



Olga Masso Marina

November 7, 2019

Olga Masso Marina, age 90; born December 14, 1928 in Jerusalem, Palestine; died peacefully on November 7, 2019 from complications after a sudden fall, surrounded with love and prayers by her family in Seasons Hospice at Presbyterian Hospital in Dallas, Texas. Preceded in death by her beloved husband of 51 years, Simon George Marina; parents Khalil Isaac Masso and Carmen Faraon Masso; brothers Julian Carlos Masso, Joseph Faraon Masso, George Masso, and Elias Faraon Masso. Survived by six children Caroline Marina Lutz, Micheline Marina Crockett, Charles Marina (Debra), Mary Marina Ackels (Larry), Henry Marina, and Alice Marina Totah (Jack); one brother John Faraon Masso, and four sisters Linda Masso Malouf, Mary Masso Massad, Viola Masso Farhat, and Georgette Masso Isaac (Charles), and sisters-in-law Cornelia Masso and Nanci Masso; fifteen grandchildren and thirteen great-grandchildren; and many nieces, nephews and cousins, all of whom adored her. Olga lived a long, blessed, and wonderful life. She was utterly devoted to her family and was renowned for her tireless work ethic, her love of business, her generous spirit, and her culinary skills as a gourmet chef, especially in the preparation of her delicious Lebanese dishes. Her life was characterized by a spirit of giving and sacrifice for her family. She had a rich and abiding faith in God, and was a devout Catholic, with special devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary. She prayed the rosary daily and mentioned without fail every family member by name in her nightly prayers. Olga grew up in Jerusalem, the fourth of ten children in a close-knit Lebanese family led by the imposing patriarch, Khalil Masso, and her gentle and lovely mother, Carmen. Her father was an astute businessman and, at an early age, Olga followed him around and learned all about business and commerce. She was truly her father's daughter and took naturally to the business world, exhibiting those traits of leadership, resourcefulness and feistiness that would characterize her entire life. Olga and her sisters were educated by the French nuns in Jerusalem, but she was the ringleader in the pranks and hijinks carried out within the convent walls. Even she would admit—she was a handful! Soon she would emerge as a young woman of classic beauty. Her movie-star good-looks would literally take your breath away—and she was often compared to Sophia Loren. Simon Marina was the lucky man who married Olga on February 2, 1948 in Jerusalem. They enjoyed 51 years of marriage until Simon's death in 1999, and raised six spirited

children. Until the day he died, Simon unabashedly professed his deep love for Olga, often saying that, “She is my entire life.” In the early years, they lived in Lebanon where their daughter Caroline was born in Tyre, followed by Micheline and Charles who were born in Beirut. Sensing a better life in the land of opportunity, Simon and Olga emigrated to the United States from their native Lebanon in 1955. Simon, Olga, Caroline, Micheline and Charles departed Genoa, Italy in December 1955 on the ship S.S. Homeric and arrived in New York City many days later. They were processed through Ellis Island, boarded a train and arrived in Brownsville, Texas on Christmas Eve. The grueling sea voyage was an ordeal for Olga, who was pregnant with her fourth child, Mary, born in Brownsville six weeks later. And she often recalled how young Charlie was running on the deck and almost fell off the ship, but was saved at the last minute from going overboard. Olga never got on another boat and she could get sea-sick even looking at a bathtub full of water! She always said that the greatest sight she ever saw upon entering New York harbor was the Statue of Liberty—the gateway to the American Dream. In Brownsville, Olga quickly got a job in a clothing store where she broke every sales record. Her reputation spread far and wide in the Rio Grande Valley. Olga’s business success was fueled by her ability to speak four languages—after arriving in South Texas, she added English and Spanish to French and her native Arabic. In 1959, Olga and Simon moved their family to the small West Texas town of Morton, where they opened The New York Store—a general department and clothing store. Their two youngest children, Henry and Alice, were born in Morton. Olga and Simon became pillars of the community and were among the prominent merchants in the area. They regularly provided shoes, coats and clothing to orphanages and to the needy. Their family flourished in the idyllic setting of a small town where everyone knew and cared for each other. They made friends for a lifetime. Olga spent some of her happiest years in Morton, where she was a full-time store owner and a full-time mother and wife. She could be seen walking to the store everyday in her trademark high heels carrying a baby on one hip. Olga was a success both in business and at home. She was truly ahead of her time and served as a constant role model for the many young women who admired her.

In 1980, Olga and Simon decided to move back to the Rio Grande Valley and settled in McAllen. They found a great location for their store on the bustling South Tenth Street and opened in time for the Christmas shopping season, specializing in Western Wear and Big-and-Tall Sizes. They enjoyed great success in McAllen and, after Simon’s death in 1999, Olga continued to run the store for many years with the help of her son. In all, Olga operated her store for 53 years and, as she would tell you, “I never missed a day of work!” Olga was able to travel with family members to Lebanon, the Holy Land and her beloved Jerusalem, to Europe, and to South America. At each stop she visited with her relatives and friends from around the world. In 2012, she came to Dallas to live with her daughter—but she left her heart with her store in McAllen.

In her later years, Olga enjoyed: spending lots of time with her grandchildren and great-grandchildren who came to know her so well and love her dearly and called her “Mema,” “Teta” (grandmother in Arabic) or more recently “Teta Olga,” visiting with her remarkable brothers and sisters on every special occasion, playing her trademark “derbeke” (bongo drums) at family reunions, cheering for the Dallas Cowboys and her favorite golfer Jordan Spieth, going to the great State Fair of Texas and the Botanical Gardens, regular trips to the casino, her favorite Lebanese foods, hot chocolate every night at 9:00 p.m. sharp, watching her Novellas and Shirley Temple movies, eating her delicious candies and sweets, and dozing in her recliner. Her number-one show was Wheel of Fortune, and her favorite football players were Jason Witten (she called him “Whitney!”), and Aaron Rodgers. And in a recent tour of Dallas Cowboys headquarters at “The Star,” Ring-of-Honor member Drew Pearson took off his Super Bowl Ring and put it on Olga’s finger! In 2018, she was beaming with joy at her 90th birthday party with so many relatives and friends in attendance. Olga was always fond of gold and fine jewelry. And she loved giving away her extensive collection to her loved ones so she could see them enjoying her distinctive pieces. She kept little for herself and her generosity was without limit. She would tell everyone how much she loved them and everyone loved her back. Above all, Olga loved her family. She doted on her children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. There is nothing she wouldn’t do for them and she poured herself out in utter sacrifice for their well-being, asking nothing in return. Your children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and descendants yet to be born will love and revere you forevermore. May you rest in the peace and tranquility of paradise with your Lord and Savior, your Blessed Mother, and all the angels and saints for eternity. We can rejoice in knowing that Olga lived a wonderful life.

Cemetery

Roselawn Cemetery

1201 S Main

McAllen, TX, 78501

Events

NOV **Entombment** 02:00PM

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Roselawn Cemetery

1201 S Main, McAllen, TX, US, 78501