



Tereza Stipicevich

March 30, 1931 - April 17, 2021

Life's Journey...

1931 - 2021

Tereza Lovrovic was born on March 30th, 1931 to her parents Kata and Martin (Marko). She was born in the family home in the former Yugoslavia, now Croatia, on the beautiful island of Olib. Tereza was an only child to her parents. Sadly, when she was only 2-years-old, her father died of complications due to a head injury he suffered while working as a longshoreman in the port of New York.

To make ends meet, her mother, Kata, was the town's bread baker. She got up early every morning and made bread for the people of the island. When Tereza was 4-years-old, she would help her mother in preparing the bread before the crack of dawn. They used an old-fashioned method to bake the bread by sliding the bread into a brick oven. They sold the bread in town because Kata had no husband and they had to provide what little they could. They grew their own vegetables, potatoes, and used the front part of their property to grow their own garden to survive.

Tereza would cry for her father, and to comfort her, her mother gave Tereza her father Marko's jacket. Tereza would cling onto the jacket to help mend her broken heart. Without a father, Tereza was greatly influenced by her mother learning how to sew, how to garden, how to cook, and how to take care of the household.

By 1937, when Tereza was 6-years-old, World War II was starting to rumble through Europe. It was a scary time just surviving the occupation by Italians, bombings on the island and wartime. Tereza's education was interrupted by the war. The two of them managed to survive by taking care of themselves and growing their own food.

After the war ended in 1945, Tereza was a teenager and she had friends on the island. One of those friends was Zvonimir Stipicevich. The couple fell in love and Zvonimir's

mother asked Kata if he could marry Tereza. Kata said, "Yes!" They had a lot in common and they grew up on the same island a short distance from each other.

Following his family to the United States, Zvonimir promised Tereza he would send for her after he settled. The couple planned to marry when he could legally bring her to the United States. In 1950, Zvonimir moved to the United States with his mother and sister.

While Tereza waited to join him, they exchanged handwritten letters. There were youth dances on the edge of Tereza's mother's property but Kata was very strict. She would not allow Tereza to attend the dances because she had already promised to marry Zvonimir.

In 1956, Tereza moved to the United States with only one dress and few belongings. They both had waited six years to be together again. The couple was married on January 6th of 1957 and settled in San Pedro. They had a small wedding and a little reception at a restaurant in San Pedro. With all of the monetary gifts, it was just enough to pay for the reception.

Zvonimir supported his family as a Longshoreman and later was promoted to Foreman in Local 94. He worked long hours on the dock but his family was everything.

In 1959, the couple's son, Boris, was born. The young family lived in an apartment and money was tight but Zvonimir was blessed and felt lucky to have a full-time job as a Longshoreman to provide for his family. They used to watch television in their landlord's living room and eventually, Zvonimir scraped together enough money to buy a television of their own. When they went shopping for it, Tereza said they would be better off buying a sewing machine so she could make clothes for the family. So they came home with a sewing machine instead. The television waited for another day.

In 1962, the couple's daughter, Jane, was born. That same year, the couple bought their first home in San Pedro on Summerland Avenue.

Tereza was a seamstress and a stay-at-home mother who made a lot of clothing for their family. She was born to be a wife and a mother. She was kind, loving, giving, and forgiving. She didn't talk badly about anybody and she didn't like to hear gossip.

The family spoke an island dialect of Croatian and Boris learned English when he went to Kindergarten. When Boris started school, Tereza and Jane started picking up English from him, too.

Boris never heard his mother raise her voice with one exception. As a young boy, she'd feed him breakfast before school and half of the time he would forget to drink his milk. He'd be on his way to school and he'd hear his mother yell for him to come home and drink the rest of his milk. The only time she raised her voice was to help him.

Boris and Jane spent a lot of time with their mother because their father was working all the time. Tereza never drove a car but instead the family walked everywhere together. They lived a mile from the Catholic Church, and they'd walk to church services and Mass every Sunday. They also walked to the grocery store. It was similar to the way Tereza was raised on the island with no cars, church, and a little store. She always made her own food so the family could have dinner together every night. They would talk about how their days went, discuss their lives, and they were a very close family unit. It was a treat in the summertime, if the kids were good, to go swimming in the neighbor's swimming pool.

