Loreto Diaz Escudero was the eldest among six children of S. Hilario and Felisa Escudero, in a middle-class family whose house was home to many relatives from the province who were studying in Manila. Ate Luring, as her siblings called her, must have inherited the giving spirit from her parents for her heart was bigger than her means. She spared nothing in sharing whatever there was that she could give. Her generosity had no boundaries. She treated me, a child of her Dad’s other family, as she did her other siblings. She took care of my primary and secondary education and prepared me emotionally for life. She would often remind me that the attitude of "making do" in anything that has to be done is not acceptable; it always has to be done well. Mediocrity was certainly not in her genes and she made sure I did not have it as well.

Ate Luring was in a class all her own. She was a shining example to me of a modern woman who treasured her independence and used all her God-given talents to earn her keep. She was a schoolteacher who taught with a passion. But the four walls of her classroom must have felt too confined for a lady whose talent extended beyond teaching. She was Myn Taylor’s executive assistant when the two of them traveled to Tokyo in the sixties to negotiate for a Shiseido franchise in the Philippines. Shiseido was then not just a cosmetic line but an upscale beauty center, which they set up on Remedios Street in Malate. Many relatives found employment in Shiseido because of her. And when she decided to explore the lucrative field of insurance, she distinguished herself as a member of FGU’s Millionaires’ Club. She showed me that family came first when she gave up her career in insurance sales to be with her eldest daughter, Bettina, who lived in the US, and to care for her and her then soon-to-be born first child. It was a role she enjoyed
the most. She cared for the second child of Bettina until they were of school age and then she returned to Manila to resume working. This time she found employment with Rustan's Commercial.

She must have been in her late forties when she joined Rustan's but her age was not a factor in her hiring for she was smart and physically fit for her age. She asked me to apply in Rustan's along with many friends and neighbors whom she informed of job openings. I was hired by Rustan's as Ate Luring's assistant. Up close, she showed me how to be a professional manager, a position she earned in a very short period of time.

When she opened a coffee shop in the Ermita area, she made me manage the coffee shop. She delegated the day-to-day operations to me and the experience prepared me to open my own business years later.

Ate Luring was the grand dame of the Escudero clan; she was loved and respected. She was the pillar of her siblings and when she migrated to the United States—her visits were events for family reunions. Even at her late age, she would continue stuffing balikbayan boxes to send to her siblings who appreciated her thoughtfulness more than the things she would send. She had a gift of knowing what we needed and sent it on time.

Ate Luring treasured her family and friends. She placed relationships above all else. She regularly sent cards and letters to keep in touch with everyone. She visited them at every opportunity she had. She stayed connected to even friends in grade school and in college. She was to me a shining example of someone who is attached to anything that is not material. She would visit sick friends and relatives. When they died, she visited their graves and laid flowers at every chance she had. If there is a single word to describe her, it would be "selfless".

When she passed away, everyone in our family wanted to keep something she personally owned to keep her spirit alive within us. I inherited many of her hats and shared her passion for sporting them for daily wear. While others would be queasy about using a dead relative's personal belongings, we in the Escudero family were a sentimental lot and kept whatever she had left behind.

Ate Luring taught me well and I shall forever be grateful to her, my sister, my mentor.
Zenaida "Zeny" Escudero is a businesswoman who as a single mother did her best to bring up her two children after her husband passed away early in their union. One of her daughters is working with Rustans Commercial, thanks to the recommendation of Ate Luring.