



Filomena Kepler

February 1, 1928 - December 13, 2020

Filomena "Mena" Kepler, 92, of Charlotte, died peacefully on Sunday, December 13, 2020 in Charlotte. Mena was born February 1, 1928 in Bari, Italy. In her youth, she took a job at a local Cantina during WWII, where she waited on American G.I.s. It was there she met a young man from Indiana serving in the U.S. Air Corps, Darwin George Kepler, who inquired about laundry service, to which Mena replied that her mother could help. Darwin and Mena fell in love, and after the war, she moved to Michigan, becoming the first Lansing Area Italian "War Bride." They married on December 21, 1944. Mena's charm and personality landing her a job as an elevator attendant at the Stoddard Building downtown Lansing, a job she parlayed into working women's retail clothing at Suites. Over 30 years, she also worked at Greens and Jacobson's. In her spare time, she did everything possible to be an American, including joining a women's bowling league. She had many other "war bride" friends whom she met as a member of the Young Woman's Christian Organization, which was predominantly a group of women who had come to the U.S. after the war. In 1951, she became a naturalized citizen, and she and Darwin raised their children.

Mena is survived by her sons, George (Garnett) Kepler, Richard "Dick" (Julie) Kepler, and William "Bill" (Lynne) Kepler; daughter, Cindy (Greg) Cummings; 12 grandchildren; 23 great-grandchildren; 5 great-great-grandchildren; two siblings in Italy, Teresa from Bari and Emanuele from Rome; and her nieces and nephews. She was predeceased by her husband, Darwin Kepler; their infant son, Franco Kepler; granddaughter, Karie Elsworth; and 3 siblings in Italy.

A graveside service will take place at a later date at Chapel Hill Memorial Gardens in Lansing. If desired, the family suggests memorial contributions to Grace Hospice or the Michigan Alzheimer's Association. Friends and family are encouraged to share memories of Mena on her Tribute Page at <http://www.PrayFuneral.com>. The family is in the care of Pray Funeral Home, Charlotte.

Comments



“ She made the best pizza and shared her skills with the Camp Fire Girls. Beautiful lady.

JOYCE DRYER - December 15, 2020 at 01:50 AM



“ My heart is broken as it aches from missing you. So many beautiful memories flood my mind. I know you're with God and all we loved who passed before you. I'll love you forever Grandma.

Andrea Mowery (Kepler) - December 14, 2020 at 11:46 PM



“ So sorry to hear of Mena's passing. Plenty of good memories growing up in Valley Farms just a few houses up the road from the Keplers. Bob Reed

Bob Reed - December 14, 2020 at 07:00 PM



“ I met Grandma Mena shortly after Derek and I started dating. I was immediately taken by her incredible homemade food, my favorite of which were her focaccia and cinnamon rolls. She was always trying to feed me, telling me I needed to eat more.
I was also completely in awe of her beauty and grace. It was obvious how much she adored her family and she made me feel welcomed the first time I met her. I feel at peace knowing that she is finally at home, in the arms of her love, Grandpa Darwin.

Brooke Cummings - December 14, 2020 at 05:16 PM