, Carl, Monika, Tanya, Michael, and Margaret, and my brothers John, Peter, Wolodemir, and Emil. I wholeheartedly thank you for being here to say goodbye to my mother, Olga. I would especially like to thank the Bennett family and Doris and Herb Fredericks for everything you do, for always being there and all your love, support, and caring.

A long time ago, a young seventeen year old girl left her home in the Ukraine as forced labor for Germany, working on a farm, never to see her home or family again. This was something that she dealt with her entire lifetime.

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Nik Kwasnjuk - March 06, 2016 at 04:20 PM

CK

I am so proud of you dad and the time you spent with Grandmom in her last days. Hearing that you sang to her is very special and I'll think of that always. I love you dad!

Carl Kwasnjum - March 09, 2016 at 07:28 AM

EK

Dear Dad, I witnessed something really beautiful these past few weeks as you nurtured your lovely Mother until her passing. You were and will always be a good son! You touched many with your song and insightful words. I just needed to tell you that. I could see qualities in me that were passed on from you and her. I am grateful for her life and being your son. Love, Eric

Eric Kwasnjuk - March 09, 2016 at 11:13 PM

JK

“ 4 files added to the tribute wall



Jeanne Kwasnjuk - March 05, 2016 at 05:55 PM

NT

“ Nicolas and Lee Tereschuk purchased the Sweetest Sunrise Bouquet for the family of Olga Kwasnjuk.



Nicolas and Lee Tereschuk - March 04, 2016 at 09:49 AM

JK

“ 47 files added to the album Olga and family



Jeanne Kwasnjuk - March 03, 2016 at 09:55 PM

JK

“ 5 files added to the album *New Album Name*



Jeanne Kwasnjuk - March 03, 2016 at 09:51 PM

JK

“ *Jeanne Kwasnjuk lit a candle in memory of Olga Kwasnjuk*



Jeanne Kwasnjuk - March 03, 2016 at 07:02 PM

JK

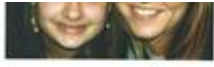
“ 6 files added to the tribute wall



Jeanne Kwasnjuk - March 03, 2016 at 06:57 PM

JK

“ 7 files added to the tribute wall



Jeanne Kwasnjuk - March 03, 2016 at 06:56 PM

JK

“ 4 files added to the tribute wall



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JK

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Jeanne Kwasnjuk - March 03, 2016 at 06:51 PM

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Jeanne Kwasnjuk - March 03, 2016 at 06:47 PM

DO

“ Doris lit a candle in memory of Olga Kwasnjuk



Doris - March 03, 2016 at 04:34 PM

HC

“ Howard and Jennifer Carroll purchased the Strength & Solace Spray for the family of Olga Kwasnjuk.



Howard and Jennifer Carroll - March 02, 2016 at 06:13 PM