



Sharon Rae Cruz

February 19, 1936 - April 1, 2020

Sharon Rae Cruz, age 84, a precious, loving mom, grandma and sweet friend, passed away on April 1st, 2020, at home surrounded by her Houston family. Sharon was born on February 19, 1936 in Des Moines, Iowa to George Reid Turner and Florine Electa McDowell. She is survived by her son Richard 'Ricky', daughter-in-law Eleonora, grandchildren Jose Alejandro (his wife Andrea and their son Luca – Sharon's first great grand baby), Gabriel, Monica, and Santiago; daughter Rita, son-in-law Jeff, grandchildren David and Justin; and son Robert 'Bobby', daughter-in-law María Isabel, grandchildren Jose Javier and Andrea, cousin Joyce from Vancouver, cousins Rick† (wife Sue) from Iowa, and Ronnie (wife Sandy) from Missouri, and their respective families.

After graduating from Roosevelt High School, she studied Music at Drake University. Although she played the violin in the Des Moines Symphony Orchestra, she could also play the piano and the trumpet. Being an only child and having lost her mom when she was only 20, she learned responsibility at a young age when she took on a major role in caring for her dad and running their household. She held many jobs while still in high school and college, including secretary at her church and at Meredith Corporation, a publisher of the well-known Better Homes and Gardens magazines and books. Growing up without siblings also meant that she made some deep and meaningful friendships throughout her life. Her trustworthiness, bubblyness, readiness to

give a helping hand, and beautiful smiles were all traits her friends valued.

Sharon met her husband-to-be Carlos Cruz from Guatemala while he was a student at Iowa State University. After marriage, she and Carlos moved to Guatemala City, where they raised their three children. She became fluent in Spanish and grew to love the traditions, customs and people of Guatemala. She was thrilled to join a large, close-knit family that welcomed her with open arms. Entertaining and cooking for her new family brought her great joy; her in-laws, aunts, uncles and cousins were especially fond of her homemade pizzas and rhubarb pies. For a few years while in Guatemala, she was a high school teacher to students who won awards of excellence in English and Shorthand. The work she was most proud of was being a mom to her three children to whom she instilled love of music, good manners, work ethic, empathy, faith, kindness, and honesty. Sharing times with her children and their families was what brought her most joy. She adored her grandchildren whom she showered with love and affection. It was a priority for her to attend any graduations, plays or concert performances her grandchildren were part of. Since family was important to Sharon, she made it a point to stay connected with her dad and family in the U.S., as well as her cousin Joyce in Canada.

In 1980 Sharon moved to Houston where she was a volunteer for the Runaway Hotline, for which her soothing sweet voice provided advice and comfort to teens in crisis after running away from home. She also had a jewelry design business for which she supplied with many materials from Guatemala; as generous as she was, it was typical of her to give most of her creations away, so her family teased her that although there were many people enjoying her artwork in the form of necklaces, earrings, and bracelets, it ended up not being much of a business.

In early '83, she brought her daddy home from Des Moines to care for him, as

he was suffering from Alzheimer's, and took on this responsibility with much dedication and love, up until he passed away seven and a half years later. The last employed position Sharon held during her 60's and into her mid-70's was a devoted child care worker at St. Martin's Episcopal Church, where she put her maternal instinct into high gear caring for babies and where she didn't mind getting on the floor to play with the toddlers. Although she always had a special place in her heart for animals and babies, she was a people person and had much love to share with everyone. Sharon's bubblyness, infectious giggles, warmth, concern for others, sweet smiles, and compassionate heart, made you want to be around her. She could be funny, gentle, and strong, all at the same time. It was important for her to actively support starting musicians, such as the family's dear friend Walter Suhr, band owner and musician who thanked Sharon in his first CD for believing in him and trusting that he would succeed. Sharon's favorite hobbies included gardening, baking, reading, entertaining at home, playing card games, oil painting, and collecting music on cassette tapes and later on CD's. When visiting South Padre Island, she loved walking on the beach, watching sunsets, and listening to the variety of local live bands at the different nightclubs.

