



## Luis García- Abrines

June 21, 1923 - May 17, 2016

Profesor Luis García-Abrines Calvo, age 92, passed away on Tuesday, May 17, 2016, in New Haven, Connecticut. He is survived by his wife of 49 years, Marie García-Abrines, Professor Emerita of SCSU; his twin daughters, Linda Isaacs (John) and Alicia Romanacci (Paolo); his son David (Orquídea); and his grandchildren Olivia, Beck and Nicholas. He was preceded in death by his parents, Dr. Adolfo García-Abrines and Francisca Calvo Escanero, and his three brothers, Adolfo, Francisco and Joaquín, all of Zaragoza, Spain.

Professor Luis García-Abrines Calvo was born on June 21, 1923, in Zaragoza, Spain. He graduated from the Jesuit School El Salvador in Zaragoza. In 1940, at the age of 17, he went to Madrid to study classical piano under the tutelage of Luis Galve, a renowned musician. After two years of piano study, he returned to Zaragoza where he continued his studies in Fine Arts at the University of Zaragoza. In the summer of 1944, he attended the University of Oviedo as a resident student to further his study of music. In 1948, at the University of Madrid, he received his degree in Romance Philology. In 1950, he founded the Philharmonic Society of Zaragoza and the Academia Miral for college students. At this time, he began his research and publications in literature, with scholarly editions and critical reviews of various works. In 1952, Luis published a facsimile edition of Gaspar Sanz Instrucción de música sobre la guitarra española which has been through several editions and cited by musicologists as their basic text. That same year, he was co-

founder with Manuel Derqui Martos of the Sansueña Music Society, a division of the the Philharmonic Society of Zaragoza. At the age of 32, he was awarded a scholarship by the French government to study contemporary French music at the Sorbonne. While in Paris, he integrated himself into the community of exiled Aragonese artists, musicians and poets that included Honorario García Condoy and Fermín Aguayo. Pablo Picasso, Pierre Boulez and Oscar Domínguez were also among his friends. In 1953, he accepted a teaching position in Spanish Language and Literature at Yale University, where he remained until 1961. He became a US citizen in 1959, the same year that Yale awarded him a Morse Scholarship to begin research on Juan del Valle y Caviedes, resulting in a two volume critical edition. In 1960, he published *Así sueña el profeta en sus palabras*, the first book of collage published in Spain.

In 1967, he married Marie Ellen Branchini, professor of Spanish at Southern Connecticut State University, with whom he had twin daughters, Linda and Alicia. The same year, he was elected Secretary of the New Haven Opera Society. In 1971, the Republican Party nominated him for the position of Registrar of Voters. In 1975, Fairfield University made him an honorary member of Alfa Mu Gama. South Central Community College honored him with two awards in 1973 and 1975, for his civic, social and cultural work on behalf of the Hispanic community of New Haven. He was the founder and collaborator of two Spanish newspapers, *Últimas Noticias* and *Gaceta Hispana*. He was also secretary of the Spanish Cultural Society of New Haven.

In 1977, he was unanimously elected to the Music Section of the Royal Academy of Fine Arts of San Fernando, filling the seat vacated by Stravinsky. For this, he received a honorary medal which became one of his most prized possessions and which he wore during many formal occasions. In 1980, Luis published *Ciudadano del Mundo* (Citizen of the World), a book that best

defined who he was. It was a self-published anthology of aphorisms, poems, short stories, puzzles and calligrams. That very same year, he also published *Crisicollages para Luis Buñuel*, a book that paid homage to Buñuel on his 80th birthday. In 1982, he was named Favorite Son of his native city Zaragoza; and in 2000, he received the Gold Medal of Saint Isabel of Aragón, Queen of Portugal.

Luis published critical essays and articles about Rubén Darío, Pío Baroja, the Brothers Machado, García Lorca, Neruda, Sastre, Arrabal, Stravinsky, Debussy, Chopin, Manuel De Falla, Oscar Esplá, Goya, Buñuel, etc. He spent the rest of his teaching years at South Central Community College and at the University of New Haven, where he was named Distinguished Lecturer in the School of Arts and Sciences. He was a Fellow of Branford College at Yale, from 1973 to 2016.

In an article published in the *New Haven Register* in 1980, Israel Amitae wrote: “ Don Luis is not only a poet. He is also a “humanist for all seasons,” a teacher, a writer, a painter, a devoted musician, a craftsman, who built himself a harpsichord and clavichord and an expert in Hispanic and Latin culture. He can quote great writers and philosophers, compare literary works of ancient and contemporary masters and recite classical poetry. In the course of his endeavors, he has befriended giants in the world of arts and letters, such as, painters Pablo Picasso and Salvador Dalí and filmmaker Luis Buñuel. When asked about his poetry, Don Luis confides, “It is in a way a confession of mine, my autobiography. I hate hypocrisy and I present myself naked completely naked with my good things. This is the way I want to be remembered.”

