



Vladimir Lvovich Merkovich

November 2, 1935 - June 1, 2023

Vladimir Lvovich Merkovich, age 87 of Moscow, Russia passed away June 1, 2023 in Tashkent, Uzbekistan.

A memorial service in his honor will be held at 2:00 PM, Wednesday, July 5, 2023, at Mitchell-Jerdan Funeral Home, 1200 Wabash Avenue, Mattoon, IL 61938; Rabbi Alan Cook will officiate.

Vladimir was born November 2, 1935 in Belarus, then the Soviet Union, to the late Lev and Faina (Kaganovich) Merkovich. He was married for 46 years to Nina Kuznetsova of St. Petersburg, Russia; she preceded him in death in 2012. He is survived by his daughter, Dr. Irina Podolsky (son-in-law Michael Podolsky) of Fairfield, IL; one grandchild, Alisa Didorenko of Chicago, IL; nephew Leonid Bylinin of Moscow, Russia; and niece Julia Shikher of Lingen, Germany; and his brother-in-law, Boris Bylinin. He was preceded in death by his beloved sister Esther Bylinin.

At age 6, Vladimir fled Belarus with his mother, grandparents, and baby sister. The family left just ahead of the advancing Nazis at the beginning of WWII, travelling by horse-drawn cart and later train boxcar for 5 months. (All of the family members and other Jews who remained behind in their town were murdered by the German SS.) Twice strafed by Nazi aircraft while in train boxcars, Vladimir's mother lay on top of her son (She was unable to evacuate

him due to his broken leg and splint.), assuming she would protect him by absorbing any bullets that penetrated their train car. They eventually ended up 70 miles from the city of Stalingrad, which in 1943 became the scene of the bloodiest battle of WWII, where the Red Army finally stopped, and then captured a large Nazi force, turning the tide of the war. The family survived by eating wild onions, drinking milk from under the cows that Vladimir's mother milked daily, and from what bread rations were issued to his grandfather, who drove a truck delivering fuel to Soviet tanks engaged in battle with the German invaders. Not long after the Battle of Stalingrad, Vladimir's father Lev found his family through the Red Cross and brought them to Moscow. (He had been arrested in 1940 and sent to the Gulag – Soviet concentration camp – but had miraculously been released to work at a munitions factory near Moscow.) The whole family was reunited after having no idea of each other's whereabouts, or who was even still alive for four years following Lev's arrest by the Secret Police.

In the late 1950's Vladimir earned his master's degree in petroleum engineering, and was employed by the Soviet State Gas Production Company. With Privatization (and the end of the Soviet Union) he became an independent owner of PMK-40, which built pipelines and provided gas distribution throughout the Moscow area. He soon expanded his business into several related companies which he ran successfully for many years. With his integrity, strong work ethic, and the ability to see projects through to a timely completion, Vladimir earned commissions and awards from numerous local, federal, and international organization and labor groups. This included recognition by the Society for the Encouragement of National Industry of France, and the French gas company Frisquet.

A man with a presence, Vladimir knew all walks of life from the common man to artists, musicians, ambassadors, and government officials. He was particularly proud that his company was chosen to bring gas and heat to the

country home of famous Soviet WWII hero General Chuikov, a.k.a. "The Tick," who led the epic defense of Stalingrad against vastly superior German forces. Vladimir's kindness and selflessness made him well loved and respected by all who knew him. He had a passion for architecture and was actively involved in the restoration and preservation of several Orthodox Christian Churches in Russia, saving them from demolition. As a gift to his nation, he brought gas lines and constructed the eternal flame at the monument honoring the Siberian Division, at a point approximately 18 miles outside the Moscow, where that unit turned back the Nazi drive to invade the City. When he found time to relax, Vladimir enjoyed spending time at his country house outside of Moscow. He loved reading and reciting poetry, even until his last days. As a young man, he was an avid boxer, weight lifter, and volleyball player. Up until health issues intervened, he greatly enjoyed visiting his daughter and granddaughter, shopping, dining, and attending baseball games in Chicago.

Memorials in Vladimir's honor may be made to The International Rescue Committee to aid Ukrainian refugees, the World Central Kitchen, which provides food to disaster sites and war zones, and the Morton Arboretum, outside Chicago.

Please visit www.mitchell-jerdan.com or Facebook to light a virtual candle in his honor or to share a memory with Vladimir's family.

Previous Events

Service

JUL 5. 2:00 PM (CT)

Mitchell-Jerdan Funeral Home Ltd.

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Tribute Wall



“ Mitchell-Jerdan Funeral Home created a Webcast in memory of Vladimir Lvovich Merkovich



Mitchell-Jerdan Funeral Home - July 03, 2023 at 12:42 PM

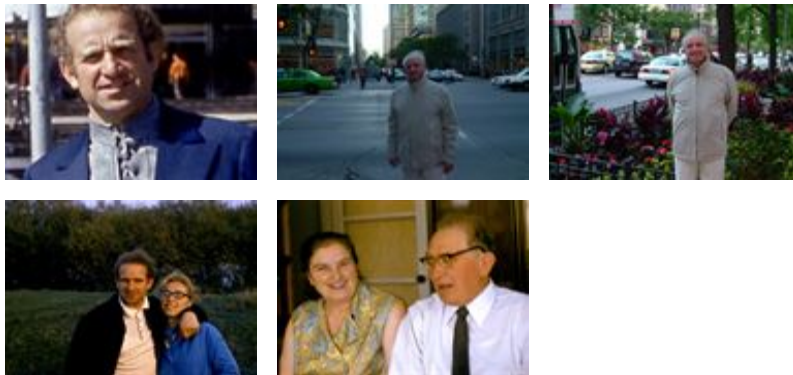


“ Vladimir Lvovich Merkovich

October 08, 2023 at 07:40 PM



“ 43 files added to the album Life Tributes



Mitchell-Jerdan Funeral Home - June 30, 2023 at 11:29 AM

CB

I read the obituary of this extraordinary man!! Wow!! Just amazing! You must be so very proud!! May he rest in peace in the living arms of God and many prayers to all of his friends and family!! 🙏

Connie Branstetter - July 04, 2023 at 09:14 AM

AD

A moving story of an extraordinary life

andreas drexler - July 26, 2023 at 01:02 AM

SM

“ *What an amazing man who survived so many obstacles in his life. God has called him home.*

Sue Ellyn Meyer - June 28, 2023 at 11:54 AM

DM

“ *I have no memory of this man but, I had to respond to his amazing, amazing life. He truly made his life worthwhile. My prayers for the family. God bless.
Debbie from Illinois.*

Debbie Modglin - June 28, 2023 at 09:16 AM