Dr. Juan M. Navia, age 83, died peacefully at his home on Saturday morning surrounded by his loving family. He is survived by wife of 60 years Josefina, sons Juan L. (Julie) of Doylestown, PA, and Carlos A. (Kathy) of Mobile, AL, daughters Ana M. of Panacea, FL, Beatriz A. of Birmingham, AL, and grandchildren Juan and Carmen, James, Gabrielle, and Rebecca.

Born in Havana, Cuba to the late Juan and Hortensia Navia, he studied in the US where he earned a BS degree in Food Technology, and Master's in Food Science at MIT. Returning to Cuba in 1951, he began as Assistant Director of the Instituto de Investigaciones Tecnologicas, and later Director of the Fundacion de Investigaciones Medicas (FIM) laboratories of nutrition in Havana. He was also Associate Professor at the University of Villanova where he taught Microbiology until the communist regime closed the University. Under his leadership at FIM, the laboratory undertook the Herculean task of analyzing the nutritional value of all the common plant-based foods in Cuba. The work merited the San Esteban Conde de Canongo Award in 1954 from the Academy of Sciences in Havana. Fleeing political turmoil in Cuba, he and his young family arrived in the US July 4, 1961. He resumed his studies at MIT in nutrition and oral health, completed a Doctorate in Nutritional Biochemistry in 1965, and joined the faculty at UAB School of Dentistry in 1968.

Dr. Navia enjoyed a productive academic life at his beloved University publishing over 150 papers, consulting for many major corporations, and published a book, "Animal Models in Dental Research", considered by many a practical bible standardizing humane use of animals in dental research. He held numerous academic positions over the next 25 years including Director of the Nutrition and Oral Health Training Programs, Senior Scientist at the Institute of Dental Research, and Professor in the departments of Oral Biology, Comparative Medicine, Nutrition Sciences, and Public Health Sciences. As Director of the John J. Sparkman Center for International Public Health, and later Dean of the School of Public Health,

Dr Navia worked with faculty at UAB and other universities to establish training programs in Public Health at universities in developing countries, most notably Colombia, Jamaica, Peru, and Thailand. He was recipient of the Senior International Fogarty Fellowship Award 1979; H. Trendly Dean, IADR and UAB Distinguished Faculty Lecturer awards in 1990, UAB 1992 President's Medal, and Hispanic Dental Association 1995 Presidential Award for Leadership. After retirement, he was recognized as Fellow of the American Institute of Nutrition, presented with an Honorary Degree of Doctor in Dental Science at Chiang Mai University in Thailand, and 2007 Global Citizen Award in Recognition of Leadership and Academic Excellence in International Health Education.

In retirement, Dr Navia returned to the life of a student, earning a MA degree in Theology from Spring Hill College. He developed his thesis on the life of Father Felix Varela into a book, "An Apostle for the Immigrants", he self-published in the fall of 2002.