



## Athena Hadjimarkos

February 4, 1937 - December 15, 2024

Athena Hadjimarkos, 87, of Ocean, NJ, passed away at Jersey Shore University Medical Center on December 15, 2024, surrounded by her loving family. She was the Matriarch to the Kostidakis Family.

She was a devoted mother to her children: Marina and her husband Petros Thomas; Presbytera Angela and her husband Father Andrew Eugenis; Dimitra and her husband Nick Sekera; and Dimitri Hadjimarkos and his wife Sharon.

Athena was the proud grandmother of 12 grandchildren and great-grandmother of 3. Her cherished grandchildren include Theoni and her husband Yianni Karalis, along with their children Aleksandra and Marina; Constantine Thomas and his wife Marlene, along with their daughter Eleftheria; Athena Thomas; Alexandra Thomas; Nicholas Eugenis and his wife Athanasia; Jordan Eugenis; Theodore Eugenis; Stefanos Eugenis; Markos Eugenis; Theodore Hadjimarkos; Nicholas Sekera; and Athena Sekera.

Athena is survived by her loving family, including her brothers, Paraskos Kostidakis and his wife Litsa, and Yianni Kostidakis and his wife Magda; her sisters Joanna Cosmas and her husband Christos, and Maraki Epitropakis and her husband George and numerous nieces and nephews.

She was predeceased by her parents, Angeliki and Semos, her brother, Kosta

Kostidakis, her sister, Effie Gardner, as well as her first husband, Theodoros Hadjimarkos and second husband, Niko Papanikolaou.

Athena was born on February 4, 1937, in Chios, Greece, to Angeliki and Semos Kostidakis. She grew up in Chios surrounded by her loving parents and six siblings. In December 1959, Athena left her family and the island she called home to embark on a new chapter in Tanzania, Africa, where she would meet her future husband, Theodoros Hadjimarkos. They were married in February 1960, and together they had four children. While living in Africa, Athena enjoyed a fulfilling life, though it came with its own set of challenges - chief among them, fending off giant snakes and other wild animals. Theodoros managed a coffee farm while Athena focused on raising their children. In this new and foreign land, Athena not only embraced motherhood but also faced the challenge of learning an entirely new language and culture. Though the transition was not without its difficulties, she met each challenge with grace, resilience, and an unwavering love for her family. Athena's determination and strong will made their home a place of warmth and joy, even in the heart of the African wilderness.

Amidst civil unrest in Tanzania, Theodoros and Athena made the life-changing decision to move to the United States, seeking better opportunities for their children. In June 1972, Athena and the children left Africa and traveled to Greece, where they waited for the necessary paperwork to immigrate. Later that summer, in August 1972, they arrived in Bloomfield, New Jersey. To support her family, Athena took a job at a factory, where she worked for 13 years at her first job in a new country, with the added challenge of not speaking the language. Nine months after Athena and the children arrived, Theodoros joined them, and soon after, they purchased their first home. When the factory closed, Athena worked several odd jobs before finding a more

permanent position as a nanny to two boys, a role she cherished and held for 14 years. During her years in Bloomfield, Athena watched with pride as she married off her four children, gaining four more beloved members of the family: Peter, Father Andrew, Nick, and Sharon.

Sadly, in July 1995, after 35 years of marriage, Athena lost her beloved husband, Theodoros. In the years that followed, she found companionship and love with Niko Papanikolaou, and they were married. In 2002, Athena relocated from Bloomfield to Tinton Falls, where she became an active member of the St. George Greek Orthodox Church in Asbury Park. Her devotion to her faith and community led her to contribute in many ways, including using her passion for cooking to serve others. Athena spent countless hours in the kitchen, preparing koliva and prosforo, and baking delicious Greek sweets for the annual festival, all while sharing her warmth and love with those around her. In 2017, she started a job in which loved, working in the cafeteria at a Charter School in Asbury Park. Despite the joy she found in serving the students and being part of the school community, she eventually had to step back to focus on her health. However, her time at the school left her with lasting memories of the connections she made with both staff and students, and a deep sense of fulfillment in the work she did.

In June 2024, Athena was diagnosed with Acute Myeloid Leukemia, but faced her illness with remarkable strength, grace, and courage. Throughout her battle, she was surrounded by the love and support of her family, who were by her side every step of the way. Though her time with us was cut short, her enduring spirit and unwavering faith gave her the strength to face each day

with dignity and love. She will always be remembered for her incredible resilience, and her ability to bring light to even the darkest of times.

Athena was known for her kindness, wisdom, and the boundless love she extended to everyone around her. She was also an avid gardener, dedicating much of her time to nurturing and tending to her beautiful garden, where she grew a variety of vibrant flowers, fragrant herbs, and fresh vegetables. Her grandchildren will forever remember her as 'Yiayia,' the woman who made the best food, gave the warmest hugs, and shared the most enchanting tales of her life in Greece and Africa. Athena's strength, love, and unwavering devotion to her family will never be forgotten. She was the heart and soul of her family, and her memory will live on in their hearts forever.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to St. George Greek Orthodox Church in memory of Athena.

# Cemetery Details

## St. George Greek Orthodox Cemetery

2380- 2386 West Bangs Avenue  
Neptune, NJ

# Previous Events

## Visitation

DEC 17. 9:00 AM - 11:00 AM (ET)

St George Greek Orthodox Church  
1033 West Park Avenue  
Ocean, NJ 07712

## Funeral Service

DEC 17. 11:00 AM (ET)

St George Greek Orthodox Church  
1033 West Park Avenue  
Ocean, NJ 07712

# Tribute Wall

PS

“ *Patricia Scaduto lit a candle in memory of Athena Hadjimarkos*



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**Patricia Scaduto** - December 17, 2024 at 05:30 PM

PS

*Dear Jim and Sharon,  
Anthony told me today of mom's passing. Such a lovely obituary  
She truly lived a full life surrounded by love.  
I met you at Brittany's shower. God bless her always and she will be in  
my prayers. My girlfriend has a daughter named Athena. Remember all  
the good times.  
Love Patti*

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**Patricia Scaduto** - December 17, 2024 at 05:35 PM

PH

“ *Peter H. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Athena Hadjimarkos.*

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**Peter H.** - December 16, 2024 at 10:11 PM

GR

“ *Gina Coraci, Korina & Frank Ruffino purchased the Medium Dish Garden for the family of Athena Hadjimarkos.*



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**Gina Coraci, Korina & Frank Ruffino** - December 16, 2024 at 09:56 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Athena Hadjimarkos.

December 16, 2024 at 07:32 PM



“ Divine Peace Bouquet was purchased for the family of Athena Hadjimarkos.



December 16, 2024 at 07:32 PM



“ Forever Our Angel Bouquet was purchased for the family of Athena Hadjimarkos.



December 16, 2024 at 02:59 PM



“ Bongarzone Funeral Home lit a candle in memory of Athena Hadjimarkos



**Bongarzone Funeral Home** - December 16, 2024 at 01:43 PM

LF

“ *Love The Gregorakis Family purchased the Sacred Garden Spray for the family of Athena Hadjimarkos.*



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**Love The Gregorakis Family** - December 16, 2024 at 12:08 PM