Sharon suffered from Alzheimer's disease, and she spent the last years of her life under the roof and daily care of her devoted daughter Rita. They sang in a choir together, attended the 'Gatherings', took neighborhood walks together and spent many years enjoying each other's company and love. Her sons Ricky, Bobby and her daughter in-laws Eleonora and Maria Isabel, as well as their children also took a part in caring for their mom / grandma during her 4-month stays in Guatemala in 2017 and 2018. Caring for their mom, was an opportunity for her children to show their gratitude for all the love and life lessons she gave them while growing up and beyond. Caring for Sharon while she had Alzheimer's had its challenging moments, but it was mostly a

blessing and a chance to build some precious memories. When she was still verbal, Sharon would often lovingly thank Rita for the care she was receiving. Rita is extremely thankful for her husband to have welcomed her mom Sharon into their home and for her sons David and Justin to have helped with making their grandma happy and cared for. Music was a very big part of her life, as it lifted her spirits and when she could no longer be conversational, music would enable her to sing, dance, and smile. She loved it when everyone was laughing at the dinner table. Alzheimer's robbed her memories and ability to take care of herself, but she never lost the ability to find joy in music and understand love, hugs, kisses, and humor. Sharon will be sorely missed and though she has passed into life eternal, she will live on in the good deeds she performed in life, and in the hearts and minds of those that cherish her memory. May her sweet soul rest in peace.

Due to the coronavirus restrictions, Sharon will be remembered in a private family ceremony and laid to rest in Forest Park Westheimer Cemetery on Monday, April 6th. A memorial funeral mass to celebrate her life with her friends and family will be at a later date. In lieu of flowers, the family would appreciate donations to the Alzheimer's Association or any organization associated with helping veterans, such as the Gary Sinise Foundation or Wounded Warrior Project.

Tribute Wall



“ Sharon Rae Cruz

October 08, 2023 at 10:52 AM



“ Sharon Rae Cruz

October 06, 2023 at 01:12 AM



“ Sharon Rae Cruz

October 05, 2023 at 09:45 AM



“ Sharon Rae Cruz

October 05, 2023 at 01:54 AM



“ 1 file added to the album Sharon and her dad



Rita Williams - June 18, 2020 at 11:56 PM

RW

“ 1 file added to the album *Sharon and her love of animals*



Rita Williams - June 18, 2020 at 11:52 PM

RW

“ 1 file added to the album *Gatherings bringing joy and friendship to people w/memory loss*



Rita Williams - May 27, 2020 at 01:44 AM

RW

“ 1 file added to the album *Sharon and her love of animals*



Rita Williams - May 16, 2020 at 06:40 PM

RW

“ This is part of a message included in her note of condolence and written by a dear volunteer, Sandra at one of the Gatherings:

"Dear Rita, What a gift it was to share a space with your lovely Mother when she attended MDUMC gatherings. Her dignity and beautiful personhood always shined through the dementia."

Rita Williams - May 16, 2020 at 06:18 PM

EF

Dear Rita, I wish Beth and I could have met your mother. What a beautiful and wonderful mother she must have been! What talent! What grace! And what love she had for her family, friends and even those whom she didn't know, but simply crossed their paths and enhanced their lives immensely. Thank you for letting us all share in your and your mother's life. We look forward to meeting her in Heaven. God bless her and God bless you and your family.

*Your cousins,
Ed and Beth Fendley*

Ed Fendley - June 15, 2020 at 10:50 PM

RW

Thank you dear cousins "Father" Ed and Beth. Yes, I've thought many times about how grand and sweet that meeting will be with her when that time comes.

