



## Blanca Iris "Mama" Ortiz Rivera

September 17, 1943 - August 18, 2023

UTICA – On Friday, August 18, 2023, Blanca Iris “Mama” Ortiz Rivera, age 79, surrendered to the Lord after a 22-month illness with her loved ones in her company. She was truly a blessed soul.

Born in Guraba, Puerto Rico on September 17, 1943 to the late Domingo and Petra Ortiz, she was raised and educated in Puerto Rico and worked at a brassiere factory, where she proved herself an industrious worker. In 1970, she relocated to Utica to be closer to her family. In 1971, she met the love of her life, Jaime Alejandro, with whom she spent 52 years. Together their relationship was bonded in love and unity. These years were her greatest joy. She had been employed in earlier years at Abelove’s Linen Company as well as Beaunit Fibers. She later made a career for 22 years as a machine operator at Joseph and Fiess Company, but more importantly, she made many friendships there.

Blanca possessed great strength of character, and was also very strong-willed. She believed firmly in right and wrong. She could always be found performing kind acts for others. She always had an abundance of food, and her door was always open. Her warm heart earned her a beautiful reputation for her hospitality and she had a knack for helping people without them even noticing. She vowed from her childhood to be one who served others. She was charming and charismatic because of her gentle heart. So many people

gave her the honorary title of “Mama” as a sign of their great respect for her. Not only did her family use it, but all those who felt especially loved by her.

She showed her spirituality by her actions and always prayed for her family and those in need. “Que Dios te bendiga” was a sentiment she often ended her conversations with.

An “unteachable driver” Jaime tried tirelessly to teach her, but there was no point! Thus, she walked. One of the highlights of her life was her trip to the Grand Canyon with Jaime where she was in complete awe of its beauty.

Blanca loved music and especially enjoyed Hispanic Caroling “parranda!” It would begin on Bleecker St. and go all the way to the other end. Holidays were extra special and began all the way in October. A mass factory would often be held in her house making “pasteles” followed by rice and gandules, which were made to perfection and considered to be the best. Every day revolved around her preparing food. She positively doted on Jaime, giving him good coffee in the morning and dinner at 5:00 p.m. each day. She loved to show her love and appreciation through food.

Blanca’s parties were also superb – filled with fun, laughter, love, and “coquito.” Blanca and Jaime had endless and boundless energy. She loved her dominoes, friendly card games, the game of chance, and Spanish soap operas “novellas”.

The Lord was the center of her life. Each year she observed Easter as a most sacred holiday. She read her Bible in both Spanish and English and prayed the rosary. She was devoted to Historic Old St. John’s Church and made their Charity Bazaar all the more special to the Spanish community because of how hard she worked to prepare authentic dishes for it that always sold out! She was legendary and will not be forgotten – bless her soul!

Blanca is survived by her beloved Jaime; her cherished children, Rafael Ortiz, Lucy Ulloa and Mari Santiago; her adored grandchildren, Marisol and Carlo Louis-Jacques, IrisMireya and Jose Colon, Jr., and Nastassia and Patrick Hare; her great-grandchildren, Sophia, and Myah; Jozette, Jose, and Juliana; and Rafael, and Alyssia; her siblings and their loves, Melin Ortiz and Alada Perez, Petra Lago and the late Miguel Lago, Luz M. Torrez, Carmen L. Torrez, Angelina and Tomas Garcia, and Ramona and Luis Perez Molina. She was preceded by her siblings, Carmelo and Estervina Ortiz, Hilda and Ramon Ortiz, Irene Torrez, and Candelario, Jr. and Alada Torrez. She also leaves to cherish her memory a multitude of nieces, nephews, great-nieces, great-nephews, and cousins; her in-laws, Carmen Alejandro, and Ida Alejandro; and so many beloved friends in the Spanish community. She touched so many people it would be remiss to mention just one person.

The family extends their special thanks to Hospice & Palliative Care, Inc. for their outstanding care, which they ministered to Blanca in a profound way. Special thanks specifically goes to Katie and Crystal. Much love is expressed to Fr. Luis who was considered family, it was always with humility and compassion that he offered his company to them.

