



Josephine Avila

January 13, 1913 - February 11, 2017

Josephine “Fina” A. Garcia Avila - 1913-2017

On Saturday evening, February 11, Josephine “Fina” Armao Avila (nee Garcia) passed away peacefully at her San Luis Obispo home at the age of 104.

Fina was the only child of San Luis Obispo pioneers, Manuel and Eleanor (Lima) Garcia. Fina spent the beginning of her childhood first at the Home Dairy (also known as the Garden Dairy) in Laguna, close to the current location of the automotive dealerships on Los Osos Valley Road, and then at Ranchita de Santa Fe (ranch where the Lima-Pereira Round Barn is located) in San Luis Obispo.

Though an only child, Fina had a brotherly relationship with first cousin, the late Dr. Luiz A. Pereira. Fina and Luiz attended the Laguna School (formerly located at the intersection of Madonna and Los Osos Valley Road) from 1st through 8th grade. As part of the San Luis Obispo social elite, Fina and Luiz were frequently mentioned in the social pages of the San Luis Obispo newspaper along with their parents.

Fina attended the College of Holy Names High School on Lake Merritt in Oakland, California. She excelled in sports, specifically basketball, swimming

and was manager of her crew team at Holy Names. Her love of sports continued to her death as she frequently watched the Lakers, Dodgers and Cowboys on TV.

Following high school, Fina attended Pomona College in Claremont, California. While in college, she participated in the orchestra, playing the piano and violin. She graduated in June of 1934 with a B.S. in Pre-Medical Studies.

Having an interest in continuing in the medical field, she attended the Women's Medical College in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. She was an X-Ray technician at San Luis Obispo General Hospital. Fina was one of the first women in the area qualified to administer the procedure.

In 1936, Fina married Francis "Frank" O'Reilly in San Luis Obispo. Although the marriage ended in divorce, the union produced two of her three children, the late Michael O'Reilly and Patricia (O'Reilly) Auyong.

In 1949 Fina married her soulmate, Frank W. Avila. Frank was the youngest brother of her best friend, Angie Avila, and Fina had known him all her life. When asked once what attracted her to Frank Avila, Fina commented that she couldn't resist him in his Navy whites. Little would Fina know what a large part the Navy would play in her life. Frank's career took her to Florida, the South Pacific, Monterey and then back to San Luis Obispo. In 1955, their son, Frank J. Avila was born.

Fina was a voracious reader, plowing through novel after novel. She especially liked historical and spy novels. She was probably the only centenarian that knew how to operate a Kindle. Fina was a librarian for 27 years at the San Luis Obispo City-County Library before retiring at the early age of 83. She continued on as a volunteer until the age of 88. Her hairstyle,

an elegant bun on the top of her head, became iconic in San Luis Obispo.

She also was a lover of animals. She was always happiest when she was surrounded by her pets, especially the three 9-year old dogs she called “the puppies” at the end of her journey. Second only to her love of critters was her love of travel. Fina visited over 30 countries and almost all the states.

Fina had a great sense of humor. She knew when she was funny. She also knew when someone was having fun with her. When she would realize one of her children or grandchildren was playing a joke on her, she would respond with a pointed shaking index finger while saying “Oh, you kids!” This gesture was lovingly referred to as “The Fina.”

Fina was preceded in death by her husband, Frank in 1993, and her son, Michael in 2006. She is survived by her daughter, Patricia Auyong (Nicholas), and her son, Frank (Erin) Avila, both of San Luis Obispo, California; and her daughter-in-law, Mary Lou O’Reilly Woodall (Gary) of Nipomo, California. She is survived by six grandchildren, Nicolette “Niki” Auyong Muñoz (Tony) of Simi Valley, California; Natalie Auyong Hoxie (Sean) of Rancho Bernardo, California; Claudine “Dede” Auyong (David Svetich) and Monique Auyong Speake (A.G.), both of San Luis Obispo; Patrice Auyong (Jack Bates) of Alameda, California and Timothy O’Reilly of Nipomo. Also surviving Fina, are 13 great-grandchildren, Allyssa, Kyle, Will, Dana, Lily, Rory, Brady, Duncan, Holly, Marco, Scarlett, Serene and Michael.

Recitation of the Rosary will be held at Reis Family Mortuary in San Luis Obispo on March 16, at 6:00 p.m. The Memorial Mass will be held at the Old Mission on March 17, at 10:00am, with a reception immediately after. For anyone planning on attending the Rosary and/or Memorial Mass, Fina has requested that a splash of color be worn!

In lieu of flowers, it is requested that donations be sent to Woods Humane Society, SLO Friends of the Library, or the Frank & Josephine Endowment at Cuesta College. The family of Josephine would like to give special thanks to her longtime therapist and caregivers who always treated Josephine with love, respect and dignity: Bridget, Sommer, Celia, Marivic and Tess. Condolences and personal notes can be sent in care of Reis Family Mortuary or at the website www.ReisFamilyMortuary.net/obituaries

Previous Events

Vigil/Rosary

MAR 16. 6:00 PM (PT)

Reis Family Mortuary and Crematory
991 Nipomo Street
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401
(805) 544-7400
k.reis1958@gmail.com
<https://www.reisfamilymortuary.net/>

Memorial Mass

MAR 17. 10:00 AM (PT)

Old Mission Catholic Church
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401