Rita Williams - June 18, 2020 at 11:50 PM

RW

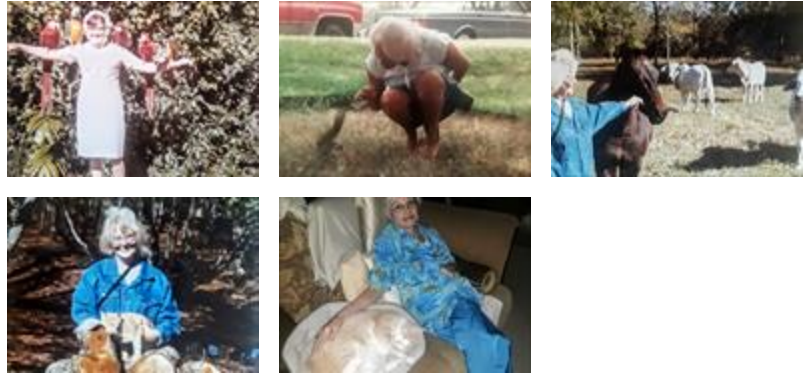
“ 2 files added to the album *Get-togethers and celebrations with family and friends*



Rita Williams - May 14, 2020 at 06:47 PM

RW

“ 5 files added to the album *Sharon and her love of animals*



Rita Williams - May 14, 2020 at 05:50 PM



“ 188 files added to the album *Life Tributes*



Dettling Funeral Home - May 14, 2020 at 05:42 PM

RW

“ 14 files added to the album *Gatherings bringing joy and friendship to people w/memory loss*



Rita Williams - May 14, 2020 at 05:34 PM

RW

“ 38 files added to the album *Get-togethers and celebrations with family and friends*



Rita Williams - May 12, 2020 at 06:56 PM

RW

“ 1 file added to the album *Sharon as a child, teen, and young woman*



Rita Williams - May 12, 2020 at 04:33 PM

RW

“ 25 files added to the album *Happy & silly moments*



Rita Williams - May 12, 2020 at 04:15 PM

RW

“ From dear friends Eloyda and Fred who lived directly above Sharon's condominium unit in the 1980's:

"Dear Rita and family,

Please accept our sincerest condolences on the passing of your Mom, Señora Sharon. We have the fondest and happiest memories of her, giving back more than 35 years. She was always the sweetest and most cheerful person, and we always loved to be with her. She would brighten up our spirits any time we saw her. We have cherished those memories, during recent years when she was ill. While we are sad at her passing, those lovely memories will be with us always. We are thankful that she is now resting in the peace of the Lord.

*With Love,
Eloyda and Fred"*

Rita Williams - May 05, 2020 at 05:06 PM

RW

“ 1 file added to the album *Grandma and her dear grandchildren*



Rita Williams - May 01, 2020 at 06:14 PM

ME

“ Dear Rita,

I am a volunteer at St. Cecilia's Gathering Place. I am sorry to learn of your mother's passing. I witnessed such an incredibly strong and loving bond between you and your mom. Through your incredible dedication and tenderness toward her, I know she was an amazing and loving mother. I enjoyed reading about her; truly a beautiful person who lived a full and interesting life.

May she rest in peace. God bless you and your family.

Mary Beth Erfert

Mary Beth Erfert - May 01, 2020 at 04:30 PM

RW

“ 4 files added to the album Sharon and her dad



Rita Williams - May 01, 2020 at 04:27 PM

RW

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Rita Williams - May 01, 2020 at 03:46 AM

RW

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Rita Williams - May 01, 2020 at 03:36 AM

RW

These were refresher classes she took when she was 45, once she moved to Houston.

Rita Williams - May 01, 2020 at 03:37 AM

RW

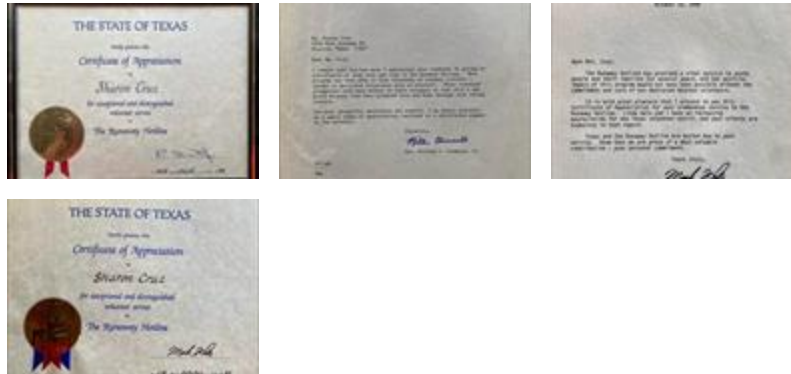
“ 1 file added to the album Videos



Rita Williams - May 01, 2020 at 02:35 AM

RW

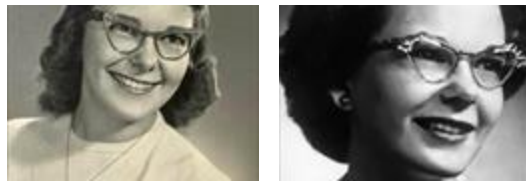
“ 4 files added to the album *Recognition letters and certificates (Runaway Hotline)*



