

## Gisela Broderick

### "Gigi"

- Gisela also known to us as "Gigi" was born in Cuba to a single mom. She grew up with her grandma and mother to what she describes as an uneventful childhood. She was a joyful child and loved to play hopscotch, paper dolls, and flew homemade kites. It was an idealist childhood without store bought toys. Later in 1956 she migrated to the U.S. at the age of 12. She only spoke Spanish at the time.
- Cuba was a wonderful place to grow up in the 1950's. Gigi was safe and happy. She lived in a poor small town in the center of Cuba with caring people around. Fresh fruit, especially mangos, Gigi loved. She enjoyed playing with the neighborhood kids.  
Gigi's happiest memories are of leading a carefree life in Cuba. She played hopscotch, caught butterflies, made leis. NO TV.
- Later Gigi worked in retail in a men's shop. They sold cigars, tobacco, cigarettes, and liquor. She was too young to sell liquor. She later went to work for a drugstore.
- In 1956 she moved to Hoboken, New Jersey. She remembers the Poodle skirt, French Twist, and teased hair as fads at the time.
- In school her favorite subject was math. Her favorite high school teacher was Mrs. Bungal, her Algebra 1 teacher. School was difficult at times learning English and making friends. She did get in trouble for talking a lot in class. She was a wonderful student and quickly mastered the English language. She graduated top of her class. Later she attended Montclair State with a full scholarship where she earned her nickname "Gigi". Then she received a National Science Foundation scholarship to earn her master's degree in math at the University of Notre Dame where she met her husband Jack in 1971. They have been married 53 years and have 2 sons who grew up in Tolland.

- The Pontiac Tempest was the first car she bought. She bought it once she had a job teaching math in Dumont High School in New Jersey.
- Gigi has always made the best of each situation. Many of life's events made her very happy including her graduation from college, marriage, children and grandchildren.
- Her advice to others would be to look ahead, don't dwell on the bad times, do your best and always Be Kind!
- One of the most rewarding things about getting older is to be able to enjoy the small moments. Being able to help others and knowing what's important Gigi also finds rewarding.
- Gigi is most proud of overcoming a lot of adversity and poverty. Other proud accomplishments are migrating to the U.S. at a difficult age without speaking English and figuring out how to get thru college. Her driving force was diversity. She is also a cancer survivor.
- Teaching math was something Gigi loved to do. After teaching in New Jersey, New York and CT. she worked for several insurance companies. This included working for 2 years in Buenos Aires as CIO (Chief Information Officer) supporting five companies in Argentina and Uruguay. She traveled thru the country and met many professional and personal challenges. This included her having cancer and getting treatments during that time.
- The things that make her the happiest are being with family and friends. Cooking is a special joy to her, and she loves to eat. She still goes to Cuba to visit family. She has learned she has 5 half siblings whom she keeps in touch with.
- Gigi would like to be remembered for always doing her best no matter what she was faced with, always meeting her challenges with hope, optimism and faith in God.
- Gigi with her wonderful smile can be found exercising every Tuesday and Thursday at the Senior Center. Stop in and say hello to her.