



## Phyllis M. Chetakian

November 13, 1927 - November 25, 2023

In the early morning of Saturday, 25th of November 2023, Phyllis Morgan Chetakian, aged 96, passed away peacefully into the loving arms of Jesus, in Leesburg, Florida.

Phyllis was born on November 13, 1927 in Indianapolis, Indiana and was raised by her grandparents, for whom she always expressed love and admiration. At the age of three, on a Sunday afternoon, Phyllis sat at her grandmother's piano for the first time and, to the amazement of her grandmother, played a hymn that had been sung at church that morning. At the age of six, she began playing regularly at church, and she won a scholarship to the Arthur Jordan Conservatory when she was only 14 years old.

When Phyllis was 20, she married Edward Chetakian, a U.S. Army soldier who was stationed in Indianapolis. They moved to Southern California, where they raised five children, and Phyllis helped in her husband's plastics company while continuing her musical career.

Phyllis was a featured pianist for the Crystal Cathedral Church and was the permanent accompanist for Norma Zimmer, the "Champagne Lady" of the Lawrence Welk Show. Phyllis traveled with Norma on tours for many years. Phyllis also had the pleasure of playing piano for Governor Pete Wilson,

Astronaut Jim Irwin, and was the accompanist for Thurl Ravenscroft (better known as “Tony the Tiger” and the voice of “The Grinch Who Stole Christmas”). Her piano recordings were broadcast on radio, and over the years, she played in many concerts to audiences nationwide. She produced several CDs and is also found on Youtube.

Besides piano, Phyllis also had many other talents. She was an artist and a writer. She often displayed her paintings in art shows locally, and she recently completed her book entitled “The Melody of My Life.” An excerpt from her book: “I always ended my concerts with the famous ‘My Tribute by Andre Crouch’ - also known as ‘To God be the Glory.’ The lyrics reflect my gratitude to God for giving me a musical talent I can share with everyone.”

Despite her career in music, Phyllis never missed precious moments for her family. Motherhood seemed to come easy to her even with the huge task of raising five children. She spent time chauffeuring them to extracurricular activities, baking cookies, and sewing clothes for her children, never missing the encouragement and loving hugs for her family.

For those who had the pleasure of getting to know Phyllis, know that she encompassed beauty and grace throughout her life. She rarely met anyone that remained a stranger, and she loved to bring joy to everyone she would meet. She will be forever missed from our world, but we know that Phyllis will continue to play her beautiful melodies for the Lord. The last words from her book: “When the lights go out in your life, keep the music playing.”

Phyllis is predeceased by her husband of 56 years, Edward Chetakian; and her second husband, Lowell Allen Ripley of 12 years. She leaves behind her beloved five adult children – Ted Chetakian, Calvin Chetakian, David Chetakian, Pamela Parker Johnson (Chetakian), and Lori Hugill (Chetakian) Phyllis also leaves behind 13 grandchildren – Adam, Christopher, Alicia,

Griffin, Casey, Jordan, Court, David Jr., Darrin, Nicole, Andrea, Amanda, Olivia – and 19 great-grandchildren, along with many nieces and nephews.

A Celebration of Life gathering will tentatively be held on February 3, 2024 at the Celebration Baptist Church in Leesburg, Florida. In lieu of flowers, donations in her memory to your favorite charities would be appreciated.

# Tribute Wall

RG

“ We were so blessed to have moved to our neighborhood and met Phyllis and her family. What a wonderful and truly aweome lady. We loved sitting with her and talking for hours about her life. We miss her so much.

Randy Griswold - January 07, 2024 at 01:31 PM

DC

“ We are so grateful that God allowed us to have a wonderful friendship with Ed and Phyllis starting in 1973 at :Lake Hills Community Church in Mission Viejo, California where she was the pianist. Ed and I sang in the Men's Quartet with "Springs of Living Waters" as our favorite song. After choir practice we would go to the Hilton Hotel Coffee Shop for pie and coffee with Ed & Phyllis driving their "his and hers" 240Z sports cars, green and white! We have the CD "From the Heart" and have her wonderful piano music playing to relax while driving our car.

Dick Cummings - December 25, 2023 at 02:47 AM

 Lisa Yapp

“ I only heard today -nearly a month late- that Phyllis passed. She was such a special lady and very kind to my Mother. I remember her as someone who never seemed to age and always had a smile that could light up a room. It was wonderful when she got a place in Florida and we saw her more often. A party came alive when she attended and had piano. The singing and the laughing would would entail was priceless. I had been messaging her and we wrote about my visiting her this year in Florida. I am sorry that will not be happening. Much love to her family. Lisa

Lisa Yapp - December 24, 2023 at 12:07 PM

NS

*We were so blessed to meet, I too had visited the Crystal cathedral when I lived in Anaheim a short time, and her play at our church, we are so blessed to know her and miss her a lot, we do have a couple of her CD that we purchased from her, she will be in our heart forever, and nice to have met you all*

*Sincerely, Nancy/Bill Stevens*

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**Nancy Stevens** - December 24, 2023 at 02:13 PM

NW

*Phyllis was always my special inspiration. I spent many evenings with her and especially her last few nights. I feel blessed to have had her in my life for many years. I love you Phyllis.*

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**Nancy Witt** - January 08, 2024 at 09:54 AM