

Why my mother had to move

Dear Editor,

This is in response to the many inquires about my loving mother, and renowned educator, Eulalie Castella Rohlsen Rivera, who was recently honored on VI-Puerto Rican Friendship Day. Many people would like to know why she moved recently to Puerto Rico and about her condition.

Because of the petitions of many loving citizens in St. Croix who asked me to personally take over her care, and in particular a friend who worked for a medical supply store who saw her there advised me that not only did my mother appear ill but she also showed signs of uncleanness, I made two separate trips to St. Croix to investigate and help her.

Please bear in mind that for many years my mother declined my offer to have her here with me because she always said "I don't want to die in Puerto Rico." Besides that, her grandson informed me years ago that he had a power of attorney (which I have never seen) and that he was her caretaker and in total charge of her affairs, including her finances.

I was barred from information about the care of her and all suggestions from me and others were declined by the person in charge.

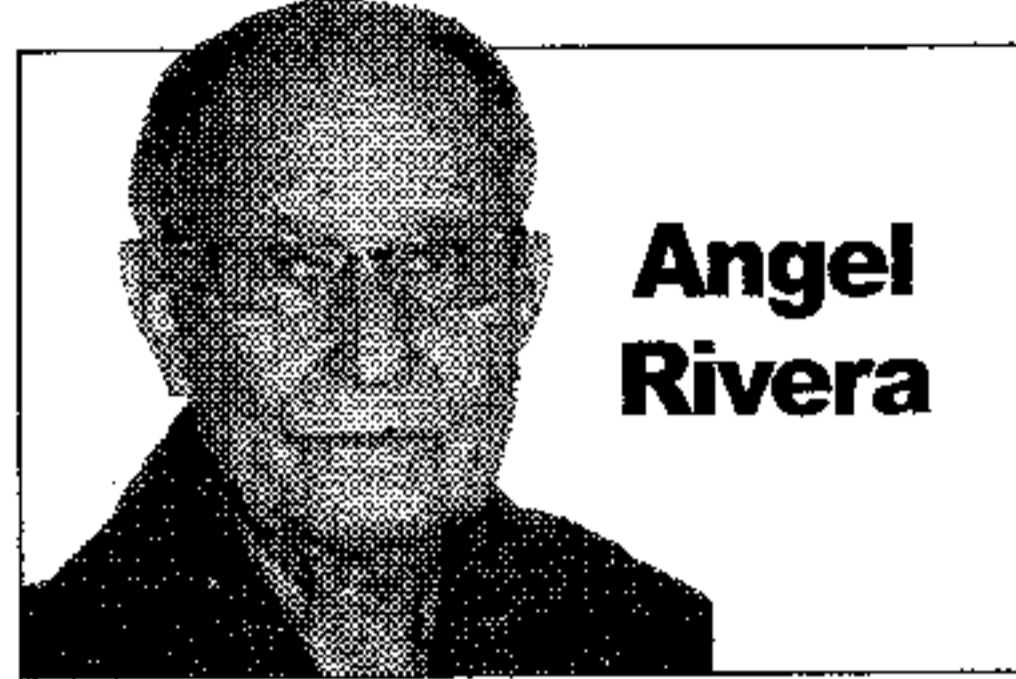
Upon my mother's request that I take over her care and for me to be able to do so, in February 2008, she willingly signed and approved an irrevocable power of attorney superseding any or all that may have existed.

Reasons for her needed change:

For all practical purposes and in spite of her old age she was forced to live alone. On her return from the Aldersville Senior Center she would then walk to the main highway and take a round-trip ride to Christiansted and back so as not be alone.

A woman was placed in charge of my mother by her grandson.

She was paid to work for two



**Angel
Rivera**

My Turn

hours in the morning before my mother went to the center and two in the afternoon when she returned. Even though she was totally inadequate and unqualified for that position in the opinion of a professional business administrator who is also a graduate and experienced nurse. A social worker, family members, and myself advised him and requested that she be replaced. Her grandson absolutely refused to do so and continued to retain her.

I had her examined by a doctor, who discovered that she was afflicted with an infection that was unattended to, she was anemic, and had a heart murmur. He prescribed medications that were immediately purchased and I began giving them to her. Her grandson was informed of her condition and his response was not to worry about it and that she was going to live for another five years.

After our return to Puerto Rico, I took her to the emergency room of a hospital and it was determined that she would have shortly died had she not immediately received emergency treatment. She was hospitalized for several days.

The following are additional factors determining the necessity and final decision to take charge and bring her with me to Puerto Rico.

Her house of approximately 50 years lacked maintenance with the roof leaking in several places

(including right above her bed that got wet during rainfall). The kitchen was infested with roaches and the false roof with mice. The lighting was dim and inadequate and the bathroom needed repairs. The telephone next to her living room where she enjoyed looking at television was inoperative and a replacement that I had sent her was never connected.

My mother who years ago lost her lower dentures (that were never correctly replaced) was unable to eat any solid food. In order to be served puree food at the senior center, a form required to be filled out by a physician that was delivered to her grandson which remained in his possession of more than a year and was never attended to. Her home diet then consisted only of oats, tea, and "Ensure," purchased with her funds. The home attendant only allowed her one bottle at a time in the refrigerator and when questioned told me the reason was because sometimes my mother opened two at a time. I obtained a new form from the Department of Human Services on Feb. 5. Two days later she was receiving her puree food.

When I was invited to my mother's 100th birthday party, I questioned where the funds would come from since whatever available savings she may have had were to satisfy her personal needs and necessities only. I was made to understand that the funds would come some from other sources. Through blind faith and confidence, she was accustomed to signing blanks checks for others to fill in and pay her debts.

I later discovered that between Aug. 3, 2007 and Aug. 8, 2007, \$10,209.83 of my mother's signed blank checks were filled out by someone else and paid "for my