



## Itala Punaro Samulski

June 29, 1915 - February 29, 2016

Columbia, SC—The Mass of Christian Burial for Mrs. Itala Rose Punaro Samulski, who entered into rest February 29, 2016, will be conducted Saturday morning at 11 o'clock from Our Lady of Peace Catholic Church. The Reverend Jacob Joseph, CMI, Celebrant. Final Prayers and Commendations in Westover Memorial Park.

Itala was a native of Augusta, a piano teacher, and a mother of nine. Itala was born to a musical family of Italian descent. Her father Egidio (Edward) Punaro was an accomplished harpist from Viggiano, Italy, while her mother Maddalena (Madelene) Campiglia was the daughter of an Italian harp maker in Philadelphia. Her father and grandfather gave up life as touring musicians to settle in Augusta where they established Punaro's Meat Market at the corner of 13th and Jones.

Itala attended Mount Saint Joseph Academy and graduated from Augusta Junior College. Subsequently she studied piano with Ellmer Zoller in New York City where she made her debut in the 1930s at the Commodore Hotel (now the Grand Hyatt). She returned to Augusta where she met her husband Thaddeus (Ted) Peter Samulski, a native of Buffalo (Lancaster), NY, at a USO dance during WWII. Ted was a member of the Army Air Corps stationed at Daniel Field in Augusta before being deployed to North Africa and Italy, where he was part of the Anzio Beach assault.

Itala was the organist at multiple Catholic churches—Sacred Heart and Saint Patrick's (now Holy Trinity) in Augusta, GA, Our Lady of Peace in North Augusta, SC, and Our Savior's Lutheran Church, Jefferson City, MO. Her husband became a cost manager with Fluor Daniels, and they moved to wherever a plant was being built. Itala maintained a private piano studio wherever she lived until the age of 92—Augusta, Georgia; Scheuren, Germany; Muskogee, OK; Greenville, SC; Blythewood SC; Chapel Hill, NC; Roswell, GA; and Columbia, SC. She taught music and piano at Immaculate Conception Academy (an orphanage for African American children in Augusta, GA) and Murrow Indian Children's Home (a Native American school in Muskogee, OK). She also co-founded and taught a kindergarten for Irish Travellers in "Murphy Village" (named for the priest who helped establish it) in Edgefield County, SC.

Besides taking care of her own numerous family, Itala often cared for the children and grandchildren of many friends and relatives. At the end of her life, she even took care of her care-givers (including Jeannie, Maggie, Thomasena, Viola, Alicia and Cindy) whom she treated as members of her own family. She was a mother and grandmother to all.

Itala was predeceased by her husband Thaddeus (Ted) Peter Samulski, (1990), her grandsons Kevin Hollett (1989, son of Phil and Marcia) and Mark Samulski (1992, son of Peter and Gay Madden), her brother Augustine Punaro (2003), her sister Teresa Punaro (2004), her son Thaddeus Samulski (2009), her brother Angelo Punaro (2010), and her granddaughter Erica Samulski (2012, daughter of Thaddeus and Ricka Samulski).

Survivors include eight children, Edward T. Samulski, Ph.D., wife Carol Shumate, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, David A. Samulski, wife Jetta ,Cortez, Colorado, Peter L. Samulski, M.S., wife Catherine, Flat Rock, North Carolina, Philip B. Samulski, M.F.A., wife Marcia, Kailua, Hawii, Mary M. V. Samulski-

Parekh, D.M.A., husband Jyotindra, Columbia, South Carolina, Richard J. Samulski, Ph.D., Chapel Hill, North Carolina, John M. Samulski, wife Emelina, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, Joseph M. Samulski, J.D., wife Cynthia Hammond, Brooklyn, New York; Twenty-one grandchildren; Eighteen great-grandchildren; her sister, Clara Tantillo and her husband, Anthony, Atlanta, Georgia, and their nine children, Nina Mahal, Thomas Tantillo, Madeleine Meyerson, Antoinette Paradiso, Angela Tantillo, Teresa Tantillo, Anthony Tantillo, Mario Tantillo and Augustine Tantillo; her sister-in-law, Louise (Angelo's wife) and their five children, Jan Punaro, Joseph Punaro, James Punaro, Maria Sommerfeldt, and Edward Punaro.

Pallbearers will be Thomas Tantillo, Anthony Tantillo, Mario Tantillo, Augustine Tantillo, Joseph Walker and Michael Ritchie.

