

## MARGARIDA P. WEST, ACTIVIST, 95

Margarida "Guida" West, PhD, died on May 25, 2023, at her home in West Caldwell, NJ. She was 95. A loving wife, mother, aunt, and grandmother - as well as a civil rights activist, feminist, professor, public policy analyst, and beloved friend to many - she was passionate about racial equality and social justice, never giving up hope for a better world.

Born in São Paulo, Brazil, she grew up with three sisters, Yolanda Wesely (her twin), Maria Isabel Stevenson (Bellita), and Elaine Long. She and Yolanda attended Barnard College, where both received bachelor's degrees in mathematics. In 1951 she married John M. West, a graduate of the Columbia University School of Engineering. John predeceased her in 2013.

In the early 1960s, Guida became involved in the civil rights movement through the Presbyterian Church in Metuchen, NJ. After she and her family moved to Montclair, NJ, in 1966, she expanded her work into welfare rights organizing, which became the focus of her doctoral dissertation at Rutgers University, subsequently published as *The National Welfare Rights Movement: The Social Protest of Poor Women* (Praeger, 1978). She later co-edited a volume of essays, *Women and Social Protest* (Oxford, 1992).

She received her PhD in sociology from Rutgers University - New Brunswick, where she was also a professor for several years. In 1989 she joined the Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies in New York as Director of Policy, Analysis, and Research, where she advocated for social welfare policy at the state and national level until her retirement. In 2020 she received Barnard College's prestigious Woman of Achievement award.

Along with the award, a first-person video account of her life and work was recorded, which is archived in the pioneer histories section of the Veteran Feminists of America. Her papers are housed at the Sophia Smith Collection

of Women's History at Smith College.

Guida and John enjoyed many happy years hosting family and friends at their home in Bridgehampton, NY, after their retirements. In the late summer of 2006, they moved to the Crane's Mill Retirement Community in West Caldwell, NJ, where they were surrounded by friends old and new.

Guida is survived by her daughter, Laura, of Manhattan, her son, Paul, of Seattle, her daughter-in-law, Linda Williamson, and her treasured grandchild, as well as her nieces Marissa Wesely (Fred Hamerman), of Manhattan, Emma Allen (Alex Allenchey), of Brooklyn, and Adrienne Shirley, of White Plains, NY, and a large extended family throughout the US, Brazil, and the UK.

You can remember Guida in spirit by writing to your elected officials on a topic of social justice and/or by donating to [www.veteranfeministsofamerica.org](http://www.veteranfeministsofamerica.org)