Rita Williams - April 29, 2020 at 02:36 AM

RW

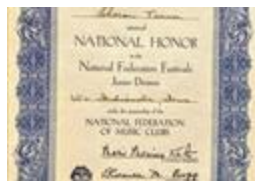
“ 2 files added to the album *Sharon as a child, teen, and young woman*



Rita Williams - April 29, 2020 at 12:38 AM

RW

“ 1 file added to the album *Sharon playing her musical instruments*



Rita Williams - April 28, 2020 at 03:10 PM

RW

“ 7 files added to the album Sharon falling in love and marriage



Rita Williams - April 28, 2020 at 02:20 PM

RW

“ 1 file added to the album Grandma and her dear grandchildren



Rita Williams - April 28, 2020 at 02:05 PM

RW

“ 3 files added to the album Sharon as a child, teen, and young woman



Rita Williams - April 28, 2020 at 04:37 AM

RW

“ 3 files added to the album *Grandma and her dear grandchildren*



Rita Williams - April 28, 2020 at 04:03 AM

RW

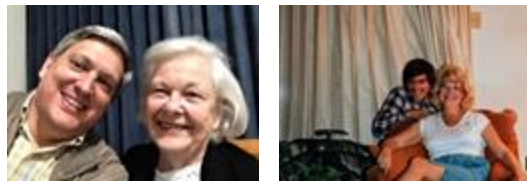
“ 14 files added to the album *Sharon and her kids (Ricky, Rita, and Bobby)*



