



Emma Guitart Cerice

December 27, 1941 - January 16, 2026

Emma Eloisa (Guitart) Cerice, age 84, of Birmingham, AL, went home to be with her Lord and Savior on Friday, January 16, 2026. She is preceded in death by her parents Miguel Guitart Ph.D. and Emma (Tabares) Guitart, brother Miguel Guitart, husband Frank Griego, and daughter-in-law Denise Cerice. A native of Cuba, she came to the United States in 1961 and became a U.S. citizen in 1969. She received her teaching degree from the University of Montevallo and Master of Arts degree from Samford University. She then taught and tutored Mathematics for over thirty-five years at Hueytown's Pittman Junior High school, Jefferson State Community College and Bessemer State Technical College. After retiring, she continued tutoring for over fifteen years and lived a very active life revolving around her church, family and many friends. She enjoyed playing the piano and after retirement found inspiration to write some Christian music. She was a member of Pleasant Ridge Baptist Church before relocating from Hueytown to Hoover where she joined Hunter Street Baptist Church. She is survived by her sons Emilio M. Cerice V (Kristi) and Gus Cerice, grandchildren Diana Cerice, Nathan Cerice and Andrew Cerice, her nieces Virginia, Lillian, Raquel, Diana and Emmy plus many wonderful friends. Emma and her brother Miguel were from Havana, Cuba. They were raised in a Christian home and attended private Catholic schools. Her mother was from the former province of Las Villas and taught music and was also a choir director. Her father was from the province of Camaguey and had a double PhD in mathematics & physics and a

2nd PhD in mathematics & chemistry. He taught mathematics mostly throughout his career and at one point was a school principal. During Carlos Prio's presidency before Castro and before Batista, he was appointed superintendent of secondary education for the country, while his brother Augustine was minister of education. His mother Eloisa, was from Mexico, making Emma $\frac{1}{4}$ Mexican and $\frac{3}{4}$ Cuban. Towards the end of the Cuban Revolution (1953-1959), Emma's first husband Emilio IV, fought alongside Fidel Castro to overthrow the dictator Fulgencio Batista (1952-1959) who had deposed elected president Carlos Prio (1948-1952) via military coup. It wasn't until afterward that Castro would announce a communist regime and alignment with the Soviets. Then Emilio IV fought with the underground militia as part of the failed Bay of Pigs Invasion (April 1961). As a result, he and his father became military prisoners. Castro imprisoned anyone suspected of being involved in the failed takeover, which overflowed the prisons, pressuring Castro to release them after only 3 weeks. (May 1961) At that time, Emma and Emilio IV had only dated about one year, and were not yet married. As soon as Emilio IV was released from prison, they had a small rushed wedding (July 15, 1961). Christian Churches were airlifting people out that wanted to flee Cuba. The following month they fled to Kingston, Jamaica. (August 11, 1961) They weren't allowed to bring money from Cuba, only 40 lbs of clothes and 2 boxes of Cuban cigars. Emma finally arrived in Miami on 9/1/1961. Emma then sold her 2 boxes of Cuban cigars to help pay for the 1st month's rent of a small apartment. Emma found her first job in Miami working at a 10-cent discount store making \$1/hr. She did not know English when she first arrived in the US. She remained in Miami one year. Emma's parents came to Miami a few months later. Her father already knew English and sent out resumes to many universities. The University of Montevallo offered him a teaching position and in January of 1962, Emma's parents moved to Montevallo and her father taught there for 17 years until he retired. In 1979, her parents moved to Miami to focus on her mother's music career. Her mother was a prolific writer of Cuban folk music and had written hundreds of

songs. She also scored a musical play that was being performed in Miami called "El Pajaso". (The Clown) In September of 1962, 8-month-pregnant Emma flew to Birmingham, she and her husband moving in with her parents, and no job prospects. Emilio V was born the next month in October of 1962, and Gus was born 15 months later. Emma finished her undergraduate degree from Montevallo in 2 years, while raising 2 babies. She would later receive her Masters degree from Samford University. (1972-1976)

Cemetery Details

Pleasant Ridge Cemetery

Hueytown, AL, AL

Previous Events

Visitation

JAN 20. 11:30 AM - 1:00 PM (CT)

Hunter Street Baptist Church
2600 John Hawkins Pkwy
Hoover, AL 35244-4009
(205) 985-7295

Funeral Service

JAN 20. 1:00 PM (CT)

Hunter Street Baptist Church
2600 John Hawkins Pkwy
Hoover, AL 35244-4009
(205) 985-7295

Tribute Wall

SH

“ Praying for her loving family. She was friends with my mother, Margaret Vines, and taught my children at Pittman. She was a loving person and educator. Always caring.

Sue Huff - February 16 at 10:05 AM

AS

“ I'm so sorry to hear of her passing. She was a wonderful teacher to me back in the 80s at PJHS. Such wonderful memories, and I always marveled at her stories of how she fled Cuba. However, one day, we shall meet again!

A former student - January 21 at 09:18 PM

NH

“ I will miss this sweet lady so much! We gathered a lot of memories over the past 39 years...way too many to try to pick one ,but the best memory I have is the love we came to share and treasure... Rest in Peace now my friend

nancie holland - January 18 at 02:30 PM



“ Country Basket Blooms was purchased for the family of Emma Guitart Cerice.



January 18 at 12:28 PM

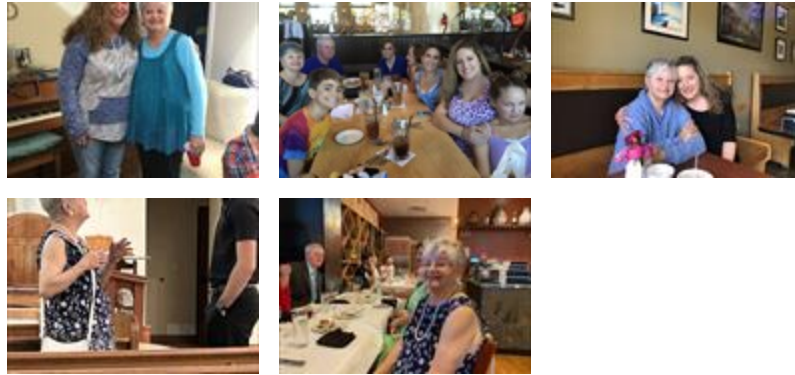
YE

“ Your nieces, Virginia and Elizabeth planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Emma Guitart Cerice.

Your nieces, Virginia and Elizabeth - January 18 at 12:28 PM

EC

“ We will miss our wonderful Tia Emma so much. She was our only aunt and a wonderful, caring, very intelligent woman. She always gave me good advice with life issues and out careers as fellow teachers. Heaven gained a precious angel. May you rest in peace sweet Tia ☐ 🙏



Emmy Cannon - January 18 at 05:27 AM