

Osredkar Marija Eulogy

Good morning,

On behalf of my mom and aunt Jackie, and our family, we would like to thank you all for being here today and for the outpouring of support not only these last few days, but over our grandmother's last years. Your visits brought her much happiness and meant a great deal to all of us. Staramama was born March 12th, 1925 on a farm in Lutrsko Selo, Slovenia. Mara was the third in a family of nine children, the eldest daughter. Her younger sister, Slavka often told us how she was a master of avoiding chores, leaving most work for her. Teti Slavka would frequently point to Mara and say, "She's the boss."

As a teenager, Mara's father sent her to Novo Mesto to learn how to sew-which she excelled at. Later, we all benefited from her impeccable skills as a dressmaker, though (ironically) she always insisted that she disliked sewing, swearing instead that she should have become a surgeon, as her hand was so steady. She was however, very meticulous, with every spare moment spent improving her craft. During the second world war, it was discovered that Mara was assisting the Domobranci, the homeguard supporters of the catholic faith, and forced to hide for over a year, far from home, in the attic of kind strangers. She very rarely spoke of this time in her life which we know forced her to relive a period that filled her with terror. After, Mara rarely wanted to return to Slovenia, only doing so to appease her husband and make him happy. She fled to neighbouring Austria to Spittal where she remained until 1948 when she made the decision to come to Canada. From Halifax she travelled to Toronto where she was under contract to be a maid for one year. This was not her favourite type of work, but she persevered and during this time was instrumental in bringing her sister Slavka to Canada. Slavka 's longtime boyfriend, Ludvik occasionally came to visit from Kapuskasing where he was a lumberjack along with his best friend, Frank. Come and meet Slavka's sister, Ludvik told Frank. Mara was introduced to Frank Osredkar and the fantastic foursome was born. The two were married by Father Kolarič in 1953. In 1954, Miriam was born, and Jackie followed 10 years later. One of the most special relationships in staramama's life was the one she shared with her sister, Slavka. It spanned Slavka's birth, through marriage, children, and tragedy, until their shared time at Dom Lipa. Mara, being the oldest and quite bossy, had a very strong influence on not only her sister's life, but also the rest of her family, especially her younger brothers, Zan and Tone, who were consistently the recipients of their big sister's advice. Holidays, Sundays and even just evenings in the backyard on Delta, the times Mara spent with her sister and brother's families brought her great joy-and a lifetime of happy memories. As time went on, the unique bond between our grandparents and Teti Slavka and Stric Ludvik grew stronger-they regularly met at the church for mass, banquets, concerts, and more, and spent most days together, meeting for a coffee at the very least. They enjoyed travelling to different destinations, both near and far- going out of their way to admire churches and cathedrals.

Satramama was very active in the newly built Slovenian church and community-and played a vital role in making it a home away from home. Mara devoted many hours to supporting its growth; she was the first president of the Catholic Women's League, taking on two additional terms. She made the first set of curtains for the dvorana, piles of scarves for the boy scouts, held sewing classes for young women, and fundraised for numerous causes including in later years, Dom Lipa. While Dom Lipa was being constructed, she canvased parishioners for donations and to assist in providing lunch for the volunteers working every Saturday. Her leadership in the community was truly exemplary. Any task that she took on was fulfilled to the

best of her ability. Staramama was an extraordinary seamstress. She created countless wedding dresses without using a pattern, but unfortunately never kept a list. So far, we have counted 26, and are sure there were many more, with bridesmaids, communion and confirmation frocks thrown in. My sisters and I remember going to visit her at Sherway where she worked as an alterationist and could magically tailor any dress to fit the anxious customer. Staramama also made many outfits for her seven granddaughters-evidenced by our perfect narodne nose and Halloween costumes, and instilled a love of clothes and shoes in her extended family. She was always beautifully turned out in the latest styles, frequently inspired by Jackie Kennedy, the Catholic first lady. Mara's love of leopard print was legendary. Staramama had unconditional love for all children and always ensured that her purse had a treat - candy or gum - for any child she encountered (a whimpering child in church could be easily soothed by one of her surprises). They always gravitated towards her. She especially loved her nieces and nephews, and their children, and would frequently offer advice - solicited or not. That was Teti Mara and they loved her. All of us were fond of her famous chocolate roll and apricot kifelcke - enjoyed after a long swim in their backyard pool. Along with treats, Mara had a kind word for each person she came across and modelled strength of character to her daughters and granddaughters. She was the embodiment of generosity, a quality that we greatly admired. Our grandmother was ahead of her time in many ways. She encouraged our educations and believed that women could have fulfilling careers and happy families. She was honest and exacting-consistently sharing her wisdom, style tips and notes on life. She wanted us to be the best we could be and was not shy about sharing her disappointment when we weren't meeting her high expectations (hidden in a compliment sandwich. Of course). Each of her granddaughters was the lucky recipient of an etiquette book on our sixteenth birthday. She was the Miss Manners of the Tratnik and Osredkar families. Our grandparents were rarely apart, preferring to be in the company of each other. They wouldn't consider travelling separately. They enjoyed going for leisurely walks, to the Slovenian farm and visiting their children. They treated one another with love and respect. Friends and family often commented on the attention and care they consistently showed each other. Now they will be together again. Our Stric Joze wrote,

Rojstvo in smrt, zacetek in konec. To je clovesko zivljenje. Zdruzeni v molitvi za rajno mamo prosimo gospoda, da sprejme njeno duso in ji pokloni svoj mir za vse do bro kar je v tern zivljenju storila, placilo za trpljenje v mladosti. We tum to our faith now in this time of sadness with the belief that our beloved staramama will brighten the heavens with her glow of perpetual grace. We love you, staramama. May God rest your soul.