Both Boris and Jane learned so much from their mother about kindness, working hard, learning how to garden, how to cook, and be self-sustaining. You couldn't ask for a better mother because she was the master of everything. She could lay tile, bake, and she was kind hearted. She was also meticulous and neat. Growing up, Tereza was there for both of her children.

Zvonimir and Tereza truly loved one another. He was a good provider. They were good friends. They shared similar life experiences growing up and Zvonimir would have been lost without Tereza. They both loved listening to Croatian music. He loved to dance while she was more on the shy side.

Through the years, Tereza always hosted most of the holidays including Easter, Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day celebrations. She also hosted special occasions and birthdays. Tereza had the best birthday celebrations in the backyard with birthday hats, cake, ice cream, and she even invited the kids' friends.

Tereza also enjoyed spending time with her friend Sonja, Mary, and cousin Dolores. They would shop together, go to church, visit each other's homes, and talk on the phone regularly.

Everyone always appreciated Tereza's home-cooked meals such as lamb chops, French fries, and a salad or homemade stew. Tereza enjoyed drinking water sprinkled with Crystal Light.

In 1969, the family took a vacation back to the Island of Olib so Boris and Jane could meet

their Grandmother Kata. It was a special memory and a time of joy and reconnection for Tereza to see her mother again. She left in 1956, they wrote letters back and forth, but she got to see her in person again that year. The family also traveled back in 1975 and later as adults there were multiple trips to the island of Olib.

In 1972, the couple moved a few miles away to their second home. They grew their own vegetables and kept the yard looking beautiful.

After Boris moved out of the house, he had dinner regularly with his parents. He would take his daughter Breanna to their home regularly for dinner and every meal was a great time.

Jane kept in touch with her parents by visiting regularly, too. In being greatly influenced by both of her parents, she had both Zvonimir and Tereza walk her down the aisle when she married Larry.

In honor of their parents, Boris and Jane held a surprise 40th wedding anniversary party at the Dalmatian American Club. It was a big celebration with 150 family and friends attending. They both enjoyed the party!

With many favorites in life, Tereza enjoyed watching soap operas such as All My Children, General Hospital, and One Life to Live. She liked gardening, keeping her home clean and tidy, and especially being a mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother. She also enjoyed talking to her friends.

Zvonimir's late cousin Vjekoslav's wife Dolores and their daughter Antoinette have many good memories of Tereza. She often told Dolores, "I don't have any brothers or sisters and you are like a sister to me." In 1963, when Vjeko and Dolores moved from New York to California, they lived with Zvonko and Tereza until they found a home of their own. This was the beginning of spending many Holidays and Sunday dinners together. Vjeko and Dolores eventually purchased a home just 3 blocks away from Zvonko and Tereza's home. Dolores and Tereza would go shopping together every Saturday morning, and they spoke almost every evening on the telephone. Tereza was always there for her. They often sewed and crocheted together. Tereza also taught Dolores her Croatian style cooking and the two got along beautifully. Dolores remembers Tereza as being exceptionally talented in anything she set out to do. She was simply a wonderful and very kind woman.

Antoinette, Zvonko and Tereza's Goddaughter, remembers spending a lot of time at her

Godparents' home with her older cousins Boris and Jane. Her Teta Tereza always took such good care of her and their home felt like her own home, or maybe even better. Antoinette remembers Teta Tereza as being capable of doing anything and everything. If her Mom had trouble sewing one of her dresses or getting a spot out, they would go to Teta Tereza's because she could fix it. In addition to being a wonderful seamstress and great cook, she could paint, tile floors, and reupholster. If you needed a wall knocked down, she could do that too. Tereza and Zvonko even planted a garden for Antoinette at her home. Teta Tereza taught Antoinette how to make Croatian Easter bread, not with a recipe but by feel. Teta Tereza was a kind, good, calm, and honorable lady and she will be remembered fondly and greatly missed.

With their grandchildren, Zvonimir and Tereza were very involved. Tereza was a beloved Nana to Krysalynn, Breanna, and Samantha. She adored all of them and she was very active in helping to raise the kids. Nana was a built-in babysitter and it was a nice safety net.

