

Celebrating the Life of



Teresa Varnado

May 31, 1944 - July 20, 2026

Order of Service

Saturday, August 15, 2026, at 11:00 AM

Grace Long Beach

Beth Balmer and Will Vucurevich, Lead Pastors
3601 Linden Avenue
Long Beach, California 90807

Elder Lafayette Shelton, Officiant
The Living Gospel Church, Los Angeles, California

Musical Prelude

Processional **Ministers & Family**

Prayer of Comfort.....**Pastor Emanuel Jones**

Scripture Readings.....**Martha Aguirre and Rosalind Bynum**

Musical Selection: "My Soul Has Been Anchored in the Lord"...**Pastor George Cowart**

Words of Expression and Love.....**Family and Friends**

A Special Tribute: My Beloved Best Friend by Lucy Living.....**Kim Dixon**

Musical Selection: "Never Would Have Made It"**Pastor George Cowart**

Words of Expression and Love - Her Legacy:.....**The Nietos (Grandchildren)**

Acknowledgements and Reflections.....**DeJa Varnado and Stacey Lewis**

Obituary | Visual Reflection**Silent Reading and Video Presentation**

Words of Comfort.....**Elder Lafayette Shelton**

Closing Prayer.....**Suffragan Bishop Levon Mitchell Jr**

Recessional**Directors in Charge**

Repast Immediately Following Services

Grace Long Beach Community Center

Honorary Pallbearers

Efrem Lewis | Marco Reid
Markeyz Johnston | Kyle Lewis
Oneal Forbes | Jonathan Forbes
Gregory Forbes

Services Entrusted to

Green Family Mortuary Cremation
and Burial
13819 Foothill Boulevard, Ste. D
Fontana, California 92335
(909) 428-6650

Life Reflection of Ms. Teresa E. Varnado

May 31, 1944 - July 20, 2026

*Dios, concédeme la serenidad para aceptar las cosas que no puedo cambiar, el valor para cambiar las cosas que puedo y la sabiduría para conocer la diferencia.
(God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.)*

-The Serenity Prayer



In May 1944, a beautiful, feisty baby girl lovingly known as “Tinny” entered the world in a small rural town in Costa Rica. Born to Advira Senior Graham, Teresa Eucella Beatrice Senior would go on to leave a lasting mark everywhere she went.

Though Costa Rica was her birthplace, Teresa had a lifelong love for learning and reading, recognizing early on that education was the ultimate equalizer. She often shared her childhood dream of moving to America—a dream that came true in 1961 when, with the support of her beloved aunt, she relocated to Boston. Shortly after arriving, while working at a local manufacturing company, she had the memorable privilege of meeting President John F. Kennedy during an all-staff event where he shook her hand.

Seeking warmer weather, Teresa later moved to Southern California alongside her aunt "Pooch" and her uncle (Tio). While she was sad to leave her cherished Brooklyn Dodgers behind, she embraced the sunny skies and beaches. Eager to gain her independence, she sought out driving lessons from a skilled young man from Mississippi. That driving instructor eventually became her significant other; the two married and were blessed with two daughters, Stacey and DeJanette.

Outside of her deep devotion to her family, Teresa was most proud of her work as a bilingual powerhouse and dedicated educator. In May 1974, just three weeks after giving birth, she accepted a position as a first-grade teacher at Wilson Elementary in Lynwood, California, launching an extraordinary career that spanned more than 35 years. "Mrs. Varnado" served with passion, integrity, and deep care for every student who entered her classroom. Widely respected by colleagues, parents, and students alike, she earned a Master's Degree in Education during her tenure alongside numerous district awards. She was truly the blueprint for overcoming obstacles and creating opportunities.

Teresa embraced life with enthusiasm. She loved the Dodgers, playing Bunco, bowling, traveling, enjoying the Las Vegas vibe, cooking her signature arroz con pollo, dancing to Michael Jackson in the car, serving as a church usher, collecting tote bags, gifting books, and spending precious time with her loved ones. The prayer above was one of her favorite poems; she kept several copies around her home and would often recite it aloud during life's challenging moments.

Teresa transitioned peacefully on July 20, 2026. Her impact, influence, and loving spirit will forever be remembered by all who knew her. One of her beloved former students spoke of her passing so befitting:

Descansa en paz. Que Dios te reciba en la paz y la belleza del cielo. Vuela alto hasta el cielo de Costa Rica.

(Rest in peace. May God welcome you into the peace and beauty of heaven. Fly high to the skies of Costa Rica.)

- Eric Aguirre















