



## Irene Rivera Hurst

October 7, 1941 - October 24, 2024

On October 24, 2024, we said our final goodbyes to our matriarch, Irene Rivera Hurst. Born in 1941 to first- and second-generation immigrants, Irene's life was an expert's class in courage, strength, and resilience, often in the face of unimaginable loss. As they say, "nevertheless, she persisted." Despite the challenges she faced in her later years, Irene's life concluded with dignity and love in her home, wrapped in her warm sunflower blanket, under the caring eyes of her loyal sons.

A trailblazer for women's rights, Irene's journey was highlighted in a 1970s newspaper article titled "Mother Is a Co-Ed." This piece, written with admiration and awe, chronicled the remarkable achievements of this army wife and mother of four, who had recently been awarded a scholarship to Hofstra University. The article marveled at what was then considered an implausible feat: at that time, Irene had four toddlers, moved her family among military bases in Texas, Georgia, and Alabama, and coached her husband through flight school—all while filling her home with music, books, crafts, and love.

Irene's abundant Thanksgiving dinners, bringing together a far-flung group of family, friends, and neighbors, remain the stuff of family legend.

Her first college degree, long but lovingly delayed by motherhood, set her on a decades-long path of scholarship, teaching, educational administration, and, above all, empowerment for women. She began her career in Long Island's modest parochial schools, where she introduced innovative ideas and built

lasting relationships. Irene eventually became principal of St. Kilian's School in Farmingdale, forever changing the culture and curriculum there. As she accumulated student success stories, educational degrees, and certificates, her reputation in the Long Island educational community soared, leading her to become principal in one of Long Island's most prestigious "Gold Coast" school districts. There, she brought her unique blend of intellect, advocacy, and dedication to young and disabled students, changing the lives of countless students, educators, and administrators along the way.

Irene found her secret strength at Hi-Cove, her paradise and oasis, where she was joined by her lifelong companion, Howard, Sr. Together, they created an impenetrable sphere of solace, welcoming friends and acquaintances with ample coffee and Entenmann's cake, living by the motto displayed in Irene's kitchen: "Sit Long, Talk Often." And so they did.

Tragically, Irene's life was also marked by profound loss. The pain of losing her youngest daughter over two decades ago never waned, and the loss of her eldest daughter three years ago remained fresh. The deaths of her devoted husband, Howard Sr., and her beloved Shih Tzus, Noah, and Jacob, could have defeated most, but Irene was different. Even when beset by physical challenges and heartbreak, she continued to host book club, nurture relationships through her Monday Club, and serve as a trustee of the Saugerties Public Library, ensuring that the institution's mission aligned with her lifelong passion for education and access to literature—there would be no book bans under her watch.

In the end, Irene passed with her sons nearby, after weeks of close, loving care, under a blanket of sunflowers reminiscent of her daughters, whose spirits she now joins. There, too, will be Howard, Sr. (and, hopefully, the Shih Tzus), ready to welcome Irene into eternity.

Irene's beautiful daughters, Elizabeth, and Andrea, whom she loved without end, predeceased her, as did her loyal, loving companion, Howard Sr. She is survived by her son Howard, Jr. (Kauai, HI) and his wife, Judy Roberts; her son William (Delmar, NY) and his wife, Pamela Hadad-Hurst, and their

children, Ezra (Troy, NY) and Callum (Alfred, NY); her son-in-law Ross Blair (Milford, NJ); grandchildren Baxter (Philadelphia, PA) and Dixie-Drea (Philadelphia, PA); her brother Geraldo Rivera (Cleveland, OH) and his wife, Erica; her sister Sharon Rivera (Sarasota, FL); her brother Craig Rivera (Verona, NJ) and his wife, Cordelia Bowe; as well as the intrepid Sharon Rubertone (Saugerties, NY) and numerous grandnieces, grandnephews, cousins, mentees, friends, and companions from whom she drew her strength.

A memorial service will be held in Irene's memory at Buono Funeral Service, Inc. 100 Main Street, Saugerties, NY 12477, on Sunday, October 27, 2024, with visiting hours from 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

# Previous Events

## Visitation

OCT **27**. 2:00 PM - 5:00 PM (ET)

Buono Funeral Service, Inc.  
100 Main Street  
Saugerties, NY 12477  
(845) 246-2600  
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<https://www.BuonoFuneralService.com>

# Tribute Wall

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“ I met Irene when we were both members of Lifespring Saugerties. We were both from Long Island so we had a lot in common. She was lovely and often spoke about her family proudly. I always enjoyed chatting with her. I'm sorry for your loss.



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**Susan Kahl** - October 29, 2024 at 03:50 PM