



Mrs. Helen Yolanda (Gillette) Alfano

June 1, 1925 - February 23, 2020

WHITESBORO/LEAWOOD, KS - Mrs. Helen Yolanda (Gillette) Alfano passed away after a brief illness and an extraordinary, healthy, vibrant life.

Helen had 101 uses for clothes pins and duct tape that shared the crowded kitchen drawer with rubber-bands, sharpened number 2 pencils and her Shell Oil stapler. They represented not only tools for her “necessity is the mother of all invention” outlook on home repair, but also her theory of an uncomplicated life.

Helen’s wit and humor were only matched by her insatiable appetite for learning and the importance of education. Many days you would see her reading, observing, researching anything about the Royal Family, or completing her daily crossword puzzle. Had she been born in a different era, she would have gone on to “great things” in her words.

Born to the late Anthony and Assunta “Susan” (Pecci) Gillette in Syracuse, New York on June 1, 1925, she was the youngest of four siblings. She later was educated in Utica Schools and graduated from T.R. Proctor High School in 1946. In 1956 she married Joseph Charles Alfano who passed away in 1988; to that marriage came the blessing of two children, Peter, and (Mary) Beth.

While she didn’t work outside the home her entire life, her positions from Shell Oil to the Whitesboro School District created fond memories and lasting friendships.

She resided at 10 Chateau Drive, in Whitesboro most of her adult life in a

home she and Joe built, raising their children and creating the typical Ozzy and Harriet experience. For the previous 12 years she resided in Leawood, Kansas with her daughter, favorite son-in-law, and cherished grandson. The last year of her life she resided at Sunrise Living in Leawood, KS where she was active and had a lovely group of friends till the end.

Helen made many friends in the Kansas City Area and became part of the Leawood gang, always a fixture at parties and dinners hosted by her daughter. She became a social media celebrity with her “Coffee Talks with Helen” and was known for holding court, laughing and telling stories with her “band of six” tablemates, Ruth, Isabelle, Pat, Marylou, and Rita.

Helen leaves behind her son, Peter Alfano of Kansas City, MO; daughter, (Mary) Beth (Bill) Zollars of Leawood, KS and Laguna Beach, CA; and grandson, Austin Zollars of Orange, CA. She also leaves behind 3 bonus grand-children, Stephanie (Ashley) Stroud, Sara (Jason) Conner, and Brad (Jenny) Zollars; 6 bonus great-grandchildren, Olivia, Will, Maddy, GiGi, Mackenzie, and Molly; nieces, Suzanne, Judy, Carol, Sue, and Tina; nephews, Frank C., Frank G., Ricky, and Joey; many great and great-great nieces and nephews; and a wide net of friends from New York to Kansas City whom she touched with her humor and friendship the past 94 years. She was predeceased by her siblings and their spouses, Carmela Palmieri (August), Eda Cardinal (Frank). and Joseph Gillette (Antoinette).

A special thanks to her one-of-a-kind caregivers the past few years; Haley, Maria, Liz, Amy, and Tina, as well as all the staff at Sunrise (Erica and Michelle) and Ascend Hospice.

Every Wednesday was beauty parlor day and her hair was coifed in a way she thought resembled Julius Caesar’s hair style, and last Wednesday was no different. When a friend commented on her hair, she would answer “Friends, Romans, Countrymen, lend me your ears” a comedian till the end! When asked why she covered her Honey Bunches of Oats in “Half n Half” instead of 2% milk, she replied “What’s that going to give me, another two minutes?”
Daughter, sister, mom, grandmother, aunt, friend, and teacher. We love you

and shall miss you.

Visitation will be held on Saturday from 2-3 at the Eannace Funeral Home, Inc., 932 South St., corner of Hammond Ave. Helen's funeral service and Celebration of Life will follow at 3:00 at the funeral home at the conclusion of visitation. A future service will be held at a date and time to be determined in the Kansas City Area.

Cemetery Details

St. Agnes Cemetery at the convenience of the family

601 Arthur Street
Utica, NY

Previous Events

Visitation

FEB **29**. 2:00 PM - 3:00 PM (ET)

Eannace Funeral Home, Inc.
932 South Street
corner of Hammond Ave.
Utica, NY 13501
(315) 724-6714
eannacefh@roadrunner.com

Funeral Service

FEB **29**. 3:00 PM (ET)

Eannace Funeral Home, Inc.
932 South Street
corner of Hammond Ave.
Utica, NY 13501
(315) 724-6714
eannacefh@roadrunner.com
<https://www.eannacefuneralhome.com>

Tribute Wall

MP

“ Sorry to hear of your mom's passing, please accept my condolences. Though I don't remember your mom I guess we were second cousins. Your grandmother "Susie" was my grandfather's sister. His name was James Pecci. My parents were Pete and Rita Pecci. My father had a closer relationship with Eda than with the other siblings, probably because of the similarity of their ages. We moved to Ohio in the mid 1960's and the cardinal's visited us there once and Buster & Eda visited my folks after retirement' in Florida, several times. Again, sorry to hear of your loss, sincerely Mike Pecci, Nashville, Michigan.

Mike Pecci - April 05, 2020 at 12:47 AM

TG

“ What a wonderful story about a woman who has left quite the legacy! I am from KC, KS...did not know the lovely and funny Mrs. Alfano, but certainly wish I had. What a fabulous life and what an inspiration to her family and all who knew her. Much sympathy to the family and friends....may the memories in your heart carry you through these days and help to tell her story for years to come. Thank you for sharing your words with the world!

Theresa Van Goethem - February 28, 2020 at 09:06 AM

TG

“ Theresa Van Goethem lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Helen Yolanda (Gillette) Alfano



Theresa Van Goethem - February 28, 2020 at 09:03 AM

SS

“ I did not know your mom, but after reading her beautiful obituary, I wish I did! What an absolutely beautiful and heartfelt tribute. She sounded like an amazing woman! I am so sorry for your loss! My thoughts and prayers are with you at this very sad time!
Stephanie Sacco

Stephanie Sacco - February 27, 2020 at 08:57 PM

JT

“ Joe,Nancy,Frank and Tina purchased the Country Basket Blooms for the family of Mrs. Helen Yolanda (Gillette) Alfano.



Joe,Nancy,Frank and Tina - February 27, 2020 at 06:52 PM

MF

“ Much Love, John, Amy and Jonathan Felton purchased the Your Light Shines for the family of Mrs. Helen Yolanda (Gillette) Alfano.



Much Love, John, Amy and Jonathan Felton - February 27, 2020 at 03:56 PM

GG

“ Graham, Katie and Mary Katherine Gillette purchased the Beautiful Dreams for the family of Mrs. Helen Yolanda (Gillette) Alfano.



Graham, Katie and Mary Katherine Gillette - February 27, 2020 at 09:00 AM



“ *Be My Love Bouquet with Red Roses* was purchased for the family of Mrs. Helen Yolanda (Gillette) Alfano.



February 26, 2020 at 08:53 PM



“ *Connie & Frank purchased the Peaceful White Lilies Basket* for the family of Mrs. Helen Yolanda (Gillette) Alfano.



Connie & Frank - February 26, 2020 at 12:07 PM



“ *Divine Peace Bouquet* was purchased for the family of Mrs. Helen Yolanda (Gillette) Alfano.



February 26, 2020 at 10:49 AM



“ *Enchanted Cottage* was purchased for the family of Mrs. Helen Yolanda (Gillette) Alfano.



February 26, 2020 at 12:33 AM