The stories abound about Luis and his exploits in Zaragoza at the legendary *Café Requeté Aragonés* (today *Cinco de Marzo*), Paris and New Haven as a precursor of the happening (a spontaneous, improvised event that occurs

anywhere and at anytime): dropping to his knees to receive the Apostolic Blessing of celebrity friends; dressing up as the reincarnation of an Aragonese Dracula; putting himself inside his own homemade wooden coffin; wearing his monk tunic, complete with sandals and large rosary beads - to take Marie and the twins to eat lunch at Bonanza.

Luis was spontaneous, irreverent, improvisational, funny and mischievous. He was free-spirited and witty; he relished sarcasm, profanity, scatology, humor, poetry and paradox. He was an Aragonese extraordinaire who lived Aragón in his heart while in exile.

Upon hearing the news of his death, the emails and letters of condolences echoed the same sentiment: He was a good man, worthy of our affection and praise. In an article published on May 25, 2016, days after his death, the Spanish newspaper, *La Vanguardia*, published an article entitled *The Last Surrealist* by Mario Sasot, who wrote that Luis was “an artist, an intellectual, an unclassifiable, restless spirit, and a transgressor, considered to be the last Aragonese surrealist of his time.”

Luis García-Abrines Calvo’s legacy lives on in the love of his family and friends.

A memorial service will be held on Sunday, June 12, 2016, at 2:00 at St. Thomas More Chapel at Yale, 268 Park Street, New Haven. Please RSVP the family.

# Tribute Wall

GJ

“ *I'd like to express my condolences, Profesora. Geoff Jacobs (SCSU)*

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**Geoffrey Jacobs** - February 10 at 03:11 PM



“ *my sincerest condolences to you and your family Maria I don't know if you remember me which I'm sure you do well at least I hope you do LOL you made me feel so welcome in your home what a great couple to add to my list of great people be good be well and be blessed*

**TANYA COLEMAN MATTHEWS**  
*a former employee of Lifetime Care at home*

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**Tanya Coleman** - January 03, 2017 at 05:33 PM

TD

“ *Many years ago at a family wedding in Connecticut I had the pleasure of meeting Luis who was married to my husband's cousin Maria. I found Luis to be extremely pleasant, kind, and fascinating to speak with. Luis made me feel comfortable because that was the first time I was meeting many of my husband's relatives. We discussed our love of Opera and music and I found Luis to be extremely charming.*

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**Teresa D'Lorenzo** - June 08, 2016 at 12:15 PM

NC

“ Dear Professor Maria Garcia-Abrines and family,  
I was sorry to read that your husband, Profesor Luis Garcia-Abrines  
passed away.

*I enjoyed coming to your home to teach your daughters piano and  
play the harpsichord that your husband built. It was an amazing  
musical instrument.*

*I never realized just how brilliant he was until I read the obituary.  
He was a humble man and never bragged about his  
accomplishments.*

*I wanted to write this letter to you because I won't be able to attend  
his funeral Mass.*

*Please be assured that he will be in my prayers when I play the  
organ at my weekend Masses.*

*I just retired from teaching piano, having driven to homes for the  
past forty years. I play the organ in Milford on the weekends and  
special occasions.*

*God bless you!*

*Nancy Campaniolo (Miss Nancy)*

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**Nancy Campaniolo** - June 02, 2016 at 11:04 PM

BK

“ Marie & family,

*Sorry for your loss.*

*Frank & Brenda ( DeFilippi ) Karsmarski*

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**brenda karsmarski** - June 02, 2016 at 12:12 PM

PL

“ *What an amazing man. I wish I could have met him.  
Love-  
Peggy*

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**Peggy Loehr** - June 01, 2016 at 07:36 PM

VF

“ *I'm very sorry for your loss of Luis. He was a client of ours and what I remember of him is that he was a very romantic man- and a real gentleman. After reading about his life I was struck by his many accomplishments.He led a very full life. After suffering the unexpected loss of my own father 3 months ago, I share in your sorrow.  
My deepest sympathies. Vince Ferrucci*

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**Vincent Ferrucci** - June 01, 2016 at 09:09 AM

BB

*My most sincere condolences for your loss. May he rest in peace and may his memory warm your heart and bring a smile to your face when you think of him. Bob Bradley*

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**Bob Bradley** - June 01, 2016 at 09:12 PM

JC

*My deepest sympathy to the family. I had Prof. Abrines for Spanish well over 30 years ago. He was a true gentlemen and scholar. One of my fondest memories of Prof. Abrines are, he had the patience of a saint and made learning Spanish enjoyable.  
God's peace!*

*Joseph Carroll*

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**Joseph Carroll** - June 02, 2016 at 11:55 AM

RB

*I've been praying for Dr. Garcia-Abrines in his journey to the afterlife. The prayers give comfort to the family. He was my professor at SSCC (Gateway). He inspired me to enjoy and love Spanish language and culture. I will attend the memorial service.*

*Ros. Beatty*

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**rosalyn beatty** - June 11, 2016 at 11:07 AM