



Esther DeSoignie

September 8, 1924 - May 27, 2020

Esther Chediak DeSoignie, 95, passed away peacefully in Topeka, Kansas on Wednesday, May 27th, 2020, after a long, fruitful and dramatically eventful life.

Esther was born in Havana, Cuba on September 8, 1924. She was one of four children of Antonio Chediak, a successful import merchant, and Magdalena Bared. When Esther was just five years old, the family's happy life was shattered by the untimely death of her father and the collapse of the global economy. The extreme hardship suffered by her family over the next several years had a profound effect on Esther's character. It made her tough in confronting adversity, compassionate for the suffering of others, and appreciative of the value of strong family bonds. She had a strong force of character, with a lovely smile and laugh and a warm, caring heart.

In 1950, Esther was united in marriage with Dr. Rafael Ruiz DeSoignie, a young medical doctor with a promising career as a Surgeon. Esther and Rafael had three sons, who she was determined would have the best possible education. Once again events disrupted her plans. Cuba's extreme political instability convinced Rafael and Esther to start a new life in the United States. Knowing but few words of English, Rafael and Esther with their three young sons, emigrated to the U.S. in 1956 and experienced several very lean years as they sought to establish themselves in a new country. With Esther's strength of character, energy and devotion to family, the family prevailed times

of scarcity, learning a new language and raising three young sons, with high hopes, determination and good spirits.

The family settled down in Topeka in 1962 and had a happy life there for the next 29 years. Following the death of her husband, Esther moved to Shawnee, Kansas in 1991 and later to Houston, Texas to be closer to her sons. In 2019, she decided to return to Topeka and close out her life where she was surrounded by happy memories of her family and friends. Throughout her whole life, through thin as well as in prosperous times, Esther was noted for her extreme caring and her generosity. She made significant contributions to help the needy, and her generous support of Catholic institutions prompted Archbishop of Kansas City in Kansas Joseph Naumann to address a personal letter to Esther thanking her for her extraordinary generosity.

Esther was preceded in death by her husband, Dr. Rafael DeSoignie on April 20, 1988, her parents, sisters, Olga Perez of Miami, Florida, Aida Gray of Worcester, Massachusetts; and brother, Dr. Charles Chediak of Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

Esther is survived by her sons, Raphael DeSoignie of Topeka, Edward DeSoignie of Olathe, Kansas and Roland DeSoignie of Houston, Texas; by six grandchildren and by five great-grandchildren; by nephews, Christopher Chediak of Sacramento, California, Dr. Ronald Chediak of Herrin, Illinois, Dr. Gregory Chediak of Topeka, Kansas; and niece, Dr. Jennifer Kareklas of Albany NY.

Esther's family will greet friends from 10 to 10:30 a.m. Thursday, June 4, at Most Pure Heart of Mary Catholic Church, 3601 SW 17th Street, Topeka, Kansas 66604, where the rosary will be prayed at 10:30 a.m. Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated at 11 a.m. at the Church. Burial will follow in Mount Calvary Cemetery, Topeka.

Memorial contributions in honor of Esther are suggested to Benedictine College, 1020 N 2nd Street, Atchison KS 66002, or sent in care of Kevin Brennan Family Funeral Home, 2801 SW Urish Road, Topeka KS 66614.

Cemetery Details

Mount Calvary Cemetery

801 SW Westchester Rd
Topeka, KS 66606

Previous Events

Visitation

JUN 4. 10:00 AM - 10:30 AM (CT)

Most Pure Heart of Mary Church
3601 SW 17th Street
Topeka, KS 66604

Rosary

JUN 4. 10:30 AM (CT)

Most Pure Heart of Mary Church
3601 SW 17th Street
Topeka, KS 66604

Mass of Christian Burial

JUN 4. 11:00 AM (CT)

Most Pure Heart of Mary Church
3601 SW 17th Street
Topeka, KS 66604

Tribute Wall



“ *Esther DeSoignie*

January 28, 2023 at 12:08 PM



“ *Ed and family: I was sorry learn the passing of this amazing woman. What a life she led! I am holding you all close in my heart during this difficult time. I know it is hard. Rep. Annie Kuether*

Annie Kuether - June 02, 2020 at 02:09 PM



“ *Raphael, sorry to hear of the loss of your mom. May God's peace be with you. Jim Lemon*

Jim Lemon - June 01, 2020 at 08:11 PM



“ *Raphael and Family, I do remember your mother (and father) in Topeka and Atchison. I was proud that in some way we were fellow Topekans. I will think of all of you on Thursday at Most Pure Heart of Mary Church. Much pax to all of you.*

Joe Geist, Fayette, MO. - June 01, 2020 at 08:38 AM