



Marie Aurelie Laxalt Bini

September 26, 1928 - October 2, 2019

Marie Aurelie Laxalt Bini passed away peacefully in Grass Valley, California, from vascular dementia. She was 91 years old. She was born in Carson City, Nevada, to Dominique and Therese Laxalt. Marie spent her early years in Carson City with her four brothers and one sister. The little girl with smiling eyes and ringlets in her hair was adored by neighborhood ladies, who gave her treasures with each of her visits. In nearby Carson Valley, her father, a Basque shepherd, showed her how to care for baby goats and motherless lambs. But he also took his two-year-old daughter to a boxing ring in Reno, where, training for a heavyweight bout, Max Baer lifted her in his arms, and the great Jack Dempsey bought her an ice cream cone. While in grade school, Marie washed dishes in the kitchen of her mother's restaurant and spent her free time with friends hiking the hills surrounding Carson City.

After graduating from Carson City High School, she enrolled in College of Notre Dame at Belmont in California. There, she absorbed the words of her philosophy professors and obeyed the rules of the Notre Dame sisters. But some nights, when returning past curfew, she would have to climb in through the window of Ralston Hall. She continued her course work at San Jose State College, where she graduated with a major in education. She also met her future husband, Lou Bini, with whom she would be married for sixty-seven years. After teaching youngsters in the schools of San Jose and Patterson, Marie married Lou, and they began their own family.

While raising her children in the city of Santa Clara, she stayed active in other areas. She founded the Alumni Association of College of Notre Dame at Belmont and was its first president. She returned to teaching, this time for San Jose Metropolitan Adult Education, and was the first English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher in the city of Santa Clara. With a lack of facilities, classes were held in a small room under the bleachers of Washington Baseball Park. As Marie was hesitant about her ability to teach adult immigrants, she sought the advice of a woman who, coincidentally, had taught Marie's Italian-born mother- and father-in-law, when they were studying for citizenship classes in San Jose in the 1930s. This wise woman left Marie with the following words: "You have to love the people."

Marie thrived with her years teaching ESL. She opened her doors to her students, holding annual Christmas parties in her family home in Santa Clara's Old Quad—a neighborhood that reminded her of Carson City. Marie's home became a gathering place for students, neighbors, relatives, and friends from her many walks of life. Proud of her Basque heritage and her Nevada roots, she kept a lifeline to relatives from France and from her home state. Nieces and nephews spent summers in Santa Clara, and cousins from overseas were introduced to chili beans for dinner and chocolate chip cookies for dessert.

In the 1960s, she fed her husband and children with nutritious food and a warm sense of humor, or vice versa. With one foot in the kitchen, she would tell her children to call her when the Addams Family came on the TV for she couldn't bear to miss an episode. After dinners, she would teach her kids to sing "Workin' on the Railroad" while they washed dishes in the kitchen. She surprised her children when she seemed to see things others did not see, especially when she sliced open various fruits and vegetables to point out repetitive patterns in nature.

In 1959 and again in 1979, Marie enjoyed traveling to Europe with her husband to visit relatives in their parents' native villages in the Basque Country and Italy and to learn more about the sacrifices their parents had made. Marie shared these stories with her children and with her grandchildren. As the grandchildren came on to the scene, she once again opened the doors to her home, only this time showering her grandchildren with root beer floats. And all they had to do was star in her annual Christmas pageant productions.

In 2018, Marie and Lou left their home in Santa Clara and moved to Eskaton Village in Grass Valley, to be near their daughter Tosca. As her vascular dementia progressed, she resorted to fewer and fewer words. In her final month, when watching a delivery truck driving in reverse all the way down the block, she commented, "Hysterical," and that would be all she said that day. And when all she had left was a beaming smile and a twinkle in her eyes, she could still light up a spacious room.

Her love was her grace and her strength. But it came with experience. When Marie saw suffering in others, she poured love into their hearts and souls. She taught those who came into her circle how to be kind and to look for the good in each other. And when she faced bullying and injustice, she walked into the darkness to confront them.

She was preceded in death by her son Michael Bini. She leaves behind her loving husband, Louis Bini, and her four children: Suzanne Shehadeh, Robert Bini (Sarah Lindsay), Adrienne Bini, and Tosca Bini (Adam Lawrence). She cherished the joy brought to her by her eight grandchildren. Her family wishes to thank her compassionate caregivers at Eskaton Village in Grass Valley and Hospice of the Foothills.

A memorial mass will be held at St. Clare's Church in Santa Clara on Thursday, December 19th, at 2:00 pm. Burial will be private. In lieu of flowers, please give to the charity of your choice.

Previous Events

MASS

DEC 19. 2:00 PM (PT)

St. Clare's Church
Santa Clara, CA

Tribute Wall

MP

“ *Maureen Paine lit a candle in memory of Marie Aurelie Laxalt Bini*



Maureen Paine - November 23, 2019 at 08:44 PM

DF

“ *DUNY'S FAMILY purchased the Peaceful White Lilies Basket for the family of Marie Aurelie Laxalt Bini.*



DUNY'S FAMILY - November 04, 2019 at 03:43 AM

PP

“ *Marie also started a group of women who would meet every so often, and share stories, slides or pictures of their far-off travels. I know of this through my "Honorary mother", the late Beatrice Douthwaite. This group was always known to me as "The Bini Group." I cannot recall the origin of this fabulous meeting of friends, but I will hold forever what it meant to it's members! Rest in peace Dear Marie Bini. You too Dear Beatrice...*

Penny Pruett - November 03, 2019 at 12:12 AM

RB

“ *Richard And Mimi Bini lit a candle in memory of Marie Aurelie Laxalt Bini*



Richard and Mimi Bini - November 01, 2019 at 02:53 PM