Visitation for family and friends will be held on Thursday, August 24, 2023 from 4:00-6:00 p.m. at the Eannace Funeral Home, Inc. 932 South St., corner of Hammond Ave. Memorial contributions in Blanca's name may be made to Hospice & Palliative Care, Inc. online at <https://hospicecareinc.org/donate-online>; envelopes will also be available at the funeral home. Blanca's Mass of Christian Burial and Celebration of Life will commence on Friday, August 25, 2023, at 8:30 a.m. from the funeral home and at 9:30 a.m. at Historic Old St. John's Church, 240 Bleecker St. Interment will follow in Calvary Cemetery.

# Cemetery Details

## Calvary Cemetery

2407 Oneida Street  
Utica, NY 13501  
(315) 735-2727

# Previous Events

## Visitation

**AUG 24.** 4:00 PM - 6:00 PM (ET)

Eannace Funeral Home, Inc.  
932 South Street  
corner of Hammond Ave.  
Utica, NY 13501  
(315) 724-6714  
eannacefh@roadrunner.com

## Funeral Service

**AUG 25.** 9:30 AM (ET)

Historic Old St. John's Church  
240 Bleecker Street  
Utica, NY 13501  
(315) 724-6159  
<https://www.historicoldstjohnschurch.com/>

# Tribute Wall

YF

“ My deepest condolences, thoughts & prayers are with the family. "Mama" we absolutely love you and you will be greatly missed and never forgotten. I have nothing but good memories with you and the love, support you have always given me and the kids you where our "Mama" everyone's "Mama". You had the biggest heart your doors where always open. We plant that tree 🌳 in your honor full of life as you where while on this earth. Rest in eternal peace "Mama" until we meet again my beautiful angel dance in eternal paradise. 🕊️🙏



Yvette, Jon, Marino & Nyssa.

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Yvette Flores - August 24, 2023 at 08:23 AM

YF

“ Yvette Flores lit a candle in memory of Blanca Iris "Mama" Ortiz Rivera



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Yvette Flores - August 24, 2023 at 07:55 AM

YF

“ Yvette F. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Blanca Iris "Mama" Ortiz Rivera.

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Yvette F. - August 24, 2023 at 07:52 AM



“ Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Blanca Iris "Mama" Ortiz Rivera.



August 24, 2023 at 07:47 AM



“ Dan Amado & Kim Perkins purchased the Full Of Love Bouquet for the family of Blanca Iris "Mama" Ortiz Rivera.



Dan Amado & Kim Perkins - August 24, 2023 at 07:13 AM



“ My Deepest Condolences to this Beautiful family . I remember her all the way back to my childhood and what a caring mother and wife she always was . Prayers and heartfelt sympathy to this family and especially to my Dear Friend Lucy. God Bless 🙏🌹💔 Cathy D.



Cathy Drew-Egan - August 23, 2023 at 05:40 PM



“ Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Blanca Iris "Mama" Ortiz Rivera.



August 22, 2023 at 07:06 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Blanca Iris “Mama” Ortiz Rivera.

August 22, 2023 at 03:30 PM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Blanca Iris "Mama" Ortiz Rivera.



August 22, 2023 at 03:30 PM



“ My most sincere condolences to the family. May our Lord bring comfort. To those who are in pain, but she is resting in the Lords arms she was a loving, caring person. God bless.

ana pagan - August 22, 2023 at 02:15 PM



“ Eloisa Carretero lit a candle in memory of Blanca Iris "Mama" Ortiz Rivera



Eloisa Carretero - August 22, 2023 at 10:28 AM



I remember sitting at "mamas" with my family as a little girl.. singing and eating...some memories are never forgotten..may she forever rest in heavenly peace..and may the family find peace and I send my prayers and sincerest condolences to everyone 🙏🙏

Eloisa Carretero - August 22, 2023 at 10:41 AM

FC

“ *OMG! What can be said about Blanca Iris that has not been said already. We first met over 50 years ago when she first arrived in Utica, so there are so many happy memories of all the good times we shared together over all that time. She was one of the best. We have truly lost someone special. My sincerest condolences go out to the entire family, all of whom I have interacted with in one way or another over all these years. Que en paz descanse, mi querida Blanca Iris.*

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**Frankito Calaprice** - August 22, 2023 at 06:54 AM

LC

“ *Our sincere condolences to the entire family. May "Mama" Blanca rest in peace. You all will be in our thoughts and prayers.*



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**Lydia E Carretero** - August 22, 2023 at 02:54 AM