

ZORAIDA DUCA



Formerly of Johnstown, was called peacefully to the Lord on October 10, 2024, from Little Sisters of the Poor Nursing Home, in Pittsburgh, at age 90. Born, Zoraida Gutierrez-Sanchez, on May 10, 1934, in Salinas, Puerto Rico, to Jose Gutierrez and Elisa Sanchez. Preceded in death by her parents; husband, Dr. Robert Duca of Johnstown; brothers, Carlos and Luis; and daughter, Elisa. Survived by her three sons,

Dr. Robert Jr. (Lourdes) of Vienna, Virginia, Frederick (Pam) of Warrenton, Virginia and Dr. Mark (Megan) of Oakdale, Pennsylvania. Also survived by her brother, Ismael of Cayey, Puerto Rico; grandchildren, Giovanni, Robert III, Joseph (Savanna), Michael (Mary Katherine), Daniel, Elisa, Christopher, Katherine; and great-grandchildren, Mia and Alina; in addition to numerous loving nieces, nephews, great-nieces and great-nephews.

Growing up in rural Puerto Rico, the seeds were planted early for kindness, compassion and an exemplary work ethic; as a young girl, tending to farm animals and studying to master a second language. Her strong will to achieve eventually led her to a camera sales position at the U.S. Army base at Fort Buchanan, in San Juan. It was there she would sell a camera to a young G.I. from Johnstown, Robert. After two supervised dates by her grandmother, they would be wed for the next 60 years.

Persevering through the culture shock of moving to a new country, mastering a second language, and the tragic loss of an infant daughter, she went on to raise a loving family, where education was always priority number one. While working full-time, she completed a Bachelor of Arts Degree in English from the University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown. From there, her professional career blossomed, becoming a Spanish teacher at St. Patrick in Moxham, followed by a two-decade career as Spanish teacher at Bishop McCort High School in Johnstown. Educating legions of students about her passion, the Spanish language, culture and civilization, she'll be fondly remembered for leading her annual, overseas Spanish Club trips with her students to Spain and Mexico. After retirement, she remained vibrant, traveling the world, teaching Spanish to friends, serving as a Eucharistic Minister at St. Benedict Parish in Geistown, counselor at Birthright of Johnstown and even winning an over-65 10K race. "Sory" or Aunt Sory, as she was known to friends and family, will always be affectionately remembered for her reserved demeanor, yet overwhelming kindness and being the adult the grandchildren loved playing with, as if she was just another one of the kids.

The family would like to thank all of her many friends, clergy and colleagues who made her life so special. In particular, the family would like to thank the Sisters and staff of the Little Sisters of the Poor, for their overwhelming dedication, compassion and care. Visitation will be Tuesday, October 15, 4-7 p.m., at Little Sisters of the Poor Pittsburgh at Sts. Peter and Paul Home, 1028 Benton Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15212-1607, and Wednesday, 4-7 p.m., at the **FRANK DUCA FUNERAL HOME, WESTMONT CHAPEL**, 1622 Menoher Blvd., Johnstown, PA 15905. Mass of Christian Burial will be held Thursday, October 17, at 10 a.m., at St. Benedict Catholic Church, 2310 Bedford Street, Johnstown, PA 15904, Rev. David S. Peles. Interment will be held at St. Anthony Cemetery, Geistown. In lieu of flowers, the family suggests donations to the Little Sisters of the Poor in supporting their mission of providing care to the elderly poor (<https://littlesistersofthepoorpittsburgh.org/donate/>). For online condolences, please visit

www.ducafuneralhome.com

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