



Maria A. Lestyan

January 13, 1920 - June 13, 2019

With loving memory – On June 13 Maria Lato Lestyan, beloved mother of twelve, passed away at her daughter Virginia's home in Raleigh, North Carolina.

Maria Lato was born in Budapest in 1920. She worked in her parents' textile business and attended college studying art and estate management. She married John Lestyan in 1943. As WWII ended, the family fled to Germany to escape the Russian invasion of Hungary. After six years in Bavaria, the growing family immigrated to the United States settling in Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania. While raising twelve children, she pursued her artistic talents in various venues. When her marriage ended, her artistic gifts enabled her to support her family with commissioned portraits, painting exhibitions, and art classes. Through her art classes in Beaver Falls and later in Raleigh, Maria shared her intense love of art, oil painting and her insights into color theory and the connection between art and life. She formed lasting relationships with numerous art enthusiasts, many of them attending her summer art classes and painting workshops in Duck, North Carolina. She was a fellow at the Barnes Foundation attending lectures and conducting docent tours at the institute, and later at the North Carolina Museum of Art in Raleigh.

Maria was an insightful artist, an avid reader, a stimulating and sympathetic conversationalist, a humorist, an accomplished cook and gardener, but her most cherished accomplishment was her children. Shortly before she died, she recited the names of all her children to tell them "You were the best thing that ever happened to me. You are the diamonds in my life. I LOVE YOU" –

– Maria Ann (John Skabo; Erica, Christopher, Heidi) – Valeria Melinda (Raymond Duda) – Csilla Johanna; (Timothy, Quentin, Joel) – Aniko Marguerite (decd.); Jennifer, Jessica, Paul, Maja) – Virginia Ann (Richard Patterson; Michelle, Robert, Eric, Tristan) – Suzanne Katherine (Jeffrey Carroll; Elizabeth, Stephanie) – Stephen Michael (Melinda; Lauren, Stephen Ross) – Kathleen Louise (Marcel Tourdot; Marcel, Linee) – Elizabeth Philomena (David LaSala; Michael, Mark, Geoffrey, Thomas) – John Thomas (Ildiko; Patrick, Thomas, Catherine) – Peter Paul (Sarita) – Joseph Attila.

She is also survived by 32 great grandchildren and 2 great great grandchildren.

She will be sadly but lovingly missed by her family and all who knew her.

Private services will be held at a later date.

Comments



“ When I read the obituary in the Times of Maria Lato Lestyan formerly of Beaver Falls, I got a rush of memories of this beautiful and wonderful lady. It brought back thoughts of a painting I commissioned by her, along with the memories of family get-to-gatherings. The obituary read like the story of "The Sound of Music". My sincere condolences to all the family with love and sadness.
Our thoughts and prayers,
Leonard L Chiappetta of Beaver Falls.

Joseph Smolenski III - June 19 at 02:20 PM



“ Jill Kremin lit a candle in memory of Maria A. Lestyan



Jill Kremin - June 18 at 06:44 AM



“ I grew up on Orchard Street when the family came here. Played with Mary mostly and have fond memories. Your Mother was a beautiful lady. Deepest Sympathy to the family
Wilma Billie Bednar Farkas

Wilma Bednar farkas - June 18 at 03:15 PM



“ I too took art lessons from her and went to school with some of her children and can remember their house, the former Widener house.

Mark Andrews - June 18 at 02:49 AM



“ Dearest Ginny and family. It is with such great sadness and love to receive news of Maria's passing. I have been thinking about her so much in recent weeks and was planning to call to say hi. Always loved every word she spoke about life and art and will truly miss her. I have all her cards and letters she sent me and books via you. And feel do blessed to have had the special experience to have had her and your family in my life. Taking the art classes with Maria in your large home in PA. was an incredible gift and made such a great impact to me. All of her lessons gave me courage to make art. I wanted to tell Maria about a painting I am working on now. I am calling it a "Living Painting: Mycorrhizae". The pigments are from fruits and

vegetables and 3 plants I am rooting are part of the painting and ideas about the microscopic nutrients imaginable around the roots are part of the image. I know Maria will be with us in our hearts forever. I wish I could be there to help you in your sorrow. Hope I can call you from time to time to hear how you are. Sending all my love to you and your family. Mary Rieser Heintjes

Mary Rieser Heintjes - June 17 at 08:02 PM



“ Hi. Wanted to relate that I first met Mrs. Lestyan when I was 6 years old and my Mom took me take her Saturday art classes that she started to give at St. Mary's church/school in Beaver Falls. I still have a drawing or two from that class I think. We also made long cloth tapestries of birds and tree branches gluing on felt shapes and accepting with paint/ink. Trying to remember. Mary Rieser Heintjes

Mary Rieser Heintjes - June 18 at 10:15 AM



“ Joe and Family,
Sorry to read about your mother's passing. She was a very talented and resourceful lady!
Our prayers are with you and your family.
Doug Midon

Doug Midon - June 16 at 01:47 PM



“ Your mother was an amazing women and and an inspiration. In Beaver Falls I attended her art classes in her home. Great teacher ...the Best. My sympathy to the family. She made a difference in people's lives!

Marcia - June 17 at 11:16 AM



“ Lestyan family- I was so sorry to read of your mother's passing. What a strong, graceful, talented and beautiful lady. I remember taking her art classes and her passion of sharing her talent. I still have a painting that my mother painted in her class hanging on my wall. I truly felt that her life could be made into a movie-raising such a beautiful successful family. Even though your house is gone on Darlington Rd, I think of your family when I pass it's spot during my hometown visits. Reading your Mother's obituary-I was filled with joy-especially reading about her great grand and great great grandchildren--what a tribute to her legacy. Peace be with all of you.
Jill Campbell Foster

Jill Campbell Foster - June 16 at 09:16 AM



“ Much love to Mimi’s family. May the precious memories and Mimi’s words of wisdom keep her alive in your hearts forever

Julia Toomey Caldwell - June 16 at 08:10 AM



“ I will always remember New Year's Eve in her home. All her children and all of their friends....and the best sauerkraut ever. She was such a gracious woman. My prayers are for peace for the family.

Nancy Pelaia - June 16 at 07:57 AM



“ Maria raised the most beautiful children. Their beauty was inside and out.

Robyn Chiodo Miller - June 15 at 04:58 PM



“ I remember this beautiful lady well. My condolences to Maria and Valery, classmates at St Mary's Beaver Falls, and to all of the family members.

Victor F Mannerino - June 17 at 09:16 AM