



Esther Abellanosa Lyons

December 5, 1935 - October 10, 2024

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Esther Abellanosa Lyons, a remarkable woman whose life was a testament to resilience, love, and joy, passed away unexpectedly on October 10, 2024, in San Antonio, Texas. Born Esther Eguia Abellanosa on December 5, 1935, in Tayabas, Philippines, to Sancho and Albina Abellanosa, Esther's life was a vibrant tapestry of experience that spanned continents and cultures, challenges and charm.

Esther called many places home throughout her lifetime – from the Shinto shrine-filled streets of Japan to the easygoing backwoods of Arkansas, with Brazil, New York, and California in between – but always seemed to find her way back to Texas, her final resting place. Esther's journey along the way was marked by an unwavering spirit that carried her through both early hardships and later prosperity, ultimately shaping her into a juxtaposed woman of extraordinary strength (well ahead of it being socially acceptable) but also compassion and love for those she cared about.

Though she did not have the same opportunities as some of her later generations, education was a cornerstone of Esther's life, a value she passionately emphasized to each of her children and grandchildren. She understood the importance and power of knowledge in preventing the

struggles that she had to endure, a message from Esther that has created an enduring legacy that continues with her great-grandchildren even now. Her love for her family also manifested in traditions that became legendary, like the ever-present pan of pancit that would magically appear whenever someone visited, or the secret handshake that slipped a \$20 bill into a grandchild's hand, which always felt like a fortune. Her generosity and the food that she served were as warm as her heart.

Esther was a matriarch who bridged generations and continents. She will be remembered fondly for her unique language – a strong, well-spoken accent that told stories of her travels with her husband Chester, either in the minivan or “The Rock,” the Chevrolet Suburban they took all over the United States, with tamales or Pancho's sopapillas always in tow. She was known for her distinctive way of ending cards and letters, typically closing with a simple yet definitive, “We're doing OK.” Her birthday and Christmas cards could always be counted on, ensuring no family member was ever forgotten. Separate factions of grandchildren could never agree whether to spell Esther's name “Mema” or “Mima,” but she didn't seem to mind either way. Though she may not like it, perhaps her most defining characteristic of her language was inexplicably yelling “SEX!” instead of “CHEESE!” when posing for a picture, no matter who was around.

Esther was no stranger to loss, being preceded in death by her parents early in life, her brother Ruben during the Bataan Death March, her teenage daughter Carolyn in a tragic car accident, her husbands (Ronald Jordan in 1973 and Chester Lyons in 2017), and all of her siblings by the end.

Esther is survived by her daughters, Sharilyn Shaw (David) and Ronda King (Tim); stepdaughters, Deborah Lyons and Robyn Lyons; grandchildren, Nicole Mahaffey (John), Dani McPartlin, Jamie Browne (Rick), Michael King (Becca), Joanne Bechtol (Cooper), Casey Hotchkiss (Toby), Brian King (Emily), Brisa Shaw, Mitchum Lyons, Morgan Dilks, and Jordon Runnerstrom (Derek); and

great-grandchildren, Christopher, Grace, Liam, Madeline, Clementine, Reece, Jordan, Sawyer, Magnolia, Emery, Jamie, Harvest, Jayla, Sunny, Theo, and Roman. She would surely want the world to know that she was preceded in death by her beloved dogs, Cookie and Bruno, and survived by an impressive colony of feral cats.

Esther's life was a beautiful reminder that home is not a place, but a feeling – and she made all of us feel at home throughout her life. Her traveling adventures, her love of education and humor, her humility and generosity, her cooking, and her boundless love will continue to inspire us for generations to come.

"I'm doing OK. Be safe. God bless, Mema/Mima loves you." – A final farewell, as Esther would have written it"

Tribute Wall

BF

“ 2 files added to the tribute wall



Becca Frasier - December 03, 2024 at 07:33 PM

MN

“ Mission Park North lit a candle in memory of Esther Abellanosa Lyons



Mission Park North - December 03, 2024 at 02:39 PM