



## Rolando Figueroa

April 24, 1928 - March 8, 2023

Rolando Figueroa passed away peacefully on March 8, 2023. He was predeceased by his wife, Gladys, and his son Rolando Garcia Figueroa. He leaves behind his son, Dr. Jorge Figueroa, lecturer emeritus of the University of North Carolina at Wilmington, his loving daughter in law, Dr. Kathy Smith and her husband, Mike Rhoades, as well as his grandchildren, including Jennifer Rickard-Figueroa, Ariana Figueroa, Marisa Figueroa, Ro Figueroa, Lucy Figueroa, great-niece Gabriela Figueroa-Rojas, Lizzie Rhoades, Josh Rhoades, and Ethan Rhoades. He is also survived by two great-grandchildren, Miles Figueroa and Luke Figueroa Watts.

Rolando was a man of keen intellect and impeccable integrity who consistently exemplified strength and resilience. He was a devoted husband, father, brother, grandfather, great-grandfather, and great-uncle. Born on April 24, 1928, in Havana, Cuba, Rolando grew up to become an officer of the Cuban Navy. During his 17 year career, he sailed thrice the Earth's circumference throughout the Caribbean Sea, Gulf of Mexico, and Atlantic Ocean. While in the Navy he met the love of his life, Silvia Gladys Garcia, and began a Hollywood-worthy courtship which included the independent young Cuban woman flying her Piper J-3 Cub airplane over his Navy vessel, providing a flirtatious tip of her wing to him. They were married on November 1, 1951.

With the communist takeover of Cuba, they knew they needed to raise their two sons, Rolando and Jorge Luis, in freedom. In 1961 they left everything

behind and moved to the United States. They made many sacrifices in order to provide their children a promising future. Rolando worked various jobs until he became a self-taught computer programmer. Ultimately, he achieved a position as a Systems Analyst working for Baxter International.

Rolando Figueroa was a man of great integrity, honor, and intelligence. He always put his family first. He approached life with steadfastness, humor, resilience, and careful attention to detail. His family will miss his pragmatic advice, witty puns, his loving, noble spirit and the “Dichos,” emails he sent out daily celebrating Cuban culture. He was a selfless man who put the needs of others before his own.

His ‘Hollywood’ romance, which lasted over 60 years will once again have a happy ending. Gladys will be glad to be holding his hand once again in the afterlife. His lifelong motto of “a place for everything and everything in its place” is finally complete.