



Stergios "Stevie" Gitsis

April 15, 2023

Stergios "Stevie" Gitsis

Saturday, April 15, 2023. Predeceased by his wife, Dorothea, Brothers Sam, & Dionesios, Sister Florika. Survived by his children, Nikolas (Lia Katrina) Gitsis and Angela (Michael) Hetelekides; Grandchildren Eleftherios, Stergios, Dorothea, and Kalliope; Brothers Jerry and Christos Gitsis; Sister in law Ekaterini Petalas; and several nieces, nephews, dear friends and large extended family in Greece and Indiana State.

Stevie was well known in the Rochester and Southern Tier area for his many years as the owner of landmark Diners including Gitsis Texas Hots of Rochester and Silverlake Family Restaurant in Warsaw, NY. Besides restaurants, Stevie was an avid auction attendee and loved collecting buying and sometimes selling all sorts of things. He was known to have helped many people and was always willing to feed anyone in need. His difficult early years set the tone for his caring and generosity with his achievements in his adult life in America.

Born in 1931, in a small northern Greek village during the great depression, Stevie grew up during the difficult and war torn years. Helping with his family as an older child in a family of 6, his father, a woodsman and shepherd, often sent him out to tend to the large herd they kept. During World War II, with the burning of his home and his entire village, and the subsequent 4 year civil war, brought more hardship limiting Stevie's formal education to a 3rd grade level, and instead opting for work to fend off hunger. At 19, a chance to emigrate to

the USA (1951) was a dream come true and looking forward to this new life, Stevie set out to claim his share of the American dream.

With less than 50 dollars they were gifted, together with his younger Brother Jerry, they set sail in September for the 3 week voyage across the Atlantic in steam ship from Greece to Ellis Island, New York City. Initially taken in by their aunt Kaliopé Nicholas in Rockford Indiana and not knowing a word of English, the brothers worked odd jobs, in factories, steel mills and plants.

3 years later after being invited by his cousin Nick Tahou to work for him, the now proud American Stevie moved to Rochester NY in 1955. Washing dishes and cooking hot dogs for Tahou, Stevie quickly realized that the boom years of post WWII there was money to be made feeding the city dwellers and factory workers.

Together with Jerry and his newly arrived brother Sam, and their combined years of savings, the 3 brothers struck it out on their own and opened up their first restaurant called Gitsis Texas Hots 10 years after their arrival to the USA . Business was so good the brothers expanded to Buffalo Road and ran the dual diner locations working 12-16 hour days together for many years. The downtown Monroe Avenue became the landmark that it is today, and the westside suburban Buffalo Road location thrived, expanding into a tripartite restaurant group including the Gitsis Party House, Gitsis Steak House (famous for hosting Lions club, Rotary club and Greek nights on weekends with belly dancers), and the 24 hour Gitsis Diner, all driven and underscored by growing families in the suburbs, and the white and blue collar workers from the nearby Kodak plant, looking for satisfying breakfast, lunch, and dinners, all the way up until the end of the 20th century.

As the years went and as demographics changed in the city and suburbs, the brothers with their growing families in tow also went out on their own, bringing their style of Greek diners to many areas around the Rochester area especially in smaller towns and villages such as in Spencerport and Holley NY. In 1989 Stevie with his family headed south of Rochester to build a new restaurant in the neighboring villages of both Perry and Warsaw and named

them Silverlake Family Restaurants', paying tribute to the picturesque summer attraction in the area and being so fond of the area, settled there through his latter years.

Family and friends may call Thursday 10-11am at Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church, 962 East Ave. Rochester, NY 14607. Funeral Service to follow at 11am. Interment at Grove Place Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, please send donations to the Alzheimer's Association or to the Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church.

Cemetery Details

Grove Place Cemetery

2775 Chili Avenue
Rochester, NY 14624

Previous Events

Calling Hours

APR 20. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (ET)

Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church
962 East Avenue
Rochester, NY 14607

Funeral Service

APR 20. 11:00 AM (ET)

Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church
962 East Avenue
Rochester, NY 14607

Tribute Wall

CD

“ *Dearest Angela Mike & Family*

Sending our condolences to each of you. Although we never had the opportunity to meet your Father and Grandfather he sounds like an amazing person. May all your loving memories of your Father bring you peace and comfort at this every sad time.

Curt & Susan Dechow - May 08, 2023 at 07:21 PM

MK

“ *Sympathy to the Gitsis family. I remember well the hot dog shop on Genesee st. in the early 60's Steve & Gerry, Steve was always welcoming to us kids. When they opened Buffalo Rd my mom and I would ride out there and see Steve. What an honor to know him polite, caring, hard worker, Steve your Heavenly home awaits you, you were truly a Blessing to the people who came through your life. God Bless you our friend.*

- Margaret Hayes Kelley



Margaret E kelley - April 23, 2023 at 08:20 PM



“ *Arrive in Style was purchased for the family of Stergios "Stevie" Gitsis.*



April 20, 2023 at 08:42 AM

AM

“ *Stevie was an amazing man. Ment alot to my family. He inspired and help us kids grow to amazing people. Will be missed and always loved.*
Majors and Mana family.

Allison Majors - April 19, 2023 at 02:40 PM

NC

“ *Dear Gitsis Family,*
Sending my condolences and sympathy to you all. May the memory of Mr. Sergios' be eternal. God bless you at this difficult time of sorrow. Zoi Se Sas

Niki Chamberlain - April 18, 2023 at 07:13 PM

LC

“ *Louie, Patty, Jerry, and Chrysan purchased the E nchanted Cottage for the family of Stergios "Stevie" Gitsis.*



Louie, Patty, Jerry, and Chrysan - April 17, 2023 at 12:11 PM

TT

“ *Theo Stevie was a great influence in my life as a young man. He will forever be fondly remembered as a great family man. On behalf of the Tzimas family, our most sincere condolences. Love you all. Tim*

Tim Tzimas - April 17, 2023 at 12:03 PM



“ Sentiments of Serenity Spray was purchased for the family of Stergios "Stevie" Gitsis.



April 17, 2023 at 11:49 AM



“ All who had the extreme pleasure knowing Steve, will miss him dearly. Always joyful and happy, with a smile that could brighten up the cloudiest days.

Angela Griggs-Gitsis - April 17, 2023 at 10:52 AM



“ I'm sorry to learn of his passing. Many times I enjoyed a meal at Gitis on Monroe and was saddened when it closed. He was very friendly and kind.

Betty Johnson

Betty Johnson - April 16, 2023 at 07:43 AM



“ Angela, Nick & family, So sorry for the loss of your father. Please accept my deepest condolences.

David Griggs - April 16, 2023 at 12:39 AM

DG

“ *David Griggs lit a candle in memory of
Stergios "Stevie" Gitsis*



David Griggs - April 16, 2023 at 12:37 AM