



## Matheos Kosta Balafas

December 23, 1936 - June 6, 2025

Matheos K. Balafas, age 88, of Golden Valley, passed away June 6, 2025. Survived by longtime partner, Letta Nicklow; children, Dino (Karen) Balafas, Maria (Steve) Merbler; grandchildren, Alyssa Merbler (Kyle), Niki Merbler, Natascha Balafas (fiancée Vanessa), Matthew Balafas; sister, Stamata Pakirizis. Preceded in death by Dolores Balafas; siblings, Sotirios and Kostula Balafas.

Starting life in a rural mountainous area near Nemea Greece, World War Two saw him and his family fleeing the German occupation and then the internal revolution once the war had ended. As a farmer in Greece, rural life was difficult relying on mules and pull plows given the absence of tractors, electricity and running water as they grew grapes for raisins and wine, olives, and some crops for additional sustenance. He took advantage of an uncle who sponsored him to come to the US to participate in the America dream. This had him land in the late 1950's in Canada and then New York City as a young man who did not know a word of English and had a serious gap in his education due to the war.

In America he started very modestly, as a dishwasher, and soon moved to MN to join the only family he had in MN. He continued working in the food industry his entire life rising through the ranks of bus boy, waiter and eventually, restaurant managers and eventually owning his own restaurant which

prospered.

He was a giving, modest and humble man, who always sought to assist those in need around him. He helped many - many - other people from Greece to have a chance in participating in the American dream by working through the immigration process, sponsoring them, providing financial assistance to get them started and even opening his home for a warm comfortable place to stay.

He loved and served his church, St Mary's Greek Orthodox for his entire life, first by helping it get built, as a trustee member and a faithful servant. If anyone shared a meal at the church in the past 50 years, they certainly would have experienced his cooking prowess not to mention a kind smile and friendly joke.

He was a loving father and Papou to his two children and his four grandchildren. He left fond memories, wisdom and impressions of the "old country" on his weekly outings with his grandchildren to parks, trails and a favorite lunch spot.

Wealth and success in our time is usually measured by the size of a bank account and the titles held, but Matheos success was measured in his kindness towards others, willingness to give when he had little himself, and rolling up his sleeves to aid anyone who needed his help. Character qualities that the world could certainly use more of. May God provide his spirit with peace, comfort and joy for throughout eternity.

Funeral Service 12:30pm Monday June 16th with visitation beginning at 11:30 at St Mary's Greek Orthodox Church, 3450 Irving Avenue South, Minneapolis. Interment Lakewood Cemetery. Memorials preferred to St. Mary's Greek Orthodox Church.

[www.washburn-mcreavy.com](http://www.washburn-mcreavy.com)

Edina Chapel 952-920-3996

# Cemetery Details

## Lakewood Cemetery (Minneapolis)

3600 Hennepin Avenue South  
Minneapolis, MN 55408

# Previous Events

## Visitation

JUN **16**. 11:30 AM - 12:30 PM (CT)

St. Mary's Greek Orthodox Church  
3450 Irving Avenue South  
Minneapolis, MN 55408

## Funeral Service

JUN **16**. 12:30 PM - 1:30 PM (CT)

St. Mary's Greek Orthodox Church  
3450 Irving Avenue South  
Minneapolis, MN 55408

# Tribute Wall



“ 7 files added to the tribute wall



Jackie Leckas - June 15, 2025 at 01:14 PM



“ Country Basket Blooms was purchased for the family of Matheos Kosta Balafas.



June 15, 2025 at 01:00 PM



“ Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Matheos Kosta Balafas.



June 13, 2025 at 04:44 PM

YD

“ Your friends at May Advertising & Design purchased the Full Of Love Bouquet for the family of Matheos Kosta Balafas.



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**Your friends at May Advertising & Design** - June 12, 2025 at 12:24 PM

YD

“ Your friends at May Advertising & Design planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Matheos Kosta Balafas.

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**Your friends at May Advertising & Design** - June 12, 2025 at 12:24 PM