Dr. Natalia DaRoza

December 25, 1940 - August 10, 2023

On August 10, 2023, Dr. Natalia Maria de Paz da Roza, 82, passed away in Statesboro, Georgia.

Natalia, also known by her family and friends as “Talie,” was born on Christmas Day in 1940 in Hong Kong and grew up in a tight-knit ancestral Portuguese Catholic community there. Encouraged by her mother’s love of classical piano, Talie showed her musical talent at an early age. She attended Maryknoll Convent School in Kowloon for her elementary and secondary education and generously served as the piano accompanist for the choir as well as pianist for the staged musical shows. During those years, she also entered and won many of the local piano competitions. With her independent spirit, she followed her passion for piano and music education and left Hong Kong on her own at the age of 16 for the State of New York in the United States. She was offered a full scholarship and earned her BS in Music Education at Nazareth College in Rochester, New York in 1962. She continued her studies on a full scholarship at Holy Names College in Oakland, California, graduating with a master’s degree in Piano Performance in 1964.

Natalia was drawn to a life of prayer and service to others and joined the convent of the Sisters of Nazareth and worked as an instructor of piano at Nazareth College. She then started her doctoral study at North Texas State University in Denton, Texas, where she was awarded the Outstanding Women

Doctoral Student and earned a Doctorate in Piano Performance in 1972. She joined the University of Mississippi as a professor of piano and in 1986 took a position as a professor and head of piano at Georgia Southern University, where upon retirement, she was honored with the distinction of Professor Emerita of Music.

During her long career in a male-dominated field, Dr. da Roza performed in dozens of concerts around the country and internationally, taught hundreds of students, and made recordings of classical pieces. Her solo performances especially are well-remembered by those in attendance, and her piano students cherish her high standards, strong convictions and colorful clothes and personality–always laced with wit. One student recalls Dr. da Roza saying, "Practice doesn't make perfect. Perfect practice makes perfect."

Natalia loved living in the heat, hospitality and humidity of the south and enjoying the company of friends at her Statesboro lakeside homes, one of which she designed with her brother Gustavo. Always in the company of her small dogs, she enjoyed boating, fishing and gardening. During her holidays, she often visited family in Florida and California. Natalia was also surrounded by devoted friends at Saint Matthew Catholic Church in Statesboro, where she was a beloved member and music director for many years.

The sixth of seven siblings, her death follows those of her parents Cecilia Maria Selavisa Alves da Roza and Gustavo Uriel da Roza, her sister Rita Maria Pereira, and brothers Daniel Alberto da Roza, and Gustavo Uriel da Roza Jr. She is survived by her sisters Maria Teresa Hyndman, Maria de Fatima Gomes and Cecilia Maria Orella, who passed away on August 16, 2023. She also leaves behind dozens of close friends and family members, in particular her friend Peter Vecchio, her nephew Philip Hyndman, her niece Mary Jean Gomes, and the dedicated staff at The Gardens Senior Living, all of whom lovingly oversaw her care during the final years of her life.

Memorial services will be held, on Thursday, August 24, 2023, at 12 pm, at the Saint Matthew Catholic Church.221 John Paul Ave, Statesboro, GA 30458

Services will be live-streamed through YouTube https://www.youtube.com/@st.matthewcatholicchurchst671 or Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100064452832260

In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations be made to Saint Matthew Catholic Church or Humane Society of Statesboro and Bulloch County.

Hill's Mortuary, Inc.

Previous Events

Memorial Service

AUG **24**. 12:00 PM (ET)

Saint Matthew Catholic Church
221 John Paul Ave.
Statesboro , GA 30458

Tribute Wall

AP

ARNOLD PERKINS lit a candle in memory of Dr. Natalia DaRoza

ARNOLD PERKINS - August 17, 2023 at 12:38 PM