



American Adoption Congress

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ANNOUNCEMENT

Death of Registry Founder Mourned By Adoption-Reform Advocates

WASHINGTON, July 9 -- The American Adoption Congress joins members of the adoption-reform movement throughout the world in mourning the death of **Emma May Vilardi**, founder of the International Soundex Reunion Registry (ISRR), headquartered in Carson City, Nevada. The International Soundex Reunion Registry has facilitated more than 2,500 reunions between interested adult adoptees, birthparents, siblings and other family members. It is a special service organization of the American Adoption Congress.

Mrs. Vilardi, 68, died in her sleep last night. The daughter of an adoptee, Mrs. Vilardi understood the need for biological information felt by many of the nation's 6 million adoptees. In 1975, she founded the International Soundex Reunion Registry as a vehicle to assist adoptees and birthfamily members interested in contact with one another. It is the only free registry service available to triad members -- adoptees, birthparents and adoptive parents -- which does not impose additional requirements for enrollment.

AAC President Kate Burke praised Mrs. Vilardi's contributions to adoption reform. "The efforts of a dedicated individual like Emma May Vilardi, who was affected by adoption and who felt the pain of that separation, have led to an awakening to the need for changes in adoption laws and policies," she said. "An appropriate legacy will be to see changes in state laws that make birth and adoption information available to all adoptees and birthparents. We will all miss Emma's smile and friendly chatter."

The International Soundex Reunion Registry plans no change in its operations and will continue to accept enrollments, according to registry administrator Tony Vilardi. ISRR adds more than 1,000 enrollments to its database each month and has printed more than 250,000 of its forms in several languages. Enrollment information is available by sending a self-addressed, stamped envelope to P.O. Box 2312, Carson City, NV 89702.

Mrs. Vilardi was an historian and genealogist and assisted in helping hundreds of adoptees and birthparents locate each other prior to founding the ISRR. She was former town historian of Kearney, New Jersey, and had written a book of that town's history.

Mrs. Vilardi is survived by her husband, Tony, of Carson City, NV and one son, Edward. Funeral arrangements are pending.

The American Adoption Congress suggests memorial donations be made to the ISRR at P.O. Box 2312, Carson City, NV 89702.