



Griselda DeCastro Boler

AUG 16, 1918 - JUL 31, 2020



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Griselda DeCastro Boler

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Griselda DeCastro Boler, 101, of St. Petersburg, passed away July 31, 2020 after an amazingly full and happy life. Above all she was a loving mother dedicated to family. She is survived by 6 children: Kenneth S. Peale, Robert Boler, Richard (Sydney) Boler, Griselda (David) Forbes, Raymond (Connie) Boler and Ivette Boler. Also 9 grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. In lieu of flowers, please donate in her memory to the charity of your choice.

A Mother's Smile

A Eulogy by Richard Boler

Let me start by thanking Reverend Leonard and the staff at Memorial Park for guiding us through this service. And I extend our condolences to Reverend Leonard. Her father recently passed. I also want to thank Griselda and Connie and Sydney for facilitating the service. There were a myriad of details. I'm so grateful we are able to live-stream this service and my brother Ken, who lives in Canada, will be able to witness his mother's funeral. He wasn't allowed to travel due to the pandemic. It is a most unusual time - I look out and I see all these masks and social distancing at a time when we really need to share our grief. Today is a sad day but it's not a bad day. For all of us this day will come – ashes to ashes, dust to dust. In her last years, especially her years in the nursing home, I was fortunate to be able to spend the most time with our mom. I'd bring her orange juice and french fries. She enjoyed that – she loved her junk food. I was able to help her with little day-to-day things, trimming her fingernails, taking her to the hairdresser and the dentist, making sure she had Kleenex. My brothers and sisters have been most appreciative and generous in extending thanks to me for spending so much time with her. But I assure you, it was my great blessing to have this time with Mom. My appreciation of her as a mother and person just continued to grow. My life is richer for it. Sometimes, Mom would ask if Sydney was OK with me spending my time with her. I could always honestly answer, "Sydney is like you; she's very family oriented and was happy for me that Mom and I could have our time together". Mom would say "yes, she's a good one" and tell me how happy she was for me that I had Sydney. I can't agree more. Sydney, thank you for all your love and support, especially these past months. I've



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been thinking about what I want to say today for some time and there is much I could say. My mother lived a most amazing life. How the world changed during her lifetime. Sometimes, Mom couldn't remember her age, but she always knew she was born in 1918. She would say it was a very important year because it was the year World War I ended, and I would say, "I thought it was important because it was the year you were born." Mom never mentioned the pandemic of 1918. Fifty million people died during that pandemic; many of the soldiers that died in World War I died of the flu. How ironic that she was born in the year of the last great global pandemic and passed during this pandemic 102 years later. Our mother was an amazing person. Many of you know that when she was 3 years old, she was riding in a car with her father in Puerto Rico, and to avoid a horse that ran out on the road, the car swerved and crashed in a ditch. Her father was killed instantly. She was uninjured. Mom loved Puerto Rico. She was very proud of her family and her Puerto Rican heritage. She certainly enjoyed growing up in the New York City of the Roaring 20s and Depression. She had lots of stories to tell. She loved to refer to herself as a New Yorican. She was an avid traveler. She traveled to 34 - maybe more - different countries on 6 continents. In 1983, I made a trip to China and Japan with Mom. We walked the great wall together. She enjoyed expanding her boundaries; she embraced things that were new or different. She enjoyed learning new things and experiencing different cultures. She was not intimidated by the world. And because she was so friendly and gregarious, she easily met people everywhere she went. Everybody enjoyed her company. She always had a great sense of humor; even in the last few years, she had a great sense of humor. We would make jokes and laugh often. Sometimes she would make a joke and I wouldn't get it because I was thinking she was old and dementia had gotten the best of her. She would give me a look and I would realize it was a joke and then we would really have a hearty laugh. I took her to the dentist a few times year. She liked getting out of the nursing home even if she didn't like going to the dentist. But she did like Dr. Dotson because he was good looking. On this particular occasion, Dr. Dotson came into the examination room and said, "Well who is this young chick?" Without missing a beat Mom turned to him and said, "Who is this fine rooster strutting around the barnyard". Dr. Dotson's knees buckled, he and the assistant laughed for minutes before they could compose themselves and get back to business. She loved tennis and played tennis all her life. As a kid, we would go Bartlett Park; Mom would take us to the playground and head to the tennis courts. I remember her telling me one of the reasons she retired from teaching when she did was so she could play tennis. She played tennis until she was ninety and then wondered if maybe she had quit playing too soon. Even in the nursing home, she often mentioned how much she missed playing tennis. Mom was a wonderful teacher. She was a teacher long before she went back to college and got her degrees. As a mother, she taught us all well. She taught us the most important things: right from wrong, to play nicely, to share our things, to watch out for each other. She taught us to be polite and have manners. She



