

MRS. DEGROFF DIES; FUNERAL ON FRIDAY

SMILING in the bitterness of death that cheated her by a few weeks of the fulfillment of her life dream, Mrs. Charles De Groff Tuesday willed her family five last words of courage:

"Be brave and be happy."

This testament, wrung from the agonized breathings of a losing battle for life, was the last speech of Mrs. De Groff as she lapsed into the silence which lasted until the end this morning.

Ill Short Time.

Death, only by a few weeks, separated the pioneer woman from the realization of her life ambition, which was to open the new Hotel Orndorff. Yet she died smiling, to comfort her family.

Twelve days ago, when Mrs. De Groff was taken ill as a result of cold contracted from a shower combined with over-exertion in inspecting the "dream" building, she had a premonition of fatality.

"Grandmother begged not to go to bed. She said that she would never get up again and that she must keep going until after the opening," faltered Kathleen, the child for whom Mrs. DeGroff cried in her delirium.

Courage, the same that built a magnificent hotel from beginning of a tiny lodging house, kept the pioneer woman alive until her children could reach her side, according to Mrs. Burt Orndorff.

Exhaustion was like a heavy weight Tuesday and the invalid admitted defeat out of utter weariness.

"I am tired—can fight no longer—it is well—only Charles—and the children—they need me," she whispered before she counseled her sons, Burt and Lee.

"Be brave and be happy."

Watched For Seth.

She never spoke again, but looked anxiously for the other son, Seth, who had been held in California by illness.

Grandchildren, great grandchildren, the only sister were keeping watch, but always the sick woman seemed searching for another face.

As Seth placed his hand on his mother's forehead at 9 o'clock this morning, the expression of uneasiness became one of peace.

Death came easily, then, like sleep, and the family, watching, saw the lips curve in a last smile—of courage. The end was at 9:30 o'clock.

Mrs. DeGroff was born 67 years ago in Landry Parrish, Washington, La. Her maiden name was Alzina Caroline Allis.

In 1876, she was wed to Lee H. Orndorff, but in 1887 was left a widow with three young sons.

Lived In Tucson.

The young mother, out of the necessity of educating her children, that year opened a tiny lodging house which was to develop into the large Orndorff project. Originally the hotel was in Tucson, but it was later established in El Paso, beginning here in 1899 on July 4.

Mrs. Orndorff was remarried in 1890 to Charles DeGroff.

Activity and accomplishment and courage have marked the career of the pioneer, through whose efforts a large business has been established, a family been educated, and numerous projects for civic betterment promoted.

Advocated Suffrage.

As an advocate of suffrage for women, Mrs. DeGroff was particularly active. She served in the capacity of first president of the Equal Franchise league here.

She was likewise prominent in prohibition activities and in the abolition of gambling, Mrs. DeGroff



MRS. CHARLES DEGROFF.

was always a patron of educational activities and in recognition of this interest she was appointed to the board of directors of the Texas Technological college at Lubbock by Pat Neff during his administration as governor.

Flags Lowered.

Flags of the city hall were lowered to half mast by deputy clerk George Gorham when news of the death reached him this morning.

Surviving Mrs. DeGroff are her husband, Charles DeGroff, a sister, Mrs. Eugenia Seddon, three sons, Burt, Seth and Lee, and their families.

Funeral On Lawn.

Funeral services will be held Friday morning at 9:30 on the wide lawn of the DeGroff home, 2103 Texas street. Dr. Frank Hampton Fox will have charge of the services.

JUNE 15

Last Tribute Paid To Mrs. DeGroff, El Paso Pioneer

Sheriff Seth Orndorff Too
Ill To Attend Services
At Cemetery.

Phantom smiles of Mrs. Charles DeGroff comforted mourners at her funeral today.

Her serene courage, triumphing the grave, guided the conduct of the last rites. Music, as from an invisible choir, floated from the shadows of the pioneer home into the growing garden, where services were held.

The sons, their children, and the great-grandchildren stayed inside the shuttered building, apart from the hundreds gathered to pay tribute to the memory of the pioneer. They had been granted this healing solitude for their suffering by Mrs. DeGroff, herself, thoughtful in death as in life.

Growing flowers of the "ranchita" mingled with the cut blooms of the florist and the living green of the garden chapel silently bid the audience turn from thoughts of death to thoughts of life that was and would continue.

The garden, nurtured by her in the desert, was a symbol of the work and accomplishment of Mrs. DeGroff here and in this living monument her friends took comfort.

Hundreds crowded the lawn of the DeGroff homestead and followed the coffin to the family plot at Concordia.

Seth Orndorff, for whose return the mother staved off death during weary hours of suffering, was too ill to go to the grave. When Mrs. DeGroff was taken sick, he was unable to move from his bed in California but made the trip here at news of his mother's relapse.

Charles DeGroff, the husband of the deceased, could not move from the car in which he rode to the grave because of the illness that has disabled him during the last year.

Mourners were every sort and condition of people, unfortunates whom she had befriended and men of affairs with whom she had advised and cooperated in her career of business and public advancement.

City hall offices were closed during the funeral, while courthouse offices were closed until noon.

Pallbearers were Charles Newman, Frank Murchison, L. W. Hoffecker, J. F. Coles, Dr. I. J. Bush, Maury Kemp, Jim Barnes and C. H. Jones.