



Kathleen Marie Luiz

July 26, 1941 - January 21, 2025

Kathy Sylvester-Luiz left us on the morning of January 21, 2025, at 6:23 am.

But she is

still with us and will always be with us because she got us, and we got her.

She is and

will remain part of everybody who knew her.

Kathleen Sylvester-Luiz was born into this world on July 26th, 1941, at

Mountain View

Hospital in San Luis Obispo. She was the second of five children in a family with a

lineage going back to the Azores Islands. She was raised through her teen years in

Avila Beach, California. Her father, Joe, was a first-generation commercial fisherman.

Her mother, Pauline, said that Kathy was her “right arm” in the family. Mom would help

cook and take care of her younger siblings. She spent her days on the beach with her

cousins and siblings, where she became a strong swimmer. She was always a worker,

finding her first job outside the house at a snack bar in Avila, where she was a master at

drawing in customers when business was slow, by grilling some onions. The

smell

would lead people to the best food on the beach.

Her parents and family were active in the Portuguese community. In 1955, she was

picked as Queen of the SLO Portuguese organization. That year, she traveled to

parades and celebrations all over the state to represent her community. She inspired

her daughter, Bernice, and granddaughter, Lindsay, to carry on our heritage by being

queens and side maids representing SLO at Portuguese celebrations throughout

Central California.

Mom attended San Luis High School, then Arroyo Grande High after the family

relocated to Shell Beach. Following high school, she attended beauty school for a short

time before marrying the love of her life, Manuel Sr. They quickly started their family of 3

children in San Luis Obispo, California, by giving birth to Manuel Jr. (Manny), Bernice

and Paul, in less than 3 years. She also did not waste any time leading her children into

the best of all worlds: beach time, parks, social activities, travel and so much more. All

the while making it clear that the fun would continue if we were kind and respectful of others.

Mom had quite the range: 1st generation soccer mom, Bluebird mom, school volunteer. She was always there when her children's teachers needed help, as a

classroom parent, baker of cookies, or chaperone on any class outing that needed one.

But she also had a strong sense of justice and was not afraid of authority if it needed to

be challenged. A small number of school administrators learned to respect and fear

Mom. She was rarely angry, but if she was, it was righteous.

Mom was a psychologist to all who adored her. She was chef, tailor, domestic engineer

and so much more. She was jack-of-all-trades for the Portuguese celebrations, where

her legendary sweet bread created fierce bidding during the fund-raising auctions, going

sometimes over \$400 for a single loaf. As kids we were so proud of the energy that

filled the room when the auctioneer would change his pitch to a louder cadence by

saying "and now we have Kathy Luiz's sweet bread". People that were outside or in

other rooms would come in to witness the fierce bidding, then clapping when the lucky

bidder was able to claim the treasured sweet bread made by Mom. She was also

founder of the hottest ticket in town, Kathy's bus to Laughlin and Vegas. But her

proudest achievement was being a mother and wife. Her greatest love was her family.

Mom loved being a grandmother to Lindsay and Luc. She never missed an

opportunity

to babysit them, or attend an activity they were involved in. Becoming a great grandmother was one of her biggest joys, with the birth of Camila Nicole to

Lindsay and

her husband Nathan. Mom was able to celebrate Camila's first birthday this past

November.

After Dad passed, Mom returned to her Avila roots and worked for Manny at Avila Wine

Company, not far from the snack bar where she had worked as a teenager.

Mom helped

where it was needed, as she always did, and entertained customers with her knowledge

of old Avila by telling stories about the characters who lived and worked there, showing

people pictures and answering questions. She was a walking history of the town and its

people. Manny had business cards made up for her to hand out. Her cards said,

"Greeter and Storyteller". But her proudest quote was "I'm Just Mom".

In this fast-paced world of tech and increasing tension, people found comfort in her

presence. She was so steady because she was comfortable with being herself. Her

mojo was contagious because it came from her values and who she was.

She was truly courageous throughout her illness, and the medical support she received

made her last month peaceful. Those helping her included Dr. Joseph Cleveland, the

loving nurses of French Hospital and San Luis Post Acute Center, and other

health care

workers. And special thanks to Mom's gambling partners, John and Alice Sylvester, for

the help and companionship they gave Mom, especially in her last years.

Mom was preceded in her passing by her husband of 52 years, Manuel Sr., her sister

Eleanor, her brothers Richard and James (Butch). She is survived by her sons Manny,

Paul and his wife Maureen, daughter Bernice, her Grandchildren Lindsay and Luc, Her

brother Ed Sylvester, her great granddaughter Camila, 3 step-grandchildren, as well as

numerous cousins, surrogate sons, daughters and best friends.

What she taught us about life is simple but profound: Be happy. Be gentle. Be considerate of others. Be steady in kindness. Be like Mom.

Reis Family Mortuary is handling the arrangements. A viewing will be on January 29, at

5:30pm at Reis Chapel, followed by a Rosary at 6pm. A celebration Mass will be held

January 30, at 10am at Old Mission SLO, where Mom was Baptized, had her first

communion and was married.

Previous Events

Rosary

JAN **29**. 6:00 PM - 7:00 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/>

Funeral Mass

JAN **30**. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (PT)

Old Mission Catholic Church
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

Burial

JAN **30**. 11:15 AM - 12:00 PM (PT)

Old Mission Catholic Cemetery
101 Bridge St
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401
(805) 541-0584
<http://www.cfcsmonterey.org>

Tribute Wall

DJ

“ *Deolinda, Marianna, & Justin purchased the Full Of Love Bouquet for the family of Kathleen Marie Luiz.*



Deolinda, Marianna, & Justin - January 29, 2025 at 09:01 AM



“ *1 file added to the album Memories Album*



Reis Family Mortuary & Crematory - January 27, 2025 at 12:00 PM



“ *A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Kathleen Marie Luiz.*

January 25, 2025 at 03:29 PM



“ *Sentiments of Serenity Spray was purchased for the family of Kathleen Marie Luiz.*



January 25, 2025 at 03:29 PM