

A SNAP SHOT BIOGRAPHY ON

Anna Markou

THE OLDEST CHIAN WOMAN IN ADELAIDE



The early 1960's were tough, so much so that Anna became very sick, suffering a nervous breakdown and other health problems. With God's will and a strong faith, things got better.

The realisation of her dream of educating her children was exceeded beyond her expectations, with more than seven tertiary degrees and diplomas from her children and grandchildren over the years to come. Their academic achievements had made the sacrifice of leaving her beautiful homeland Greece and her extended family worthwhile, never regretting the decision that was made.

Petros became an electrician and director of a company, Con, a chartered accountant running his own practice and Maria, a secondary school teacher.

Anna's children married very well and gave her five grandchildren, Anna, Anita, Kylie, Katherine and Panagioti, two step-grandchildren, Matthew and George and six great grandchildren, Portia, Peter-Jacob, Carter, Lorenzo, Anastasia and Adele.

In 1985, after an absence of 25 years, Anna returned to Greece with Dimitri and daughter Maria. It was an emotional yet rewarding time. She even went back to Cyprus to meet up with the man to whom she was a nanny during the war, many years ago at the Hotel Berengaria.

On March 27, 1997 her husband Dimitri died aged 86 years. Anna then decided to go and live in the Ridleyton Greek Home for the Aged.

Surrounded by her loving family, she held her strong faith and resilient character until God called her peacefully home on March 29, 2013.

- Maria Rologas (nee Markou)
daughter of Anna and Dimitrios Markou



Anna Markou (born Anna Fassolas) was born in the village of Leptopoda in northern Chios, Greece on December 9, 1918. She was the youngest child of Dimitri and Maria Fassolas (nee Rimikis).

Anna had four brothers and sisters from her father's first marriage plus another two from her mother's first marriage, as both parents were widowed.

The marriage of Maria and Dimitri resulted in six children, of which Anna was the last.

Anna's childhood was difficult as her family was very poor. Socially, she experienced love and some laughter in her very early years playing with her brothers, sisters and many nephews and nieces.

Since times in the village were very desperate, at age eight, Anna was denied an education and taken out of school after only two months. She was sent to Chios town (Hora) to work as a child maid to a wealthy Chian family and suffered abuse and neglect, often running away and facing starvation.

She was married off at 15 years of age to Michael Koutsouras from the nearby village of Agrelopo and lived there on and off for 11 years. Life was tough and marriage proved to be even tougher, often leaving the village many times for months on end, to resume her duties as a maid in Hora.

During the war (WW2), around 1943, Anna and her husband along with many other Chians, became refugees escaping the Germans in Chios. Whilst on route to Cyprus from Cesme, Turkey, she was ship wrecked off the coast of Turkey. Many men, women and children drowned and only a handful of survivors were rescued - Anna was one of them, her husband Michael was not so fortunate. Rescued by the Turks and sheltered back in Cesme, Anna, in her mid 20's newly widowed, and despite the tragedy she experienced, continued her journey to Cyprus, intending to stay only for the duration of the war.

She found work in Cyprus at Hotel Berengaria, located in the Troodos Range, near the town of Prodomos. Her duties included being a nanny to a young boy, Taso, as well as being the head house keeper. Many dignitaries visited the hotel including King Farouk of Egypt and British Ministers, military chiefs and ambassadors.

One of these Ambassadors offered her a job in the British Embassy in Cairo, Egypt. She accepted and went to Cairo in 1944. She was a housekeeper for Sir Walter Smart, Britain's Chief Intelligence Officer in Egypt during the war. She stayed there for one year, but disliked it. Sir Walter was a true gentleman, kind and caring, but his wife, prominent Egyptian painter Amy Nimr, was not. After one year in Egypt, Anna left and went back to Cyprus, spending a total of seven years working in the Hotel Berengaria.

Cyprus was a memorable experience for her as she had many friends, fellow villagers and relatives there helping her adjust to the tragedy she had just personally experienced and providing comfort to each other throughout the war torn years. Two such friends were her niece Irene Psarianos and Soutana Markou, sister to the man she would eventually love and marry.

Once back in Greece, Anna married Dimitri Markou on February 13, 1949. Dimitri was the eldest son of Petros and Irene Markou (nee Skiriotis) who lived in Agrelopo. Dimitri had fallen in love with Anna when he first saw her as a young bride arriving in Agrelopo, many years earlier. On learning of Anna's tragedy, he visited his sister Soutana in Cyprus seizing his opportunity to see Anna, thus developing a lifetime relationship.

Together they had four children Irene (died at birth), Petros (born in Athens), Con and then Maria (both born in Agrelopo). Their early married years were predominantly spent in Agrelopo, however during 1958, they had moved to Athens to live, as the village offered no opportunities or future for their children.

In 1960, they decided to come to Adelaide, Australia, to begin a better life for themselves and the children. Anna's main goal for her children was for them to have an education or learn a trade, something that she valued more than anything else. It was this one thing that she was denied; the ability to read and write which strengthened her determination to provide that opportunity to her children.

In September 1960, on the ship PATRIS, the family reached Fremantle, Western Australia and were then met in Adelaide by Dimitri's brother Theodore and his family. They lived under one roof for about a year in Kilburn before moving to Virginia, north of Adelaide.