



Luz V. Higgason

MAY 1, 1938 - NOV 8, 2021



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Luz Violeta Alvarez Lopez de Higgason died peacefully at home with her husband and daughter at her side on November 8, 2021, after a five-year struggle with Aphasia and Dementia. She passed a month after her Golden Anniversary and a mere 15 minutes after St. Peter's Father Robert Franco administered the last rites. Luz was born in Portoviejo, Ecuador on May 1, 1938 and grew up in Guayaquil, Ecuador. Although her family was relatively poor since her father died before she was born and her mother and step-father divorced, she nonetheless made her way in the world with grit, determination and grace. The second eldest in a family of six siblings, Luz worked her way through high school and college, helping support the family and earning a prestigious Fulbright Scholarship to Indiana University. Following her year of study in the United States, she returned to Guayaquil and began her teaching career at the Colegio Americano de Guayaquil where she taught Spanish and English. Along the way she earned an M.A. degree from the University of Alabama, travelling to Tuscaloosa in the summers on an exchange program. She met Tom in 1971 when he travelled to Guayaquil in April to teach at the school. He pestered her for a couple months before she agreed to marry him and they were wed on October 8, 1971, as he said - the luckiest day of his life. They travelled to Lima, Peru for a weekend honeymoon.

In 1972, they moved to the United States and Tom went back on active duty with the United States Navy. For the next 21 years Luz was the dutiful Navy wife, following Tom from duty station to duty station, always having to seek a new job and setting up housekeeping wherever they went, but she never complained or uttered a cross word even when Tom drove her to distraction, which he all-too-often did.

May 1975 was a big month in Luz's life. She celebrated her 37th birthday, became a United States citizen, earned her second M.A. degree, from the University of San Diego, and welcomed her



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daughter, Mary Anne into her life. After moving to Ann Arbor for graduate school, Luz's beloved mother, Lucciola Lopez Macias came to the United States to help with the baby. Lucciola would spend the next 11 years with the family. Luz earned her third M.A. degree from the prestigious University of Michigan in 1977 as she stayed behind with Mary Anne and her mother while Tom returned to active duty with the Navy in San Diego.

When Tom had decided to return to active duty, without telling her, in December 1976, she packed up the family in May 1977 and drove to San Diego, again alone, to rejoin him there. Following the arrival of her second daughter, Carmen Isabella, in 1978, things changed again in 1979 when Tom was about to be deployed to the Iran war zone on the USS Constellation, Luz settled into a teaching job in remote Blythe, California, where she remained for three years while Tom gallivanted around the world with the navy and then went to Rhode Island for Officer Candidate School, and Supply Corps School in Athens, Georgia leaving Luz home alone again where she steadfastly carried the load without complaint.

When newly-commissioned Ensign Tom was assigned to the USS Edenton in Virginia Beach in 1982, Luz again packed up by herself, sold the house, loaded up the car and drove across country by herself with her daughters and mother again to meet him in Virginia where he left her two weeks after her arrival when the ship sailed for the Mediterranean Sea. Luz found another teaching job in Portsmouth, VA where she stayed until 1986 when they packed up again and headed for La Maddalena, Sardinia, Italy for two years. She didn't teach there, but she was the head of the local day care center, never being willing to just sit around. By this time her mother had returned to Ecuador where she died in 1987. Luckily Luz was able to visit her on her deathbed.

In August 1988 the family literally drove, ferried and flew to Cleveland which was Tom's next duty assignment, and Luz lived in North Ridgeville ever since – even when Tom again sailed away in 1990 going back to Virginia for a final tour of sea duty. By that time Luz had found her final teaching job at Lorain's Southview High School, where she taught from 1989 until her retirement in 2005. While there, Luz supervised the school yearbook and again taught English as a second language. Her younger daughter, Carmen, joined her as a teacher in the Lorain School District in 2000, which made Luz very proud.

Luz led a long, productive and happy life. She was loved by everyone who knew her. She was able to travel extensively following Tom's retirement in 1993, and after her retirement she kept busy



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making baby blankets, gardening and doing puzzles. Unfortunately, by 2016 Primary Progressive Aphasia started to rob her of the ability to speak and by 2019 she was virtually mute and also unable to read or write. Dementia further robbed her of the quality of life but she never seemed to get down on herself or fate. She took life as it came and always muddled through like a real trooper. They eventually moved into a senior living facility in 2020 where Luz lived until the end.

