



Lilita DiLallo

AUG 21, 1931 - AUG 20, 2020



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Lilita Straumanis DiLallo of Summit, NJ died August 20, 2020. She was a day shy of her 89th birthday, a day she undoubtedly would have used to give love and comfort to all those around her, just as she did every day of her well-lived life.

Lilita was born on August 21, 1931 in Riga, Latvia to the late Martin and Eva Straumanis. Her father was a scientist and Lilita discovered her own love of science at an early age. Her idyllic childhood was disrupted when the Soviets invaded Latvia, and at 12 years old, Lilita and her family fled her beloved country. Lilita, along with her parents and four siblings, spent three difficult years in a displaced persons camp in Germany before salvation came: Lilita's father's reputation as a leading scientist in the field of metallurgy earned him an invitation to teach at the University of Missouri, Rolla, allowing the entire family to move to the United States.

Lilita was 16 when she arrived, not knowing the language and not about to let that stop her. She learned English and excelled in school, ultimately obtaining a Master's Degree in Biochemistry from Loyola University in Chicago. It was there that she met the love of her life, Dr. Joseph DiLallo. The two of them settled in Summit, New Jersey, where they raised six children. As you can imagine, raising six children was no easy feat but Lilita made it seem that way as she approached each moment of motherhood with warmth and kindness. She cooked dinner for the whole family every night and made sure they always ate together. She was a skilled seamstress and sewed outfits for her children – ones they actually wanted to wear! She demonstrated for her children a love of reading; an appreciation for classical music; and an enduring interest in current events. She played violin and enjoyed singing in choirs. And she also taught her six kids, whether they liked it or not, that they better keep a brisk walking pace if they wanted to keep up with her and her long stride! But what her children will always appreciate most about their mom was that she was always there for them, both physically and emotionally. She was there for their big problems, their small ones, and everything in between.

Those six children have grown and they provided Lilita with fourteen grandchildren and one great-grandchild. Lilita loved her kids and her grandkids more than anything, and they loved her



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right back. Even the littlest of them flocked to her lap as soon as they could crawl. The flocking and cuddling kept going strong even as some of these grandkids reached adulthood. From the youngest to the oldest, they all recognized that their “Omi” was love in its purest form: she was completely non-judgmental; accepting everyone as they were and seeing the positives in them, which helped them see the positives in themselves. They will all be forever grateful to their beloved Omi and all that she taught them about love and compassion.

In addition to spending time with her family, Lilita filled her retirement voraciously reading novels, enjoying a glass of white wine at a nice restaurant, figuring out how to use FaceTime and somehow, always, being the most photogenic person ever, all the way into her last years and days. Her inner and outer beauty were always undeniable. The man who would most wholeheartedly agree to that statement is Lilita’s husband of 59 years, Dr. Joseph Anthony Matthew DiLallo, who passed away just a few weeks before Lilita. They created a beautiful life together, and now can continue to be together always.

Survivors include sons Johnny DiLallo of Tuscon, AZ and Joey DiLallo and wife Rachel Ruderman of Redondo Beach, CA; daughters Annie Newell of Huntersville, Laura Watson and husband Wade of New York, NY, Lisa Clark and husband Bruce DeCesare of Summit, NJ and Eva Nordstrom and husband Brian of Middletown, NJ; siblings, Ilze, Andrejs, and Liene; 14 grandchildren and 1 great-grandchild. She was predeceased by her much loved son-in-law, Thomas R. Clark on 9/11/2001.

A private family funeral will be held in Summit, NJ.

James Funeral Home of Huntersville, NC is serving the family.

In lieu of flowers, donations in Lilita’s memory can be made to The American Latvian Association <https://alausa.org/en/participate/donate-to-ala/>



Tribute Wall

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MM

Milton Mesko posted:

Our Sunday School teacher in Rolla MO in the mid 1950's ..her family lived 1 block from us.

February 2 at 2:47 PM

PD

Paula Deluca lit a candle in honor of Lilita.

DeLallo daughters tending to our kids at babysitters, Sunday dinners at the old restaurant where Huntley's tavern now sits with Lilly and Joe's teens and our tots! New Year's Eves dining out and sipping a little too much champagne with Joe's old Notre Dame classmate Al and his wife. Then the later Oak Knoll years when our daughters attended it's upper school and alum Lisa and Lili would pay visits to the Royal Boutique where "current moms" tended tables. Between our retirement to Idaho to be closer to most of our kids and my side of the family, and a pandemic here that has cut people off from things like frequent plane travel back to New Jersey and old haunts, we are stunned to be learning that one of the most loving couples we've known in our lives passed away within a short few weeks apart from each other. "Life unto life..." chill the champagne for a future toast we hope to share once again dear friends. Countless prayers for consolation, but also an infinite number of joyful memories, are our wishes for the kids and their own offspring and your extended families. Joe was the kindly, knowledgeable, attentive old fashioned kind of doctor reflective of a Marcus Welby era in which time spent with each one provided spiritual healing beyond the merely physical. Much love, Frank & Paula DeLuca + Joe&Shawna, Elia&James, Cissy and Alex



September 11 at 6:18 PM



Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Lilita by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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