Rita Williams - April 28, 2020 at 01:32 AM

RW

“ 2 files added to the album *Sharon and her kids (Ricky, Rita, and Bobby)*



Rita Williams - April 27, 2020 at 11:40 PM

RW

“ 1 file added to the album *Videos*



Rita Williams - April 26, 2020 at 03:34 AM

RW

“ 2 files added to the album *Grandma and her dear grandchildren*



Rita Williams - April 26, 2020 at 03:21 AM

RW

“ 1 file added to the album *Sharon and her kids (Ricky, Rita, and Bobby)*



Rita Williams - April 26, 2020 at 02:46 AM

RW

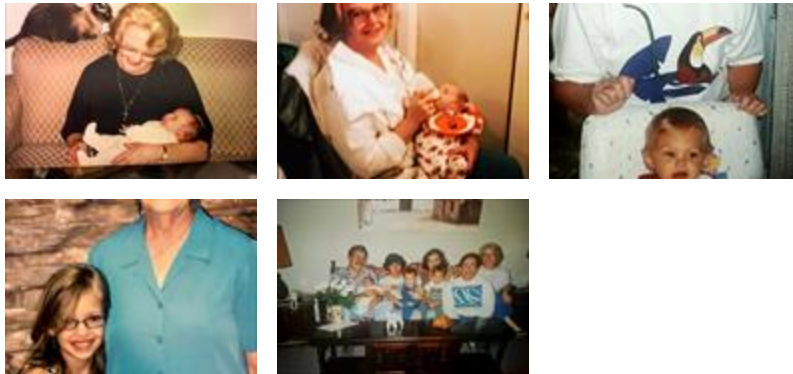
“ 3 files added to the album Videos



Rita Williams - April 26, 2020 at 01:45 AM

RW

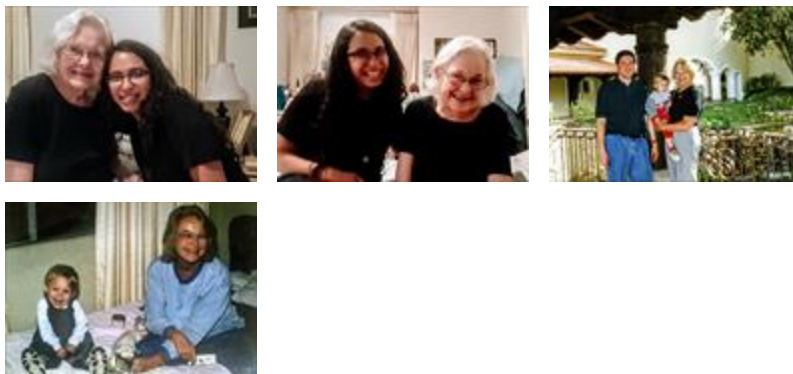
“ 5 files added to the album Grandma and her dear grandchildren



Rita Williams - April 24, 2020 at 05:11 PM

RW

“ 4 files added to the album Grandma and her dear grandchildren



Rita Williams - April 24, 2020 at 04:12 AM

RW

“ 14 files added to the album Sharon and her kids (Ricky, Rita, and Bobby)



Rita Williams - April 17, 2020 at 05:23 AM

RW

“ 18 files added to the album Grandma and her dear grandchildren



Rita Williams - April 17, 2020 at 05:14 AM

RW

“ 12 files added to the album *Grandma and her dear grandchildren*



Rita Williams - April 17, 2020 at 05:14 AM

RW

“ 10 files added to the album *Sharon as a child, teen, and young woman*



Rita Williams - April 17, 2020 at 03:32 AM

RW

“ 4 files added to the album Sharon playing her musical instruments



Rita Williams - April 17, 2020 at 12:59 AM

RW

“ 7 files added to the album Sharon falling in love and marriage



Rita Williams - April 17, 2020 at 12:46 AM

RW

“ 2 files added to the album Memories Album



Rita Williams - April 15, 2020 at 03:15 PM

LD

“ Dear Rita, I was so very saddened to hear of your mom's passing. I will always remember her as being kind and gentle. She loved the gatherings just like my mom did. Please now that my thoughts and prayers are with you and your family during this difficult time of sorrow. Take Care. Hugs and all my love. Laurie Dehnert



Laurie Dehnert - April 10, 2020 at 07:06 PM

JP

“ Lovingly remembering my Cousin, Sharon, at this sad time. Due to distance, we did not get together that often, but am so glad we were able to do so a few times. I treasure the memories & my heart goes out to Rita, Bobby & Ricky & their families. Love to all, Joyce💕💕

Joyce Pugsley - April 09, 2020 at 12:26 PM



“ Sympathy Fruits Abound was purchased for the family of Sharon Rae Cruz.



April 08, 2020 at 12:21 PM



“ With Our Deepest Sympathy Gift Basket was purchased for the family of Sharon Rae Cruz.



April 08, 2020 at 12:09 PM

RW

“ From her niece Gloria ('Chiqui') in Guatemala written on her 83rd birthday:

Feb. 19, 2019

Querida Sharon!

Deseamos que haya celebrado como se merece este nuevo cumpleaños que la hace más sabia.

Usted forma parte de lindos y divertidos recuerdos de infancia de mi hermana y míos. Gracias por compartir tanto cariño y creatividad con tantos proyectos con los cuales nos mantenía entretenidos, así como por traer al mundo a los tres primeros sobrinos que hemos querido tanto.

Gracias también por el cariño hacia Lilo y mi mamá. Hay cosas que no tienen precio.

Un fuerte abrazo e infinitas bendiciones!

