



Isabel Varona Caballero

MAR 13, 1931 - FEB 1, 2022



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Isabel Varona Caballero

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Isabel Varona Caballero, otherwise known as Isa, Mami, Tía, Isa and Aba, was the sun of our skies: bright, warm, and nurturing. Isa was kind, gracious, attentive, and loving. All who entered her houses whether in Virginia, North Carolina, Georgia, or Florida knew they were in a special space—one that required nothing of them except their company and comfort. She made her home a social hub, people coming in and out, for family or neighbor potlucks, and post-Friday night high school football get togethers. As her grandson Richard accurately summarized, Aba’s “house was always the best place to be”.

Born in Camagüey, Cuba in 1931, to Agustín de Varona and Julia Isabel de Zayas, she was the youngest of twelve children. Isabel was a product of 1930s-1940s Cuba: dating our father under constant supervision of a chaperone, living with her parents in La Sambrana until the day she married, becoming a teacher, and having four children in rapid succession between 1956-1962. However, Isabel was ahead of her time in her independent and practical nature. Her first teaching post was outside of the town of Morón, a long train and horse ride away, where she taught both children and their parents that worked in the fields to read and write. Entering exile in 1965, Isabel managed to adjust to this new land and language, gave birth to two more children, and adapted readily, if not altogether willingly, to the United States’ way of life while never sacrificing her cubanía. Yet Isabel was smart and accepted that her children would and should also be Americans.

In Columbus, Georgia the family made a life and built community. Isabel began to work and made a career teaching Spanish at all levels, going back to college to get certified. She was one of the lead teachers of the first bilingual education program in the state of Georgia and was a founder and organizer of the first Hispanic Heritage Festivals in the city. In Columbus, Isabel lived in all-American life with an accent: she volunteered in her daughters’ schools and carpooled to their sports games, worked full-time, stayed up late to finish homework and science projects,



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cooked and cleaned, visited her in-laws on the weekends, and was a member of the women's bowling league (a Bim-bowler).

Our mother liked John Wayne movies, browsing sales' racks at the mall, and M&Ms. She loved ice cream cakes, tending to her plants, and playing canasta with her sister Fara Crespi and her family. She really loved spending time with her children and grandchildren, annually driving thousands of miles all over the southeast or flying to wherever was necessary to see us and be close. However, Isabel was at her happiest when her pollitos were in her house, all under one roof, and that was true until the very end. While it was clear that she would have preferred that we lived closer, she was selfless and was the first to support us going to that school, taking that job, or making that move (to Colorado, Spain, Guatemala, Washington, etc) even if it took us further away from her.

Isabel adored Iván Caballero, our father and the one and only man in her life. Their love story began in Camagüey in their early teens and lives on in eternity. Isabel was the ying to Iván's yang; he was outgoing and gregarious, she was reserved and somewhat shy; he was the life of the party, she didn't like the spotlight; he often recited poetry and forgot to fill the car up with gas, she was practical, taking the reins of the family finances.

What they had in common was an Incredible loyalty to each other, their children and extended families' well-being, Iván and Isabel were the first to arrive when help was needed and the last to leave to make sure nothing else had to be done. Even though they lived 12 hours away from their siblings they visited often, not allowing exile or distance to diminish those bonds. After Iván died in 1995, Isabel continued the tradition, independently driving her Green Ford Taurus miles and hours to visit, listen, do laundry, ease any burden, and lift the spirits just with her presence. She was so easy to please and found joy constantly in the smallest of things, despite, or because of, all the difficult life events. She intuitively knew what to say and when not to say anything at all. She modeled elegance, reason, strength, and resilience, and all who knew her respected and loved her.

Isabel is survived, and will be sorely missed, by her children and their spouses: Iván Roberto and his wife Valli; Isa Caballero de Ortiz and her husband Marco Antonio; Rosa Isabel Hamilton; Isabel Virginia Caballero Lynch and her husband Mark; and Isabel Carolina Caballero and her husband Sean Knowlton; her grandchildren Richard Caballero, Ana María Ortiz García and her husband José and Cecilia Ortiz Spehar and her husband Andrew; Isabel Christina Caballero and her husband Javier Freiría and Sean Hamilton and his wife Megyn, Lyla and Isabel Lucía Lynch; and her great-grandchildren Isabel Paulina and Rafael Ignacio García Ortiz, Violet Isabel Hamilton, and Lucas Antonio Spehar (due any day now). She is preceded in death by her



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husband Iván Caballero, her daughter Isabel de Carmen, her grandson Johnathan Caballero, and her beloved brothers and sisters. Her legacy of love and light will live on with and in all of us.



