



Endla Kivestu

October 10, 1915 - December 31, 2016

Endla Kivestu left this earth peacefully on December 31, 2016, for the loving arms of our Lord. Born in Tartu, Estonia, on October 10, 1915, she had a deep love for her native country despite fleeing Estonia as a young woman amidst sweeping events that would change the world. In the ensuing years, she maintained her faith in God, love of family, and indefatigable will to make the most of life's circumstances. To the age of 101, she avidly followed politics and world events and took a keen interest in the lives of her children and grandchildren, always exhorting them to "Dream big."

Endla graduated from high school in Tallinn, capital city of Estonia, where she married Ferdinand Kongo and lived with her daughter Hele Mall through the beginning of World War II. A fierce opponent of Communist-occupied Estonia, she saw her husband deported along with tens of thousands of Estonians to Siberia in 1941. Having to fend for herself, she rose to become the head bookkeeper of the Building Materials Central Cooperative, only to arrive at work one morning to find the building destroyed beyond recognition by Russian bombs.

Ultimately as a single mother fearing for her safety and that of her child, she fled Estonia under harrowing circumstances via fishing boat through a mined harbour. She arrived in Stockholm on the eve of her 29th birthday to a displaced person's camp. Able-bodied and mightily independent, she considered herself too young to be cared for by the state and found work in Sweden's largest shoe factory. Ultimately, she became payroll bookkeeper for

Sweden's global construction company Skanska. Having a life-long fascination with numbers, she became a specialist in the use of the comptometer, an early and complex predecessor of the digital computer used in accounting.

In 1951, she married Juhan Kivestu in Sweden, presuming that Ferdinand, who had been missing for 10 years, was dead. During this Cold War period, Endla and Juhan remained wary of Soviet aggression and immigrated to Canada, living in Montréal for 35 years and raising their son Peeter there before moving to Toronto in 1985. Juhan passed away in December 1999, fulfilling Endla's long-held dream to see the dawn of the new Millennium with him.

Endla pressed on, living alone in Toronto for another 16 years. In 2015, she joyfully celebrated her 100th birthday there with family and friends. Shortly thereafter, she moved to the US to begin the final chapter of her life. She made many new friends at Vernon Terrace in Edina, MN. She also joined the MN Estonian Evangelical Lutheran congregation and delighted in friendships that reached back to her homeland. Endla leaves behind a legacy of lessons learned, stories told, and the dream that those who knew and loved her will continue to embrace life and make the world a better place.

Survived by daughter Hele Mall Oja (Tonis) of Scarsdale, NY; son Peeter Kivestu (Patti) of Edina, MN; and grandchildren – Erik Oja, Andreas Oja, Kenton Kivestu, and Chloe Kivestu. Services will be held Sat., Feb. 11 at Mt. Olivet Church, Minneapolis, with visitation at 11, service at noon and reception to follow. In lieu of flowers, memorials may be sent to Sharing and Caring Hands (<http://www.sharingandcaringhands.org/>) or The Great Trail (<https://the.greattrail.ca/>).

Previous Events

Memorial Service

FEB 11. 12:00 PM (CT)

Mount Olivet Lutheran Church
5025 Knox Ave S Mpls
Minneapolis, MN 55419