Krysalynn saw Nana almost every day because they lived 5 minutes apart. Every Sunday after church, Nana would stop by my house and yell thru the mail slot, "Krissey, are you home?" It was a special time that they would share over coffee. Krysalynn loved watching Nana smile at her babies. It really touched her heart and she will always cherish those special times. Nana made almost all of her costumes when she was younger. Her favorite costume she made was a bride. She remembers feeling like a bride as she went to Holy Trinity and seeing her Nana smiling back at her as she walked in the parade. Nana made her prom dresses, homecoming dresses, and she was known as the best baker.

Krysalynn got her love of baking from Nana, too. Her favorite meal was on Christmas Eve when she made Shrimp Linguine. She was like a second mother, too. Whenever they were sick, she was there for them. If they needed something fixed, they gave it to Nana. She was the person she would call about everything. She made you dinner and sweets because it showed you she cared. Nana and Krysalynn had a wonderful relationship.

Breanna will miss everything about Nana as she remembers her as the sweetest woman. She's going to miss an amazing cook and baker, who made the best heart-shaped cookies for Christmas, special occasions, showers, and weddings. They were buttery cookies with jam in the middle that melted in your mouth. When Breanna was in high school, the students were asked to bring a dish that connected to their heritage and Nana made Hrostule for her. She would also sew the most beautiful Halloween costumes for her and her cousins. Breanna even brought a photo of Lucille Ball to Nana and she made an exact replica of her dress, it was Breanna's favorite costume. Nana made her dream version of her prom dress. People have asked to borrow that prom dress, that's how beautiful it was.

She was so talented. She'd take Breanna to the fabric store, choose a pattern close to what she described, and she made it come to life. Breanna also loved hearing her stories about growing up in Croatia. Being able to sit at dinner with her at her house was a gift. She made the most amazing French fries with dinner. Breanna looked forward to sleeping over at Krysalynn's because she knew Nana would make her a good breakfast. Now, she feels Nana is watching over them. She's disappointed that Nana never got to meet Stella but now she's watching over them and finally seeing Stella in her own way. When Stella is older, she will have Stella wear the same costumes made by Nana when the time comes. When Breanna prays, she tells Nana she is going to tell Stella Nana's stories and try to make those same cookies for her daughter.

Samantha will miss everything about her because she was an all-in-one Nana: a second mom, her doctor, her friend, her cook, and completely everything. She doesn't know how to do life without her. Anytime Samantha felt sick, no matter what time of night, she asked Didi to bring over Nana to the house and he did. She became her doctor. Nana would not leave Samantha until she felt better. Nana baked her delicious food, made her clothes exactly how she wanted them to look, shellacked her hair into a ponytail without any bumps before school, and walked Snoopy, the little white Maltese, to the house. She also made sure she would cook her breakfast and pack her lunch for school. When the school stopped allowing kids to bring soda cans to school, Nana accidentally packed her a Coors Light Beer one day. Nana started cussing in Croatian but it was funny. Nana was the most humble person and she always tried to look for the good in every person. She never talked badly about anybody. She called to make sure the family always had food and dinner. She cooked whatever anyone wanted. She was over and beyond a super woman. Now, Samantha will miss everything about her... she'll miss her smile, her smell, and her voice. She even has her voicemails saved in her phone to remember her. The one thing that she wanted was everyone to be together. She was loved by her family, friends, and neighbors. She was just amazing.

Tereza also loved her great-grandchildren: Luke, Ashlynn, and Stella.

Krysalynn said Nana couldn't wait until the grandchildren were here. When Krysalynn went into labor with Luke, Nana ran out of her house still getting dressed to go to the hospital. They were there all night from 11 PM until Luke was born the next day at 10:30 in the morning. Nana came into the delivery room and she was one of the first people to welcome Luke into this world. Luke and Ashlynn still want to go visit her because they loved going to Nana's house. And her cookies were the best!

