



America Santiago Ocasio

October 23, 1939 - February 22, 2026

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America Santiago, beloved mother, grandmother, great-grandmother, and devoted teacher, passed away peacefully on February 22, 2026. She was 86 years old.

Born on October 23, 1939, America lived a life defined by compassion, resilience, and a deep commitment to learning. As a teacher, she touched countless lives—guiding, encouraging, and inspiring her students with patience and unwavering belief in their potential. Her dedication to education was not simply a career but a true calling, one that left a lasting impact on everyone fortunate enough to learn from her.

America's family was the center of her world. She is survived by her two loving daughters, Grisel Appenzeller and Maria Elias, who carry forward her strength, kindness, and warmth. Her sons-in-law Jeff Appenzeller, and John Elias who are forever grateful for her loving and caring presences. She leaves behind three cherished granddaughters—Courtney, Nina, and Emily—each of whom shared a special bond with their grandmother and benefited from her love and wisdom. America also delighted in the joy of her great-grandson, Parker, whose presence brought her immense happiness in her later years.

She now joins her beloved husband, Benito, who preceded her in death on

March 21, 2020. Their bond was one of partnership, loyalty, and enduring devotion, and the comfort of their reunion brings peace to those who loved them both.

To those who knew her, America will be remembered for her gentle spirit, her bright smile, and the way she made every person feel valued. Her legacy—rooted in love, learning, and generosity—will forever live on in the hearts of her family, friends, and former students.
Her life was a gift, and her memory will remain a blessing.

Previous Events

Visitation

MAR 4. 5:00 PM - 7:00 PM (ET)

DeGusipe Funeral Home & Crematory West Orange Chapel
1400 Matthew Paris Blvd.
Ocoee, FL 34761
(407) 695-2273
todd@degusipe.com
<https://www.DeGusipeFuneralHome.com>

Funeral Mass

MAR 5. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (ET)

St James Catholic Cathedral
215 North Orange Avenue
Orlando, FL 32801

Graveside

MAR 5. 12:30 PM (ET)

Cape Canaveral National Cemetery
5525 US-1 North
Mims, FL 32754
(321) 383-2638
<http://www.cem.va.gov/cems/nchp/capecanaveral.asp>

Tribute Wall



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of America Santiago Ocasio.*



March 03 at 04:03 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of America Santiago Ocasio.

March 03 at 04:03 PM



“ *Tus hermanos Tocayo Rafa Guelo y familia purchased the Pink Tribute Spray for the family of America Santiago Ocasio.*



Tus hermanos Tocayo Rafa Guelo y familia - March 01 at 10:05 PM



“ *Blue Caribbean Bouquet was purchased for the family of America Santiago Ocasio.*



February 28 at 10:12 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of America Santiago Ocasio.

February 28 at 10:12 PM



“ America will be missed by all who knew and loved her.

- Collazo Family

Blanca Collazo - February 28 at 10:01 PM