Chopyak-Scheider Funeral Home, Inc.

470 Chenango Street, Binghamton, NY 13901 • (607) 722-4023 • chopyak-scheider.com

Mary Waselnak "Mary" Rodgers

September 3, 1922 – February 16, 2023



Mary (Waselnak) Rodgers of Vestal, fell asleep in the Lord on February 16, 2023, at the age of 100. She was surrounded by her family as she passed. She was predeceased by her husband, James W. Rodgers in 2000. She is survived by her daughter, Diane Rodgers Costello, her son-in-law, Dr. Michael Costello (as she always used to introduce him) and her most precious granddaughter Erin Costello.

Mary was predeceased by her parents, Anna Waselnak Vouchic, father Michael Waselnak and stepfather John Vouchic; brother Michael (Doris) Waselnak, sister Olga Helen Waselnak, sister Anna Alba and her brother Nicholas, who died during the final days of World War II while serving our country.

She was also predeceased by her mother and father-in-law Julia Rodgers and William Rodgers, sisters-in-law Artemesia (Harry) Clark, Themis (Ralph) Ward, Mary (Dr. Frank) Dyer and Helen (Frank) Menta.

Mary is also survived by her nieces and nephews, Donna (Rick Kirisitz) Berger, Michael R. Waselnak, Diana (Frank dec.) Oliver, William (Denice) Ward, Cheryl Ward, and John (Bradley Dunn) Ward, and Melinda Maczko. She is also survived by many great nieces and nephews.

Mary and Jim were married at the Archdiocesan Cathedral of the Holy Trinity in New York City. While living in NYC Jim was doing his chef apprenticeship at the Waldolf Astoria. They loved living in NYC. Mary loved the stores and the vibe of the city. She was thrilled that she was able to work at Macy's 34th Street Herald Square (Miracle on 34th Street). When Jim completed his apprenticeship, they moved back to Binghamton to be near family as they raised their daughter, Diane. Mary enjoyed her time working at Sisson's Department Store.

Jim had now become a professional chef but also enjoyed buying properties. To her surprise Jim came home one evening and told Mary that he had just bought the diner downstairs. He asked her if she could have it open at 5:00 a.m. the next morning as he needed to go to work. Because Mary supported Jim as much as he supported her, she awakened little Diane and took her downstairs and she (and sleepy Diane) opened the diner at 5:00 a.m. Upon opening, the early morning crowd of hungry Crowley's workers rushed in to grab coffee and a quick breakfast. Yet again Mary and Jim, as a team, exhibited their innate business acumen. The overnight purchase of the restaurant was a success. It allowed them to buy their first home and first boat. The highlight of many summers thereafter became the joy of “Sailing on the St. Lawrence.”

When traveling to Cape Cod one year and shopping in the quaint stores, she developed the idea of starting her own clothing boutique. With Jim's unwavering support, she opened the Casual Shoppe. She had no clue how to develop a business but, with her innate love of good fashion and determination, her business thrived. When she learned that she was about to become a Grandma, she then opened the Little Boutique Children's Shoppe. Mary valued all of her loyal and long-term customers as well as Grace Robble and Helen Schedler who worked in the shop with Mary.

They did enjoy traveling and were fortunate enough to be able to join Jim's father and family to journey back to the his “old country” of Greece. In their later years they became Florida snowbirds and enjoyed many winters in their Pompano Beach condo.

After Jim's death, Mary lived independently in their Vestal home. She made one last trip to the condo before she gifted it to Diane and Michael so that they and Erin could enjoy the place they all loved.

As her health began to fail, it became clear that she needed help (Mary strongly disagreed). However, Michael went to her home several hours each day to help Mary as well as maintain

Final Resting Place

Vestal Hills Memorial Park Cemetery

3997 Old Vestal Road

Vestal, NY 13850