

Ruck Towson Funeral Home, Inc.

Sophia Arabatzis Balis, D.D.S.

(April 03, 2018)

On April 3, 2018, Sophia Arabatzis Balis, D.D.S., beloved wife of the late George U. Balis, M.D.; deeply devoted mother to Theodora Balis and to Chrysanthy Balis and her wife Autumn Shurin, M.D.; dear sister of Demetrios Arabatzis and his wife Melpo and Ioanna Tzanoudakis and her husband Nikos. She is survived by her grandchildren Sophia Alexandra and Elianna Balis and George, Sophia and Nathaniel Shurin-Balis, along with her many loved nieces and nephews.



Friends may call at the family owned Ruck Towson Funeral Home, Inc. 1050 York Road (beltway exit 26) on Saturday, April 7th from 1 to 3 and 5 to 7 PM. Dr. Balis will lie in repose at St. Demetrios Greek Orthodox Church, 2504 Cub Hill Road on Tuesday, the 10th day of April from 2-2:30pm, at which time a Funeral Service will be held. Internment in church cemetery. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to charities focused on the well-being of children.

Born in 1930 to parents who came to Greece as refugees from Asia Minor, Dr. Balis was raised in Athens, the eldest of three children. During her formative years, she experienced the horrors of war, contributing to her perspective based on community welfare and human rights.

She graduated from the University of Athens, School of Dentistry 1958. And married her high school sweetheart. Together they came to the United States, where she enrolled at the University of Pittsburgh and worked as an Intern in Pedodontics and Oral Surgery at the Children's Hospital, Pittsburgh. From 1960-1961 she interned in Oral Surgery at the Western Psychiatric Institute and Clinic, and supervised senior dental students in Oral Surgery at the School of Dentistry, Pittsburgh. In 1963 she enrolled at the University of Toronto Dental School, Ontario, Canada and received her second Doctor of Dental Surgery degree in 1966. and that year was appointed Assistant Professor at the University of Maryland, School of Dentistry. She was an associate professor, lecturer and clinical supervisor of dental students until she retired in July 1991.

Dr. Balis was the first woman to be appointed to work on the clinic floor at UMDS, the first dental school in the world, (est. 1840). During her long career there, she opened the way for women in Dentistry and in Dental Hygiene, and introduced the study of Humanities in dental education. She was active in initiating programs to prevent caries in Baltimore's children through fluoride application. Due to Dr. Balis'

efforts, thousands of women have graduated as dentists and dental hygienists, and achieved academic appointments as faculty members at all levels of training. She also served as Dental Attending at Kernan Hospital, Supervising Faculty at UMDS, and as president of the Hellenic American Dental Society regional chapter. She presented at the VIII World Congress of Psychiatry, held in Athens, Greece as well as other international conferences. Dr. Balis received grants from the Maternal and Child Health Services Department. Her research focused on periodontal disease in Fetal Alcohol Syndrome and Down's Syndrome. Her lasting contribution to education is her paper on Humanities in Dental Education. She worked for Baltimore City Health Department and collaborated with the Maryland Department of Mental Health and Hygiene, and was a member of the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry. Dr. Balis continued teaching long after her retirement. She was the winner of the IJ Preneech Prize in Endodontics from the University of Toronto, School of Dentistry, was appointed Professor Emeritus of the University of Maryland Dental School in 2006, and inducted into the Maryland Women's Hall of Fame in 2016.

“Every child is a human being in the process of becoming, with an inherent dignity that we have a responsibility to lovingly protect.” — Sophia Arabatzis Balis, D.D.S.