



Statement from the Family of Dr. Ivannia Soto-Hinman

(Posted on Ivannia's Facebook page)

After a fearless 8-year journey with cancer, Ivannia Soto-Hinman passed today in her home, surrounded by her loved ones.

Born in Los Angeles to Rod and Estella Soto, both she and her sister Arlene were star students throughout her younger years. Education was the hallmark within the family, and the sisters excelled at all levels educationally. Her family was of great pride to her. Her mother was her greatest mentor, and her sister was her best friend in life. The Soto family is a tight-knit family with great love.

As a child, Ivannia's mother worked with the famous Jaime Escalante (Stand and Deliver). Jaime selected Ivannia to act in his educational television program "Futures." She was the youngest to be cast on his show.

By high school, the Soto family had moved to Whittier, and Ivannia attended Whittier High School. In 2016, she was invited to become a Whittier High School Honoree, an honor extended to alumni who have accomplished exceptional contributions to society. She is enshrined on the library wall with other greats for her accomplishments in the field of EL Literacy.

Educationally, Ivannia received a bachelor's degree and dual master's degrees from Biola University. She was awarded her Ph.D. in Education from Claremont University in 2005 and was invited to do a post-doctoral program at Stanford University from 2005-2007, which ran the School Redesign Network, assisting school systems across the nation.

After receiving her Ph.D., Ivannia took her teaching to higher education where she started as a faculty member at Biola University from 2007-2009. Ivannia transitioned to Whittier College in 2009 and served 15 years as a faculty member. She was an active member of the Whittier College community. Her passion and pride for Whittier College ran deep.

Teaching in the classroom was but one facet of Ivannia's professional career. Her life's work in the advancement of Multilingual Education with an emphasis on language and literacy was integral and groundbreaking. Ivannia was a prolific researcher and writer, and she is the author of twelve books published by Corwin Press. Every one of her books was focused on training teachers to best serve students who were English language learners.

Of her books, she was best known for her book "ELL Shadowing: A Catalyst for Change" in which she outlined the practice of Shadowing for teachers. This dynamic practice put teachers in the scenario of observing English language learners throughout the academic day, identifying the moments when the student had lost track of the academic English being spoken in the classroom. This provided thousands of teachers with the insight to best serve students who are multilingual learners. Ivannia left a legacy in the world of second language acquisition.

Her twelve-book series created professional development requests from county offices, school districts, and large education systems across the country. She performed many trainings, sharpening the skillsets of many thousands of teachers and administrators. Her work no doubt impacted the educational opportunities of hundreds of thousands of students who were better served as a result of her work.

Ivannia's impact goes even deeper than the aforementioned sections:

- *Ivannia was the Director of Project BEST (Bilingual Educator Strategic Training) for the California Association for Bilingual Education from 2017-2020.*
- *Ivannia served as the CABE Project Specialist Advisor where she relentlessly advocated for state legislation. Her role found her crafting education bills and providing public comments at State Board of Education and CTC (California Commission on Teacher Credentialing) meetings to support or oppose legislation which would have significant impacts on students and teachers.*
- *Ivannia worked collaboratively with CABTE (California Association of Bilingual Teacher Education) where she served as ex-officio and worked on the revision of the Bilingual Authorization standards.*
- *Ivannia served as a Board Member for the CCTE (California Commission on Teacher Education) and co-chaired their Equity and Social Justice Special Interest Group.*
- *Ivannia was the Director of the Institute for Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Teaching at Whittier College starting in 2011.*
- *Ivannia was the Director of Graduate Programs at Whittier College starting in 2018.*
- *Ivannia started the BILA (Bilingual Authorization Program) at Whittier College which offered courses and field experiences to address the linguistic and learning needs of students all over the Los Angeles area starting in 2023.*
- *Ivannia hosted the first Bilingual Education Summit at Whittier College in September 2023.*

I think anyone reading this, who knew or worked with Ivannia would agree that she was a force. She never stood still, she never settled, and she was constantly striving for the next advancement. The next tool to better serve administrators, teachers, and students. Even in the last months of her life she had two books in various stages of development, weekly professional developments, and was teaching her regular courses at Whittier College. She was as focused and determined as ever, even as her health was declining.

But her professional achievements were but one facet of her robust life. Ivannia lived by the creed: "Work Hard, Play Harder" All experiences in life were worth celebrating, and she often thought of ways to celebrate with her family and friends.

Ivannia was an avid traveler, having spanned the globe. She was an adventurer, seeking new experiences at all times. She traveled to 28 countries across four continents, seeking to better experience life and culture and broaden her already impressive horizons. Of them all, Italy was her most special place. She loved everything about the natural beauty, the history, the food, and the people.

Geographically, she had two homes. Her beloved town of Whittier where she resided on beautiful Sycamore Street in the Historic District of Whittier. She loved her home, her neighbors, Uptown, and the cultural opportunities that Los Angeles offers. Her second love was the Central Coast of California. She fell in love with the wide open spaces, natural beauty, agriculture, trails, ocean views, and new experiences.

In 2019 she married Ron Skamfer, and eventually resided in Shell Beach, CA. Theirs is a beautiful love story and the love between them was immense. Both had been married once before but felt like they found a soulmate on the second try. Each was the other's better half and favorite co-adventurer. They were a team in every sense, and the connection between them was more deeply rooted than simple marriage bonds.

Her loving dog, Frida, was also a love of her life. Frida was adopted as a puppy in 2014. The bond between them was extremely deep. Frida hardly ever left Ivannia's side, especially when she sensed her mother was sick or not feeling well. Frida was the ultimate support through all times, especially in the later stages of Ivannia's life.

Ivannia leaves behind an impressive legacy on all fronts. She lived a life that left a mark on society that will never be erased. Her books will live long beyond today, and the training systems that she produced will be utilized well beyond her passing.

Today we inform you that she physically left us. But her spirit and work are still with us, around us, and her impact will continue beyond her physical passing. Her love for all of you is still with us, as is your love for her.

Today there will be tears, sadness, and grief. However, Ivannia was opposed to a traditional funeral. She preferred that we have a true celebration of life for her, to lay blessings on a life well lived.

We will stay in touch on the details of a celebration of life for Ivannia.

*Ivannia Soto-Hinman
January 8, 1976 – April 23, 2024*