

The Virgin Islands Consortium

In Memoriam: Carol Ann Marie Branker

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Carol Ann Marie Branker of Princesse died on Tuesday, October 6, at her residence on St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands. She was 63 years old.

She is survived by her son, Hayden Branker, daughter-in-law, Racquel Chisolm Branker, daughter, Teri Helenese, son-in-law, Alexander Cyril DeAbreu, grandchildren; Gabrielle Alexis DeAbreu and Crystal Loren DeAbreu, brothers; Wayne and David Branker, sisters; Annette Branker Watson, Helen "Althea" Branker and Dawn Branker. Brother-in-law, Clinton Watson and sister-in-law, Janet Branker. Nephews and nieces; Michael Villafane, Wayne "Aaron" Villafane, Lumumba Branker, Wayne Branker Jr. Dwayne Branker, Shwayne Branker, Sade Branker, Shana Branker, Jaleesa Branker, Keeda Branker, Michael Howe, Reuben Watson, Veronica "Annie" Branker, Kendra Branker, Kiera

Branker, Briana Branker , Ayana Branker and Horace Crooks. Cousins; Anthony Branker, Cathy Ann Branker-Diamond; Kathleen Matthews, Avion M. James, Yeisan Huyghue, Kirlice Lett, Brendon and Bria James, and special friends and caregivers: Ingerborg Hendricks, Angela Jerome, Heather Stephenson-Proctor, Cherry Sherwood, Faith Harrigan, Arnold and Eastlyn Helenese, Arlene Helenese-Beard, Valerie DeAbreu, Enriqueta "Katie" DeAbreu, Senator Terence "Positive" Nelson, Carol Burke and other relatives and friends too numerous to mention.



in Fernando, Trinidad. She was one of the first to attend elementary and middle school in the area, and grew up as a teenager with her parents and siblings.

Carol Ann Marie Branker

Later she attended the College of the Virgin Islands (CVI) and Hofstra University in Long Island, New York. She received a Teacher's Certificate from CVI and earned a Bachelor's degree in Business Administration from Hofstra University.

American Airlines recruited and hired Carol and Miss St. Croix that year in the early 1970's to be flight attendants; however the oil embargo started while their recruiting class was in training in Texas. American Airlines halted hiring during the oil embargo and completed a Reduction in Force in the careers of airline stewardesses and pilots.

Now called flight attendants, stewardesses at the time were hired primarily based on rigid beauty standards and physical attractiveness and height/weight conformity. Having already been trained by American Airlines and fitting their "Beauty" Brand, Trans World Airlines (TWA) handpicked Carol as one of its first Black flight attendants. During and after the oil embargo, based upon their years of service, TWA reimbursed flight attendants, customer service representatives, and other employees for their education at Hofstra University, Long Island University, and the University of Missouri.

Keen as ever to be taken seriously as a skilled professional, Carol obtained her federal certification as a flight attendant and was promoted a few times over the next 22 years from stewardess to flight attendant to Customer Service Representative, and then into management as a Manager and Director. She worked on campaigns in the 1970's that fought against discrimination based on sex, beauty, and age in the airline industry. Her activism led to better compensation for flight attendants, looser restrictions on age and weight and men joining their ranks.

Carol was also tapped to participate in TWA's accelerated training program for Vice Presidents where she would have a tour of duty across the globe. Having already traveled the globe while she was a flight attendant, she opted to retire on St. Croix where she opened Beachy Things at Hotel on the Cay, and Bon Chance, Island Imports and Gabrielle's in Christiansted, St. Croix. She enjoyed the boon years of business on the island and remained steadfast in the down economic years too.

Carol Ann Marie Branker will be remembered for her business savvy, strong spirit, striking beauty, big heart, deep love for her grandchildren and family and activism that led to the end of the tiny, colorful shift dresses in the skies, which were replaced by professional attire.

At her request, cremation has taken place. Family and friends are welcomed at the Kingshill Cemetery on St. Croix, on Tuesday, October 13, at 10 a.m. where she will be laid to rest and a Blessing Ceremony and Final Rites will be administered.

May her soul rest in eternal peace.

Arrangements are by Schuster's Crematorium and James Memorial Funeral Home.