

ROSE MARY BADAMI

11/13/1923 - 06/01/2024

Rose Mary Badami, MSW, died quietly in her sleep on Saturday, June 1, 2024, 55 years after founding Magnificat Houses, Inc. (Magnificat or MHI), an enduring Houston non-profit addressing hunger, homelessness and mental illness.

In 1968, Rose Mary purchased a single house through private donations in a then-undesirable area now known as the Second Ward. Over time, Magnificat grew to encompass 15 residential properties, mostly neighborhood homes where the homeless and ex-offenders could re-enter society through a supportive, family-style environment. In 1972, Rose Mary began her iconic downtown Houston soup kitchen, Loaves & Fishes, which has operated continuously since 1976 at 2009 Congress serving a daily average of 340 meals to Houston's hungry residents.

By 1991, confident that mental illness underlies most social problems, Rose Mary founded St. Joseph House to offer free healing programs for Magnificat residents. With its 1995 accreditation by Clubhouse International, St. Joseph Clubhouse programs became free and open to anyone over 18 with a mental health diagnosis. Its adjacent two-acre park accommodates community-building activities, such as organic gardening, cookouts and holiday celebrations.

The first graduate of the

University of St. Thomas's new school of social work in 1954, Rose Mary logged in years of social work for Houston and Harris County agencies and for the Good Shepherd Home for Delinquent and Pre-Delinquent Girls. She also helped launch a home for displaced mothers and their children.

By midlife, she was ready to launch her privately run non-profit, Magnificat House. Rose Mary speculated that given a dignified home and peer training, a group of displaced strangers could come to love and accept each other, share home tasks and responsibilities, and gain self-worth and confidence while they strived for an independent life.

Rose Mary developed a personal goal of "getting all the people off the streets that I can in my lifetime." She sometimes drove the streets looking for downtrodden women, telling them to "Get in the car—I am taking you home." There was no stopping Rose Mary if she saw someone she thought she could help.

Thousands of displaced persons have come through Magnificat's doors over the past 55 years, and many have gained what they needed to become productive members of society. MHI Executive Director, Meredith Vaughan affirms, "Rose Mary created a ministry to serve the most vulnerable in our community,



Magnificat Houses, Inc. It is our duty and privilege to continue her legacy indefinitely, and all of us at MHI will strive to do so."

Born in 1923, Rose Mary was deeply affected by the Great Depression and the countless homeless men who came, hat in hand, to her grandmother's back door. Instead of handing them a sack lunch, her grandmother invited the strangers into the dining room to eat on her best china. Rose Mary never forgot the dignity her grandmother bestowed on the less fortunate. It shaped her life and her career. Rose Mary never married and had no surviving siblings. Her family was the Magnificat community.

A visitation for Rose Mary Badami will be held on Friday, June 7th from 5:00 pm to 8:00 pm at Joseph J. Earthman Generations Funeral Home, 234 Westcott Street, Houston, TX 77007. A celebration of life will take place on Saturday, June 8 at the Co-Cathedral

of the Sacred Heart, 1111 St. Joseph Parkway, Houston, TX 77002, beginning with the Rosary at 11:30 am and followed by noon Mass. His Eminence Daniel Cardinal DiNardo will preside as Celebrant of the Mass, along with Con-Celebrant, Fr. Raphael Davila, Deacon Martin Lemond, and Deacon John Carrara. Memorial donations may be made online through www.mhihouston.org/donate or by check to Magnificat Houses, Inc., P.O. Box 8486, Houston, TX, 77288. Please designate Badami Memorial. For more information, or to join Rose Mary's tribute page in the MHI quarterly newsletter, The Magnifier, please contact the editor at gmonti@mhihouston.org.

JOSEPH J.
EARTHMAN
Generations (713) 802-0000
josephjearthman.com