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taught us to appreciate what we had and to be kind to animals. At 4 years old, she taught me how to fry an egg. So, after her six kids were grown enough they could take care of themselves, she started back to college. The route from the nursing home to my house passes St. Petersburg College. She would say, “that’s my alma mater” and tell me the story of the day she showed up to enroll. The person who met with her commented they didn’t normally get people her age attending classes, but added, “you seem like you’re smart enough.” Mom always chuckled when she told that story. She went on to get Bachelor’s and Master’s degrees in education from USF. Mom was in the school system as a reading specialist for 17 years. To her colleagues, it was immediately obvious she had a remarkable talent as a teacher. She earned a countywide reputation as an exceptional educator. Connie can attest to this. I met someone who learned that my mother was Griselda Boler. She called her a genius and probably the best teacher in Pinellas County. Mom liked telling the story of a young girl at one of her schools who said to her “You like children, I can tell.” She called it one of her proudest moments as a teacher. And when she retired from the Pinellas county school system she did not retire from teaching. She started a new career as a volunteer at the Dali Museum, and became an expert on Salvador Dali, his life and his art. She worked 20 years as a docent leading tours explaining his art, often in Spanish. I was on several of her tours; though she was a small person standing in front of a 15’ tall painting, she loomed large as she explained the intricacies of Dali’s art. With her knowledge and enthusiasm, she had her audience enthralled with his art and genius. She then spent 10 years in the archives and research department, much of it in the archives translating articles written in Spanish into English. We made a visit to the Dali for her 100th birthday and I was taken by how warmly she was received and revered by the staff who knew her from her time there. Even at the end of her life she was a teacher. She helped me see and appreciate the grace and beauty that abounds all around us every day if we just take the time to see it. As her memory failed, she opened up to the wonderful world around her, and showed me how to live in the moment. How she loved to watch the rain or wind shake the leaves on the trees outside her window. When we sat in the patio at the nursing home, she would marvel at the blue of the sky or find faces in the clouds. She helped me appreciate that now is all we really have. She was the rock our family was built upon and the glue that held it together. She often said, “Family is where it’s at.” Though she lived an amazing life, I’m sure Mom would say her greatest accomplishments were her children. Of all that she did, she was most proud of us. Above everything else, she was always a kind and loving mother. The most important thing to her was her children and her love of family. She so loved our family dinners. Of course, things will change. She was the last of her generation for us, but so far as we can, I hope we keep having family dinners. Mom gave us the greatest gift – she gave us life. She lived a life of joy and purpose. The life she lived will always be remembered by us; the way she touched our hearts will live with us forever. We will remember her sense of humor. Even in this time of grief



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we can smile for her memory. In her last years, it was visits from her family that gave her the most joy. We were robbed of her last months of her life by this terrible pandemic. It was so hard, not being allowed to see her for the past five months. It broke my heart to think of her alone. We did get a short visit with her about two weeks before she passed. Although weak and thin, she was cognizant and recognized us. And she was as she had been always - a loving caring Mother. She gave each of us the sweetest gift, a mother's smile. A smile that told us she loves us. A smile that told us everything was fine, she was at peace. A smile that said it was OK to let go. It was the sweetest gift, my mother's smile. A smile I will remember for the rest of my life. I know this truth - there, but for the grace of my mother, go I.




Events


Griselda DeCastro Boler

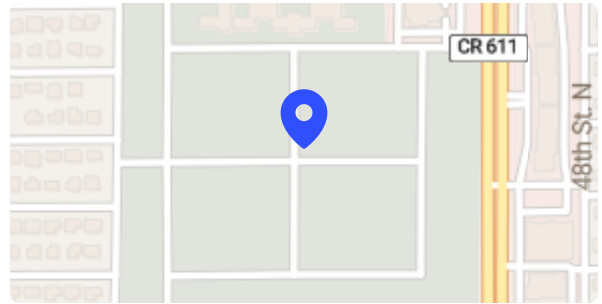
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Memorial Service


 **Wednesday**, August 19, 2020


 11:00 AM ET

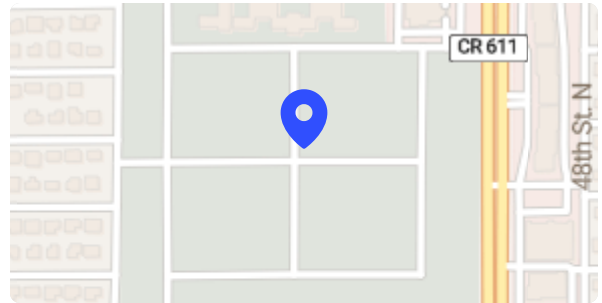
 **Memorial Park Funeral Home and Crematory**
5750 49th Street North, St. Petersburg FL 33709



Cemetery Details

 **Memorial Park Cemetery**
5750 49th Street North, St. Petersburg FL 33709

 **(727) 369-8228**





Tribute Wall

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Anonymous sent a Summer's Light Bouquet to the Boler family.

August 17 at 10:13 AM



Griselda Forbes shared a photo to the **Memories Album** album.

August 9 at 10:43 AM





Griselda Forbes shared a photo to the **Memories Album** album.

August 9 at 10:43 AM



MawMaw with grandson Ethan and 3 great-grandchildren, Mirin, Rose & Clothilde



Memories only last if you share them

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



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