Luz was preceded in death by her mother, Lucciola Lopez Macias, her parents-in-law, Herbert and Bernadette Higgason, her younger daughter, Carmen Isabella Gallo, and her youngest sister, Grimalda Matteucci. She is survived by her now completely lost buddy of 50 years, Thomas, her indispensable daughter, Mary Anne Gaikens and son-in-law Vincent Gaikens, and her precious grandsons: Franco, Dominic and Vincenzo Gallo whom she kept for much of the first 10 years of their lives while their Mom, Carmen, worked; and her remaining siblings: Dario (Isabelle) Matteucci, Anibal (Cecilia) Matteucci, Jeriz Peralta and Herminia (Galo) Valdez. To the grandsons, Luz was always "Bola." It started out when Mary Anne had trouble calling Luz's Mom abuela or abuelita (Spanish for grandmother) and it came out "Bola." Forever after that Lucciola was Bola to all her grandchildren even in Ecuador and Luz naturally also became Bola.

According to her wishes Luz will be buried next to Carmen's grave in the Saint Peter cemetery. It is requested that no flowers be sent. Instead please consider planting a Rose bush in your own garden or placing a bird feeder up in memory of Luz. She loved the birds, flowers and life and will always be remembered by those who knew and loved her. Cut flowers die, but Luz's memory never will.

Family will celebrate her life in private. Arrangements by Bogner Family Funeral Home, North Ridgeville. For further information or to leave an online condolence, please visit www.bognerfamilyfuneralhome.com

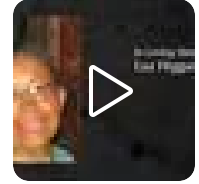


Tribute Wall

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Bogner Family Funeral Home And Cremationservices shared a **Video**.



November 12 at 11:11 AM



Yaz November 13 at 7:14 AM

Mrs. Higgason was one of my ESL teachers all through high school. Her spirit was one of determination and accountability. She taught us all to be responsible, accountable to our work and respectful. She did not tolerate laziness and lack of enthusiasm and was determined to teach us Math, English & not let our LEP be an excuse not to complete our work. We all knew not to mess around in her class. I passed my Proficiency Tests not speaking the language because of Real Teachers like her and all the Team Of teachers who really cared for us kids with LEP at Southview HS. 🙏 May you rest in His arms Mrs. Highanson.



Martha Bohorquez posted:

I'm very sad to hear about my dear friend Luz. My deepest condolences to Tomasito, Maty Anne, grandchildren and the whole family. Luz besides being my good friend she was prior my teacher at the American School of Guayaquil. She always was very helpful and willing to help her students. What an smart lady and what simple woman she was. I always remember you dear Luz and my visit to San Diego many years ago. Great memories of our quick trip then to Las Vegas. Will always keep you in my heart. Wish that God brings you Tomasito and Mary Anne peace and comfort to your hearts. Love you guys!! Rest in peace my good friend!! 🙏❤️

November 13 at 6:00 PM



Jose Delvalle posted:

My condolences to Tom and Maryann and the whole Higgason family. Luz was such a great person to work with and a kind hearted teacher who cared about the education of her students. She will be remembered by many as well as myself for all she contributed to our lives. Que Dios te bendiga en su cielo eterno!

November 13 at 1:46 AM



Tom Higgason November 13 at 2:16 AM

Long time no see. Carmen also died 2 years ago, so the Higgason family is shrinking. I hope you're doing well in Iowa.



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TA

Tati posted:

Tia te vamos a extrañar mucho, que estes junto a Dios ahora.

November 10 at 11:57 AM

PL

Paul Lincolnhol posted:

It was my honor to meet Luz a couple of times -- in 1977 I stayed with her and Tom in San Diego for a few days, and once in Ann Arbor in the late 1970s - and to meet her mother once -- in Ann Arbor. She was very strong and loving. We need many more people like her!!

November 10 at 9:24 AM

SW

Sandy Wolf posted:

So sorry to hear of the loss of Luz, a truly wonderful person. Luz was a saint on earth. I was so blessed to have known Luz as a fellow Lorain Southview High colleague as well as a dear friend. I will forever treasure Luz's smile and moment of recognition the last time I saw Luz. It is a blessing knowing that Luz is reunited with her daughter Carmen (Carmita) and other family members up in heaven. Continued prayers for Tom, Mary Anne and the family. Luz's spirit shines in all of you.

November 10 at 5:54 AM

CM

Celia Pat McMaster posted:

My deepest condolences to Tom, Mary Anne, grandchildren and family. I have so many beautiful memories of Luz, first as my English teacher in high school at Colegio Americano. Who knew that we would become friends, a friendship that lasted all these years. She was always thoughtful, caring, humble. She loved her family. I admired Luz for her positive attitude and I found her to be extremely smart! I love her and will always be in my heart and will treasure our times together. Tom and Mary Anne, my heart is with you and family. I will follow her wishes by having a hummingbird feeder in my yard. Birds I love. Celia Pat McMaster

November 9 at 6:03 PM

TL

Tim Lewis posted:

I'm so sorry for your loss. Your mom was a wonderful woman, fierce as they come! She was an amazing woman when I knew her.

November 9 at 5:59 PM



Media

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Memories only last if you share them

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



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