

# Treasure Coast Hospice patient becomes citizen

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STUART — When Treasure Coast Hospice Social Worker Kelley Thompson first began working with her new patient Felix Taborda three months ago, she never dreamed that she would help facilitate one of his final wishes of becoming a U.S. citizen.

Last month, from the comfort of home, Taborda raised his right hand and recited the Naturalization Oath of Allegiance to the United States. He then said the words he's waited so long to say, "I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion; so help me God!"

With a small American flag in hand, he said, "I'm very proud!"

Taborda and his wife Laura fled the toxic political situation in Venezuela and — thanks to their sons' sponsorship — became residents of the U.S. The highly-educated couple, he with a masters and a Ph.D. and she with a masters, ultimately settled in Stuart a few years ago.

While Laura became a citizen in 2020, Felix Taborda encountered a few issues with his paperwork, causing a delay. Sadly, he was diagnosed with metastatic colon cancer last year.

Wanting to enjoy quality time with his family at home, he opted to decline radiation, chemo and other treatments that would leave him feeling even more ill. Although he generally feels well, ambulation is very difficult for him.

The Taborda family is grateful for the assistance from Treasure Coast Hospice. Without hesitation, Thompson stepped right in, made phone calls, arranged meetings and helped them navigate the process by securing the necessary documentation, including from a physician at Treasure Coast Hospice.

The administration of a citizenship exam and the Oath of Allegiance at home is a rare occurrence. Working hand-in-hand with Eugenio Rosado of the U.S. Citizen and Immigration Services USCIS, and further assistance



**Felix Taborda Romero and Kelley Thompson, a social worker with Treasure Coast Hospice.** PHOTOS BY MARYANN KETCHAM



from U.S. Congressman Mario Diaz-Balart, Thompson helped make it happen.

"I'm so happy this day is finally here," she said. Felix Taborda plans to spend his days enjoying his hobbies — writing, reading, engaging in technology and celebrating his newly found citizenship.

Laura Taborda expressed the family's gratitude, "Kelley, and her team at Treasure Coast Hospice, gave us hope. She is an angel!"

For more information about Treasure Coast Hospice, visit [Treasure-Health.org](http://Treasure-Health.org).

**Eugenio Rosado, supervisory immigration services officer, is with Laura Abitz de Taborda and Felix Taborda Romero.**