

Violette King

Godfrey | Monday, January 4 2016

Violette King passed away peacefully, at her home, with her family at her side during the early morning of January 4, 2016.

She was born to Greek parents, Elias and Sevastie (Kotsakis) Papagianis on July 21, 1943, in Tirana, Albania, two months before the German occupation.

In 1945, she, her mother, and older brother were smuggled across the closed, Communist controlled border, into Greece, where they joined her father who had previously gone to Greece for surgery.



The family immigrated to the United States in 1957. Violette graduated from the University of Miami School of Cytotechnology. She attended Washington University in St. Louis, and received her bachelor's degree, with honors, from Southern Illinois University, Edwardsville.

She helped develop the curriculum for and was the first teaching supervisor of the School of Cytotechnology at Washington University/Barns Hospital from 1963 to 1967. Violette was the Cytology/Histology Supervisor for several medical laboratories in St. Louis from 1969 to 1974. From 1976 to 2008 she was the Laboratory Supervisor of Southern Illinois Pathology Laboratory, Ltd. in Godfrey.

Violette was the founder and first president of the St. Louis Society of Cytology in 1967. A ceremony was held in 1974 honoring her for this accomplishment. She was co-author on several scientific publications, served on the faculty of multiple regional, national and international cytopathology workshops, and in 1982, the Board of Directors

of the American Society of Cytopathology, then the American Society of Cytology, selected her, based on outstanding professional accomplishments, as one of the first cytotechnologists to receive full voting privileges in this medical organization.

In 1995, Violette founded and was president of Nursing Home Monitors, a non-profit advocacy organization for nursing home residents. She received multiple national, regional, and local awards for her dedicated efforts in that regard. These included, locally, the 2003 Women of Worth award from the St. Louis chapter of OWL and the Liberty Bell award from the Madison County Bar Association in 2004. She was featured in several magazines for her work in behalf of nursing home residents. In October 2002, the St. Louis Post-Dispatch called her, “one of the nation’s leading voices for nursing home reform.”

Violette was well known for her gardening hobby, which included her extensive plantings of various hydrangeas. In November 1996, she and her hydrangeas were on the cover on St. Louis Lifestyles Magazine, and in August 1997, the Alton Telegraph ran a feature article on her, headlined, “The Hydrangea Lady.”

She married Dr. Ordie H. King, Jr. in civil ceremony in Memphis, Tennessee on March 21, 1974. Shortly thereafter, they were married at St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church in St. Louis.

Survivors include her loving husband, Dr. Ordie H. King, Jr; daughter, Catherine A. King and her husband Michael Krutzsch; beloved grandson, Elliot Spencer King of Chicago; son, Alexander C. King and wife Joyce King of Godfrey; stepson Ordie H. King, III of Water Valley, Mississippi; stepdaughter Anna Lavelle King of New Orleans, Louisiana; older brother, Pete Papagianis and wife Beverly; nephew, Jimmy Papagianis and wife Kelly; niece, Maria Papagianis, all of St. Louis and her beloved canine foundling, Damon.

Preceding her in death are her parents, Elias and Sevastie Papagians.

Visitation will be from 4:00 to 7:00 pm on Thursday, January 7, 2016 at Elias, Kallal and Schaaf Funeral Home in Godfrey.

Funeral service will be held at 10:00 am Friday, January 8, 2016 at the funeral home.

Interment will follow at Valhalla Memorial Park in Godfrey.

Memorials may be made to St. Nicolas Greek Orthodox Church, 4967 Forest Park Ave. St. Louis, MO 63108.

Online condolences and guest book may be found at www.eliaskallalandschaaf.com