The Vigil Service for the Deceased will be conducted Friday evening at 6 o'clock in the Posey Funeral Chapel followed by visitation until 8.

Memorials may be made to the Monastery of the Poor Clare Nuns c/o Poor Clare Nuns, 37 McCauley Road, Travelers Rest, South Carolina 29690.

Posey Funeral Directors of North Augusta in charge of arrangements (803.278.1181). Visit the registry at [www.poseycares.com](http://www.poseycares.com)

# Cemetery Details

## Westover Memorial Park

2601 Wheeler Road  
Augusta, GA

# Previous Events

## Visitation

MAR 4. 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM (ET)

Posey Funeral Directors  
1307 Georgia Avenue  
North Augusta, SC

## Service

MAR 5. 11:00 AM (ET)

Our Lady of Peace Catholic Church  
854 Old Edgefield Road  
North Augusta, SC

# Tribute Wall



“ *Itala Punaro Samulski*

October 06, 2023 at 06:29 AM



“ *Itala Punaro Samulski*

September 24, 2022 at 12:12 PM



“ *My favorite memories of Itala include food and the Blessed Mother...Sugar Pops and Cool Whip..her relentless effort to get St. Pope John Paul 2 to pray for Teddy..and succeeding..she watched with a critical eye and commented on the Iraqi war hearings and those held to choose Alito to the Supreme Court..Whatever - whatever...And she did not give up driving without a fight...Pray for us Itala...much love.*

*Jamie Garriss*

**Jamie Garriss** - March 08, 2016 at 07:37 PM



“ *Just heard about the loss of Mrs.Samulski....what a dear sweet lady....always a smile. I took voice lessons from her sister,and loved to hear the beautiful piano music coming from her house.My prayers go out to her family,she is playing ,now,for our Lord.*

**Rochell Porcher** - March 05, 2016 at 04:32 PM

FD

“ Frank and Del Damiano send their deepest sympathies to all the family of Itala. What an amazing person she was. We wish we could have known her and especially to hear the stories of her 100 years. Although we never met or did not know of her accomplishments, we have a connection through the Damiano family. Please know you are prayed for during this time of need.

frank damiano - March 05, 2016 at 10:44 AM

BM

“ The William J Mottel III (Billy) family sends prayers for comfort and peace for all the family during this time of loss. What a wonderful lady she was.

Billy Mottel - March 04, 2016 at 08:32 PM

HR

“ ET - AKA MOUSE - So sorry to see where your Mom is gone. No wonder you were such a great clarinet player. It is in your DNA. Peace to your family. Mone Chapin SC

Harmon Reed - March 03, 2016 at 07:05 PM

JT

“ I took piano lessons from Mrs. Samulski from 3rd. through 12th grade. She was a kind and gentle lady. My deepest condolences to the Samulski family.  
Judy Harrell Tudor

Judy Tudor - March 03, 2016 at 03:43 PM

MC

“ Love and peace to the Samulski family...

Melinda Covey - March 03, 2016 at 07:21 AM

CM

“ Colleen McCarthy lit a candle in memory of Itala Punaro Samulski



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Colleen McCarthy - March 02, 2016 at 08:14 PM

CS

“ So fortunate to have known such a special lady as Itala Samulski. She was a sweetheart.,even when it came to the piano lessons in the Samulski house in North Augusta, when I was her student. Needless to say,I gave up way too soon She touched the lives of many people. Alan and I had the privilege of having Itala play the music on our wedding day 34 years ago in Augusta at Holy Trinity.She even enlisted one of her nieces to sing Ava Maria. Not a day will go by without thinking about her. She will always have a special place in my heart . Love her.

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Colleen McCarthy Schultz - March 02, 2016 at 08:09 PM

MM

“ Mary Ellen McCarthy lit a candle in memory of Itala Punaro Samulski



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Mary Ellen McCarthy - March 02, 2016 at 05:36 AM

MM

“ *Piano teacher, mentor, inspiration, friend, guide, nourisher of body and soul. Memories of this beautiful lady will always fill my spirit with joy. I am deeply grateful for her gentle and enormous impact on my life. I love her dearly and will always share memories of her wisdom and grace with my students. Rest in peace, dear, lovely lady.*

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**Mary Ellen McCarthy** - March 02, 2016 at 05:33 AM