

My name is Uva de Aragón and I am Silvia's sister. I am very grateful to her children for asking me to say a few words today.

Silvia Aragon Smith was born in Havana, Cuba on April 16, 1917. She was the first born of Mercedes (Nena) Godoy and Dr. Ernesto de Aragon, also my father. I am sure her young parents were ecstatic to welcome her. Five years later, our brother Ernesto was born. Silvia spent her childhood in Havana and attended high school in Holy Cross Academy in The Washington, D.C. area.. Although she missed her home and friends, little did she know how important it would be in her life to have mastered the English language at an early age. In December 1940, Silvia married Jorge Smith Dechappelles and they were true lovebirds until his death in 1986. For the first 11 years of their marriage, the couple was not able to have children, which saddened them as well as our father, who was an OBGYN, specializing in infertility. But their burning desire to have children was fulfilled with the birth of their daughter Silvia Maria in September 1952 and their son Jorge Ernesto in December 1954. And I remember both days clearly and how much happiness these babies brought into our families.

My memories of my sister Silvia, 27 years older than me, date back to the late forties and become very clear since the early 50s, when she was a young happily married woman, who worked at my father's practice, came with Jorge to our home every Sunday after mass for a glass of Oporto wine and a session of music by los Panchos on 78 vinyl records. I also remember them picking up my parents to go out to dinner. They loved dining out in Havana's many good restaurants. And there were many in Havana of the 50's. And I remember her as well as a young mother. I think these years in Havana were very happy for her.

Silvia, Jorge, her mother and their children came to the United States in 1960, like so many Cubans, because they opposed the Revolution. Their first years in Miami were very difficult, but with hard work and sacrifice they founded SilMar Electronics (the name is an anagram of their daughter's name, Silvia Maria, and the business is now run by their son Jorge Ernesto.) Their children were reminiscing a few days ago when they moved into their Westchester home and their father's recliner was a lawn chair in which he sat to watch a small TV while

their chairs was the floor. The Tv aired programs from 3 channels. And the kids were the remote control. "Oyéme, cambiáme el canal...." In the early 70's, Nena was bedridden for five years and Silvia took care of her with devotion. I have rarely seen a daughter with such unselfish love for a mother. After Nena passed away, they were better off financially, the children married and the grandchildren arrived, Silvia and Jorge enjoyed some very happy years. They treated themselves to summers in Marco Island often with their oldest grandchildren Willie and Sissy and many fun evenings with their group of dear friends, who gave themselves the knick name of "Los berracos".

Jorge's illness with leukemia and his untimely death in 1986 at the age of 72, was devastating for Silvia, who had a very difficult time coping with her new status as a widow. But the care of doctors, family, Silvia Maria, Jorge Ernesto, and her faith in God, pulled her through. As she had done with her grandchildren Willie and Sissy, she helped raise her great grandson Julián who became a great source of joy for her, as did the visits from Argentina of our brother Bebo, and from DC of our sister Lucía, the outings with her girlfriends, weekends with Silvia Maria and Sunday dinners with my mother whom she loved very much. She also went to SilMar every week and loved having lunch with her grandson Jorge Mario and never missed her weekly hairdresser/manicure appointment.

Silvia belonged to that generation of Cuban ladies, esas damas cubanas, probably extinct now, that always dressed well and carried themselves with elegance and grace. Silvia was a pathological responsible person, with high ethical values. In many things, she was stoic, for even in old age, she never complained about anything. Whatever sacrifices she made in life, and there were many, she never talked about them.

This elegant hard-working woman to whom we say goodbye today was far from perfect. Her extreme sincerity could sometimes be too much. She was obsessed with overweight people and had no qualms on letting one know, "Pero que gorda estás..." A few months ago, tired of being the target of her criticism, I got back at her and told her "Pero que bajita estás...!" She responded, "But I am

short....,” and I replied, “I’ve never held it against you”. She could not help but laugh, for she did have a sense of humor.

Silvia was prudish in expressing love, but there was a reservoir of hidden tenderness which I had the privilege of observing in some rare occasions. Once I walked into Jorge’s hospital room a few days before he died, as she was telling him “As in the famous phrase, I have loved you every day a little more than the day before, and a little less than the next.” I also observed her love as she cared for her mother and as she dressed her children, grandchildren and great grandchildren when they were babies. Una vez cuando su hija era una bebita de unos dos meses, y Silvia no lograba ponerle un saquito de piqué, lo dijo, “Pero Silvia María, coopera...” The phrase has always stayed in the family,

Silvia’s strict sense of morale made her sometimes inflexible in understanding life’s many complications, and her own frugality made her appear tightfisted. But she was generous on her own terms. That is why today there are so many of us here and why during the long process of her death she was surrounded by so many people who loved her and cared for her, her daughter Silvia Maria and her son Jorge Ernesto and their spouses, 11 grandchildren and 5 great grandchildren. And why relatives called from Argentina, Spain, Maryland to say her goodbyes. Y allí estaba a su lado, su otra familia, principalmente Margarita, que estuvo con ella por 20 años, y la conocía y entendía mejor que nadie, y Carmenza y Estela, que también la cuidaban y mimaban, y quienes encontraron en la casa de Silvia calor de hogar.

In the name of the family, I thank all of you who have accompanied Silvia Aragón Smith in her final journey. If I had to summarize her personality, I would say something very simple, rare and deep. “She was a good woman”. Silvia, your work on this earth is done. Your parents, husband and brother await you. The Lord awaits you. May the Angels take you in their wings to the Kingdom of God. Go in peace, my dear sister.

Miami, Jan 8, 2011