Chiqui

Rita Williams - April 08, 2020 at 10:50 AM

RW

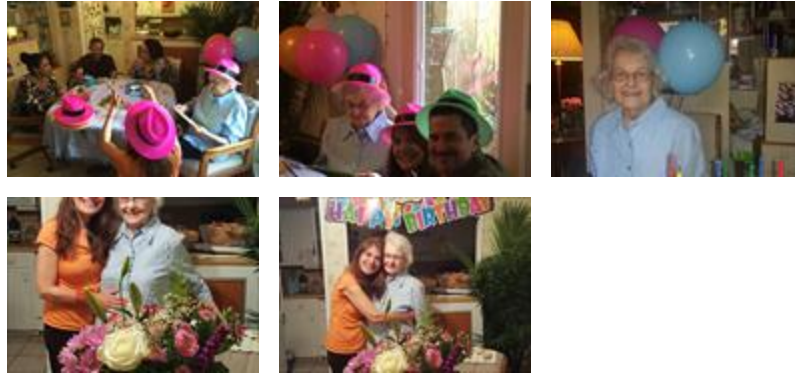
“ 1 file added to the album Videos



Rita Williams - April 08, 2020 at 12:29 AM

RW

“ 6 files added to the album *Sharon's 80th B-Day Party*



Rita Williams - April 07, 2020 at 08:27 PM

RW

“ 1 file added to the album *Bobby's 50th*



Rita Williams - April 07, 2020 at 05:43 PM

WS

“Ricky, Rita, Bobby and I knew each other from Valle Verde high-school in Guatemala. Because we were not in the same grade we were only acquaintances in our adolescent years. But when I moved to Houston in 1985, Rita and Sharon started inviting me to to their home for Thanksgiving and other events. The warmth with which they welcomed me, made the feelings of friendship develop more into a feeling of being adopted into the family. At Sharon's home, I had a first taste of a lovely German wine called "Gewurtztraminer". Loved the wine and the laughs and great time that came with it. I liked her pecan pie so much, that on a couple of occasions I had to end my Thanksgiving meal with Pepto-Bismol to soothe my over-indulgence.

Sharon was enthusiastic and supportive about my music career and Rita and Jeff were among the few guests that came to my graduation ceremony. She was in love with music and one of her passions was to listen to music and grow her collection. She loved animals (her cats in particular) and was always a sharp-dresser. Bien coqueta. She was always color coordinated and had great taste in clothes.

For many years, it became a tradition for me to spend Thanksgiving and sometimes Christmas at their home. I have fond memories of birthday celebrations as well.

My own mom was always thankful to know I had friends like that in Houston.

Thank you Sharon for welcoming me so kindly into your family!



Walter Suhr - April 06, 2020 at 12:40 AM

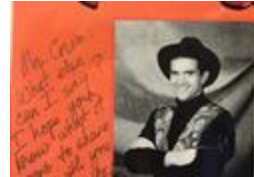
RW

Sharon and dear friend Walter

Rita Williams - May 01, 2020 at 03:24 AM

WS

“ 13 files added to the album *Walter's photos of Sharon*



Walter Suhr - April 06, 2020 at 12:17 AM



“ 2 files added to the tribute wall



Ricky Cruz - April 06, 2020 at 12:07 AM



“ 6 files added to the tribute wall



Ricky Cruz - April 06, 2020 at 12:01 AM

JE

“ *En nuestros corazones por siempre Sharon. Gracias por tanto cariño.*



Julia Esther - April 05, 2020 at 09:55 PM

RC

“ *She loved to spend quality time with her family.*



Robert Cruz - April 05, 2020 at 06:32 PM

RC

“ Always loved to see my Mom smile.



Robert Cruz - April 05, 2020 at 06:24 PM

RW

Bobby and mama - 2015

Rita Williams - May 01, 2020 at 03:26 AM

RW

Handsome Bobby and beautiful mama

Rita Williams - May 01, 2020 at 03:52 AM

RW

“ 4 files added to the album Memories Album



Rita Williams - April 05, 2020 at 04:59 PM

RW

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Rita Williams - April 05, 2020 at 03:01 PM

RW

February 2019 during Ricky & Bobby's visit from Guatemala. Enjoying the outdoors in Coldspring, TX

Rita Williams - April 05, 2020 at 05:41 PM

JE

Me encanta esta foto

Julia Esther - April 05, 2020 at 10:04 PM

RW

Ricky, mama, Rita, and Bobby. Her family was what made her happiest. My brothers and I are filled with gratitude for having had such a loving, fun, and sweet mom.

Rita Williams - May 01, 2020 at 03:51 AM