Events


Isabel Varona Caballero

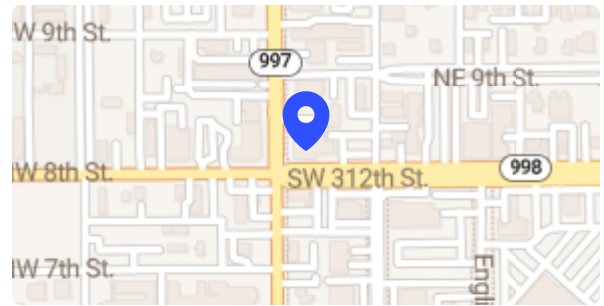
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Visitation

 **Sunday**, February 6, 2022

 11:00 AM - 4:00 PM ET

 **Memorial Plan Branam Funeral Home & Crematory**
809 North Krome Avenue, Homestead FL 33030





Tribute Wall

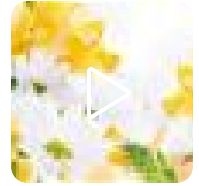
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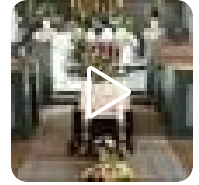
Memorial Plan San Jose - Ferdinand Funeral Home shared a **Video**.

February 6 at 8:04 AM



Memorial Plan San Jose - Ferdinand Funeral Home shared a **Webcast Video**.

February 5 at 9:44 AM





Media

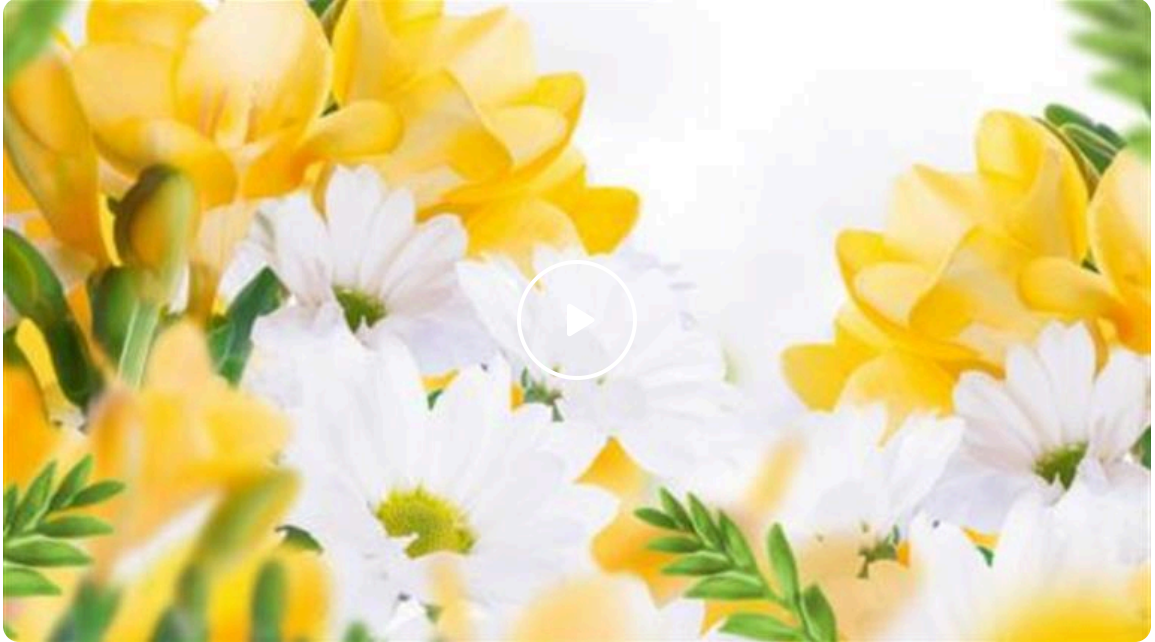
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Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Isabel by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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