

Mayie (Etchebarne) Maitia

1929-2021



MAYIE MAITIA

May 8, 1929 - December 15, 2021

Mayie Maitia born May 8, 1929 in Saint Etienne de Baigorry, France died December 15, 2021 in Bakersfield, California at age 92.

She was preceded in death by her husband J.B. Maitia, son Daniel Maitia, parents Jean and Marie Etchebarne, sisters Angele Ansolabehere and Amelie Bidart, brothers Jean Leon, Jean Baptiste, Jean, Michel and Pierre Etchebarne, many brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law, and her special friend and companion Dr. Romain Clerou.

She is survived by her daughter, Jenny Poncetta and husband David, daughter-in-law Josefa Maitia, granddaughters Christiane Camou and husband Patrick, Natalie Sorhouet and husband Mark, Victoria Maitia, and grandson Shane Geissel, and great-granddaughters Gabriella, Sophia and Amelia Camou, her sister Marianne Perez, as well as nieces, nephews, in-laws, cousins, and friends.

Mayie, the seventh of nine children, grew up in the small town of Baigorry. When she was very young, her mother passed away, and her grandmother took over the responsibility of raising the family. Her deeply religious grandmother instilled in her the importance of caring for others, how to give, and how to share. In 1947, at the age of 17, Mayie, accompanied by her sister Angele, immigrated to the land of opportunity. She worked as a nanny for the Amestoy family, but soon began working at the Noriega and Pyrenees restaurants. While working, Mayie met J.B. Maitia, a bartender, and they married in 1947. They had two children, Jenny and Daniel. In 1954, just a few weeks after Danny's birth and at the age of 25, Mayie and J.B. opened their own restaurant, the Wool Growers Cafe on Sumner Street. Starting your own business is always challenging, but doing so as a young woman, and new mother in the early 1950's is truly remarkable. Her fearlessness and ambition for a better life for her family would sustain her, as she struggled to make her restaurant a success.

Even though Mayie worked long hours, and cared for her two children, she always found time to help Basque immigrants in need. Having experienced the challenge of being in a new place, with no knowledge of the language and customs, she helped these new arrivals by taking them to the DMV, consulate, or even their medical appointments. She also held classes to help them prepare for citizenship tests and learn English. In addition, she employed many Basque immigrants at her restaurant, so that they too could live the American dream. Thus, Mayie became known as the mother, or big sister to so many in the Basque community.

Her caring nature, and hard work ethic made the Wool Growers a success, but she cherished her time with family above all else. Mayie showed them her unconditional love throughout her life. She provided support and cared for them when they needed her. She regularly prepared meals for them to gather, and was a doting and proud grandmother and great-grandmother.

The family would like to thank her loving caregivers, especially Virginia and Marina, Hoffman Hospice, and the many doctors and nurses that cared for her during these last few years. A special thank you to

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her Wool Growers family of workers, without whom she would not have been able to live her dream. She truly believed that they wanted her to succeed as much as she did, and the Wool Growers would not be what it is without them.

Viewing will be held at St. Francis Catholic Church (900 H Street) on Wednesday, December 29, 2021 at 9:00 am with Rosary and Funeral services to follow at 10:00 am.

Although Mayie loved flowers, she loved helping others more, and in lieu of them, donations can be made to the Mayie Maitia Scholarship Fund at Garces Memorial High School; the Kern County Basque Club Scholarship Fund (P.O. Box 416, Bakersfield, CA 93302); St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic Church Building Fund or a charity of your choice.

DOUGHTY-CALHOUN-O'MEARA FUNERAL DIRECTORS

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