



Nora N. Palombo

May 14, 1937 - December 8, 2024

Nora N. Palombo

To say that Nora Palombo had a green thumb would be an understatement. Some would say she had magical powers when it came to thriving plants. At times, her garden was akin to a refuge of plants others had thought were destined to perish — whether they be bushes, trees or flowers — yet achieved levels of greatness in Nora’s garden.

On Dec. 8, 2024, Nora passed away peacefully with her daughters by her side. In her 87 years she found a home in the garden and among the people she loved — her late husband, her children, her grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Nora loved to tell stories. Born in Mendoza, Argentina, in 1937, she and her younger sibling, Elba “Porota,” lived in a modest home in a modest neighborhood with her mother and beloved father. She would say her father had a smile and laugh that would light up a room, and her mother was an excellent cook who made everything from escabeche to homemade pasta, eggplant to fig jam.

Just as her own mother took the chef mantle from her grandmother, Nora was equally renowned for her cooking. Whether she was in charge of cooking or

not, she was always in the kitchen during family gatherings. The fruits of her labors (not to mention the vegetables, meats, pastas and desserts of her labors) were enjoyed at home and at church gatherings, as she was one of the founding members of the Gourmet Circle at Resurrection Parish in Lakeland.

Nora came to the United States at the age of 21 to be with her then-fiancé, John. She recalled how she was married by proxy over the phone, as John was already established in the United States. One of her favorite “coming to America” stories is when she arrived in Miami, she saw this large, green banana. She bought it and immediately tried to peel it and eat it. The tough peel didn’t deter her, but the taste did — after all it was not a banana, but a plantain, a fruit not seen in the mountainous region of Mendoza.

From Miami, the couple settled down in New York City, and then Pennsylvania. There she raised two of her daughters, Vivian and Carol. She became an American citizen when the girls were little and recalled taking them to the immigration office to take the citizen’s test, which she passed.

She was active in the children’s lives — Girl Scouts, swim team and school events. She also served as a substitute teacher in a local school where she taught Spanish. The family moved to New Jersey where her youngest daughter, Jean Ann, was born. Three years later, they moved to Lakeland, Florida, which became her forever home.

After a few years in Lakeland, Nora opted to enter the work force. She passed the realtor’s exam and became a realtor, selling homes across Lakeland. Even in her later years, when she was driven around the city, she would recall a house she sold — remembering the families, the builder and the price of the home.

She loved her Catholic home at Resurrection. As a member of the Gourmet Circle she cooked for priests and bishops, and enjoyed the monthly gatherings with her friends. She was an active member of the Council of Catholic Women. She enjoyed going to out-of-town events with fellow members, always recalling the meals they shared (or how she could make it better).

And her stories? She lived in Argentina during the Juan Peron years. She recalled while she was a little girl she was going to the post office when soldiers in a pick-up truck were throwing out Panettone and bottles of Champagne. She picked the items up and took them back home, but her father refused it, because he wanted nothing from the corrupt regime.

But some of her stories were pretty unbelievable, but she would swear they were true. Like when she was walking in the woods in rural Pennsylvania and was approached by a “woman with big sunglasses” on horseback, who had two men in suits walking on each side of her. The woman spoke to Nora and remarked how beautiful her children were. She swore that woman was Jackie Onassis.

Another story involved her youngest daughter when she was 3, and she and her husband had traveled from New Jersey to look for a home in Lakeland. The couple took their daughter to the Red Barn, known for its steaks, but all the youngster wanted to eat was oranges. At one point, the daughter wandered to a table with two men to offer them part of her orange. Her father scooped her up, but Nora would never forget one of the men at the table. She swore it was Tom Selleck.

What was not unbelievable was her dedication to her family, and their dedication in return. Along with her sister Porota and extended family in

Argentine, she is survived by her daughters and their husbands, Vivian and James Dinsmore, Carol and Bob Linville, and Jean Ann and David Gonzalez, and her grandchildren Leslie, Ashley, Robert Jr., Christine, Carlos, Marco and Emilio, and seven great-grandchildren -- Savannah, Juliana, Brantley, Maddie, Rachael, Kai and Nic.

A Celebration of Life is scheduled for Tuesday, Jan. 7, 2025, at 11 a.m. at Resurrection Parish in Lakeland. A reception will follow. In lieu of flowers, grow a plant or flowers in your own yard — whether it a ponytail palm or an African violet or an orchid or a desert rose — and remember her fondly as they flourish.

Previous Events

Memorial Mass

JAN 7. 11:00 AM (ET)

Resurrection Catholic Church
333 Terrace Way
Lakeland, FL

Tribute Wall

EM

“ Eduardo M. purchased the Rose Remembrance for the family of Nora N. Palombo.



Eduardo M. - January 05, 2025 at 11:05 AM

EM

“ Eduardo M. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Nora N. Palombo.

Eduardo M. - January 05, 2025 at 11:05 AM

JJ

“ Joni J. planted a grove of 3 [Memorial Trees](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Nora N. Palombo.

Joni J. - January 02, 2025 at 09:21 PM