



Kathryn Marie "Katoos" Bernatt

May 8, 1918 - August 16, 2013

In the early morning of August 16th, Kathryn Marie "Katoos" Dillon Bernatt joined her family in heaven after 95 years in this world. She passed away peacefully at her home in Alexandria, VA after spending the evening with family and close friends. Born in Columbus, OH to Kathryn "Katie" Marie Wahlenmaier and James George Dillon on May 8th, 1918 (or 1920 depending on who was asking) Kathryn, or Katoos, as she was called by family and friends, was the younger sister to Evelyn Dillon. After her father passed away in an industrial fire after her 4th birthday, her mother remarried James Zink and gave birth to her younger half brother, Jim (although she never considered him anything less than her full blood brother.) Her mother was the owner and operator of the local candy and ice cream shop in Columbus, Kathryn Dillon's Confectionary, a women entrepreneur long before it was popular or accepted. From a little girl, Kay dreamed of being a Hollywood Starlet, and she had the stunning looks to achieve it. During her high school years, she worked in the local movie house simply so she could review all the movies for free. She dreamed one day of living in California. As World War II began, Kay worked at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, OH as a Clerk Typist. It was there she met Howard Bernatt and they were wed in Ohio a few months later. In those days, traveling was difficult, so not wanting to disappoint her new husband's family, 'Howie and Kay' traveled to Howie's hometown of Oklahoma City, OK and were wed once again. It was there they settled and over the next three years welcomed the birth of their first three children,

Sharon, Jim and John. After the War ended, hearing the call of the West, the family loaded in the car and moved to The Redlands, California. It was there their final child, Karen, was born. Kay had finally made it to the West. From an early age, she encouraged her children to be extremely active and social, placing them into swimming lessons, water ballet, violin, trumpet and flute lessons. She was a Blue Bird leader, Scout Leader and hot dog vendor at her son's football games. She made sure her children knew the value of earning a dollar by ensuring they all had part time jobs--even saying "you better not take a lot of time off, your job might not be there when you get back!" Being with their children, she said, was more fun than being without them. She and Howie never traveled without them. In the late 1960s, Howie and Kay moved to Vienna, VA where Howie worked as an Engineer for DECO/Westinghouse. Kay threw herself into volunteerism sewing the Marshall High School Band uniforms as well as Halloween costumes for children whose mothers could not sew. She chauffeured the Sisters from Our Lady of Good Council in her "little yellow VW Beetle," took meals to the homebound and those in nursing homes and crafted hand hooked rugs to sell and raise money for the Hospital Guild. After 20 years in Virginia, Howie and Kay moved back to their beloved California and settled into retirement in San Pedro. Kay, once again, did not let the grass grow under her feet. She became a fixture at the Los Angeles Maritime Museum running the Gift Shop and educating school buses full of young children. It was there she fell in love with the tall ships that would steadily come into Port. She and Howie enjoyed a large group of friends and were extremely active in the local Social Clubs, exclaiming how her "60 and 70s" were the most fun she ever had! Kay was a deep lover of all animals and was preceded in death by her beloved BeBe and countless songbirds, both domesticated and wild. She had an undeniable knack for understanding the feelings of God's creatures and always had treats on hand to pass out to whomever was begging. Despite being five years shy of her 100th birthday, Kay was sharp as tack chalking up her longevity to small meals, home remedies and managing stress. In fact, at 93, she stated she 'finally realized

she was getting old as she could no longer conjugate a Spanish verb.' She will be gravely missed by her four children, Sharon Hackett Gleim, Jim Bernatt, John Bernatt and Karen Cuppett Piontkowski; 8 grandchildren, multiple great grandchildren, as well as countless other relatives, cousins, nieces, nephews, friends and acquaintances. Everyone who met her, if only for a moment, was touched by her kindness, insatiable wit and gentle smile. In lieu of flowers, please send flowers--as Kay so loved them. And if you are able, we would love to have you fill the church and join in the celebration of her life Katoo and finally being reunited with her family and friends.

Tribute Wall



“ Kathryn Marie "Kato" Bernatt

October 27, 2022 at 09:45 PM



“ Remembering my Aunt "Kato". Sure did love her and she made me feel loved too. I will never forget the times I spent with her in Virginia and in California; and all the times she would write to me and I would write back to her. Happy for having had such a wonderful Aunt in my life! ♡♡

Evelyn Zink Gasher - February 20, 2019 at 08:09 PM



“ 1 file added to the album Obituary Wall



Jefferson Funeral Chapel - January 28, 2019 at 09:14 AM



“ I'm researching my home's history. I believe this family lived in my house for a short while (3 years) in Oklahoma City - Howard A. Bernatt and Kathryn Bernatt. Just for your memories, I could provide you the documents if you want.

October 29, 2013 at 12:00 AM



“ *What a wonderful tribute to such a beautiful person! Thank you for sharing the memories and history of your loved one with us. Karen, Aunt Sharon, and Katie, Paul and I would like to extend our deepest sympathy to you and the members of your family on the passing of your mother and grandmother. It is our sincere prayer that you will experience the peace of God during this time of bereavement. It is not easy to bid farewell to someone you have all loved and cherished for a life-time. Please remember that you are not alone as you journey through this season of your life. God has promised never to leave you, nor forsake you. We are praying for God to uphold you and your family during these upcoming days, weeks, and months of adjusting to life without your mother and grandmother. Love you and through it all, may you find courage, strength, and hope in Jesus Christ who gives us a peace beyond our understanding. Love, Cheryl (former CSR of DAI)*

August 30, 2013 at 12:00 AM



“ *Such a wonderful writing on Grandma's life Katie. I'm glad to learn some of her early history. I remember going with her on a few meal runs as a young child; she was so good to everyone. My memories of her will stay near. We will miss her very much. My love to your family, Aunt Sharon and Uncle John.*

August 27, 2013 at 12:00 AM



“ *Katie and Karen,
As I said many times before, she was (is) a great lady! Joe and I will
be honored to attend her funeral on Friday.
With much love and sympathy,
Mary Ann*

August 26, 2013 at 12:00 AM



“ *Thank you Katie for writing such a beautiful memory of my Aunt
Katoo and including my Dad, her little brother. I loved her so much
and have many, many happy memories of her and her wonderful
kind nature, she must have gotten it from her mother, my Grandma,
who was as sweet as pie, as well as my Dad and Aunt Evelyn. They
were all so, so dear to me. Aunt Kathryn is amongst good company
now.
Evelyn Zink Gasher*

August 26, 2013 at 12:00 AM



“ *Katie, you and Karen have done a wonderful job with the funeral
arrangements and the obit (and the picture). Mom would be very
pleased. I loved her so much! Aunt Sharon*

August 26, 2013 at 12:00 AM



“ *We miss you, Grandma!*

August 26, 2013 at 12:00 AM