Larry, her son-in-law, remembers when they were building their house and around 7 AM in the morning, he heard someone digging the ditch. He was ready to get upset for waking

him up but it was his mother-in-law Tereza digging the ditch to help. Soon he was out there digging with her. When they'd go fishing or hunting, Tereza would clean the birds or rabbits and fish and always helped. She was the best mother and incredibly kind. Larry will miss her tremendously.

Her daughter-in-law Keri remembers Tereza as quiet, shy, gentle and kind—but also as incredibly fierce. She had a physical strength and constitution that was beyond measure. A real grit. If she wanted, the woman could move a mountain all on her own. Keri sees these very same characteristics reflected in her husband. Boris has always had a great pride and deep appreciation for both his parents' abilities to survive and overcome their harsh beginnings, as well as for the life and successes they built and achieved together. That strength is definitely a gift that Bo received equally from both his parents.

Interestingly enough, Keri's paternal grandfather grew up on Pag, an island directly across from the island of Olib in Croatia. When Keri and Bo first began dating, they had dinner with his parents. Tereza had prepared Bo's favorite Zelje dish. Over dinner Tereza asked Keri if she cooked. Keri told Tereza that her mother's parents were professional chefs and bakers, and that all their grandchildren had a love for cooking—including herself. Tereza smiled and nodded towards Bo and then said, "that's good because he likes to eat." Keri will also remember Tereza for her subtle sense of humor.

Tereza's purpose in life was to be a good mother, grandmother, great-grandmother, and friend.

Boris feels his mother is at peace from this earthly life and he will see her again in heaven. He misses talking to her and sharing stories. He especially misses her presence. She was a hard working person. He remembers painting the house with her, setting tile, and digging the footing for a property wall. She had no problem using a pick to overturn the dirt in the heat of the sun. She was also very easy to please and an excellent cook. Going to a restaurant was foreign to them. They made and ate all their meals at home. Every meal was made with love and the family was nourished just because his mother made the meals from her heart.

Jane feels her mother is at peace and reunited with her father again. She misses everything about her... talking with her, sharing stories, and being there for her. She spent many days pampering her with manicures and pedicures as a loving daughter. Jane misses taking her shopping at the mall and to her favorite store Draper's & Damon's. Those are special times Jane will always cherish and remember in her heart. When Krysalynn and Samantha were born, her mother came over every day to see her beautiful

granddaughters. She also brought dinner for the whole family because she wanted to make sure they all were fed and taken care of to the best of her ability. With Mom, they never had to worry about a meal. Their mother would do anything for anyone, cooking, baking, bringing over food, sewing, and helping. She was the greatest mother, and grandmother to her two girls anyone could ever have in their lives. Her mom was her best friend and she will treasure all these memories close to her heart for the rest of her life. The family was blessed to be able to spend time with her in her closing days. One of the last things they did was sing Happy Birthday to her for her 90th birthday.

Tereza's advice would be to be kind to one another.

Both of her parents, Kata and Martin (Marko), and her husband Zvonimir preceded her in death. Tereza and Zvonimir were married for 64 years in January 2021.

She is loved and remembered by her son Boris and wife Keri; her daughter Jane and husband Larry; her granddaughter Krysalynn and husband Kevin; her granddaughter Breanna and husband Theo; her granddaughter Samantha; her great-grandchildren Luke, Ashlynn, and Stella; her cousin Dolores and Goddaughter Antoinette; her friend Sonja; her friend and hairdresser Mary; her caretaker Menard; extended family and many friends.

See her husband Zvonimir's Tribute Page here:

<https://www.greenhillsmortuary.com/obituaries/Zvonimir-Stipicevich/#!/Obituary>

This loving tribute was made by Celebrant Pam Meily Vetter at the following link:

<https://celebrantpam.com/memorials/tereza-stipicevich.html>

Cemetery

Green Hills Memorial Park

27501 S. Western Ave.
Rancho Palos Verdes, CA,
90275

Events

MAY Funeral Ceremony - Private

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Green Hills Memorial Chapel
27501 S Western Ave., Rancho Palos Verde, CA,
US, 90275

Comments



“ This loving tribute has been made for Tereza at the following link:
<https://celebrantpam.com/memorials/tereza-stipicevich.html>

Green Hills Mortuary and Memorial Chapel - April 29 at 07:21 PM