



Ione Salem

October 20, 1925 - December 12, 2016

Ione Salem, age 91, of Sarasota passed away peacefully on December 12, 2016 after a long illness. Ione is survived by her loving and devoted husband of 61 years, Mario, her two daughters and sons-in-law, Susan Ryan (Matt) of Wellesley, MA and Jean Salem (Mike) of Wellington, FL. She also leaves behind the loves of her life, two cherished granddaughters, Emily and Lauren Ryan, and beloved nieces Paulina and Marina. Her two beloved sons Mario Salem, Jr. M.D., and Kevin E. Salem preceded her in death.

Ione was born in Philadelphia, the only child of a Southern, genteel mother, whose lineage traced back to the American Revolutionary War. Her father abandoned the family at an early age, leaving her to be raised by her disabled mother and elderly grandfather. As a child growing up in deep poverty in the midst of the Great Depression, she frequently reminded her children that she was able to rise above her poverty through a nurse's training program offered as part of FDR's New Deal. After graduation from high school, Ione entered the Nurse Cadet Corps. In 1951, after a few years as a civilian nurse, she joined the Army Nurse Corps as an officer and First Lieutenant, and spent two years as an operating room nurse during the Korean War. After serving in the Army, she returned to Philadelphia to work as an OR nurse in the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania where she met Mario, a dashing young Peruvian doctor, who was there completing his residency in anesthesia. Without knowing a word of Spanish, she moved with him in 1955 to Lima,

Peru, where they were married. Embraced by Mario's large and loving family, with whom she retained a long, close relationship, they lived there for nine years, during which time they had their four children. They returned to the U.S. in 1964 and lived in Boston and Miami before settling in Sarasota in 1970.

A life-long Democrat, Ione was a staunch supporter of women's rights, particularly reproductive freedoms, and also was deeply concerned about racial and economic divisions in this country, and about the environment (her children called her the "original re-cycler"). Ione was active in the Women's Medical Auxiliary and many other charitable organizations. A resilient survivor, Ione rose above a sad and deprived childhood, the untimely loss of both of her sons, and a long, difficult illness. Most important to her was her family. She was a wonderful wife, mother, grandmother and friend, and will be deeply missed.

Burial will be private. A memorial service in her honor will be held in the coming weeks. Contributions in her memory may be made to Planned Parenthood, or to the Epilepsy Foundation.