



## Gerri Russo

April 1, 2010

Gerri Russo 83 died peacefully on April 1, 2010 after a long battle with cancer.

Gerri was born in Monte Vista, CO and spent her childhood in Costilla, NM where her family tree had roots dating back to early Spanish settlers in the New Mexico area. Her family moved to Monte Vista where she graduated and later married Curtis Cornelius and had two children. For several years her family lived in central California in the King City area returning to Monte Vista in 1959 where she worked for the Dept. of Agriculture and Adam State College. In the late 60 s she moved to Vista, California where she worked for Palomar College and as an independent caregiver. She was predeceased by three husbands. Earlier this year she moved to Virginia to live with her daughter and son-in-law.

As a girl she with her two sisters played the accordion as a three-piece combo dressed in Spanish costumes and in later years she played the organ in her home. Her rich Spanish heritage and western influence could be seen in her art work, decor and cooking. Gerri s artistic talents included drawings, pressed flowers, and needlework. Her artistry was best demonstrated in her inlaid wood pictures.

Gerri had a spirit of adventure, loved travel and family gatherings. Most of all she loved dancing and was a member of Vista Elks, Tailfeathers, Vista

Women s Club and Catholic Widow and Widowers in the Vista and Oceanside area.

She is survived by her son Sonney Cornelius Connie of Valley Center and daughter Diane Ellis Buddy of VA Beach, VA. She is also survived by one sister Marian Ambrose Ron of Morehead City, NC and her brother James Meyer Linda of Bastrop, TX. She is also survived by eight Russo step-children and many nieces and nephews.

A private memorial will be held at a later date. In lieu of flowers please consider making a donation to Sentara Hospice.

Cardinals at Her Window

It is with heavy hearts that we gather to memorialize the passing of my mother 'Geri'.

While in California last fall I spent what I thought to be quality time with Mom as we tackled washing curtains, cleaning the patio, and finishing craft projects. Those tasks proved to be important work as we later prepared and packed for her move to VA. Even if for just a little while she was distracted from her disease and focused on moving into the next chapter of her life. Through it all, she never lost her playfulness and ability to have a good laugh or spirit of adventure. She would wake up and say what s on the agenda today - she knew there would always be an agenda. It was sad for her to leave her home, friends and familiar surroundings. A tear came to her eye as we flew over Mission Bay and lost sight of Southern California from the plane. She was brave and strong even though she knew this was her final chapter.

Mom loved to go .so as much as possible we went to the movies, to dinner and took drives. She took up beading, continued to crochet and pressed

winter flowers and would wake up to say what s on the agenda today we made sure there was an agenda. Until one day she could no longer fix her wig or hold her coffee cup, it was then that I knew no matter how much she wanted to see the Cardinals at her window and spring in full bloom, no matter how much she wanted to spend her 84th birthday with family, no matter how much she wanted to live, her body was failing her and her spiritual journey was to begin.

These last few months made it possible for us to enjoy special moments that would have otherwise been missed and to express our love for one another. We took time to reacquaint ourselves with little stories from years that had past but mostly she chose to stay in the moment. I would not trade spending this time with my mother for anything in this world.

With each death, we are reborn with a new appreciation for the simple things in life and how important friends and family are who help us through tough times. Our lives are but a speck of sand passing through a huge hour glass of time - if not for the people around us it would all become insignificant.

I am thankful that Sonny and Connie were there to help Mother all these years and grateful for the kindness of her caregivers, friends and neighbors. Bud and I are especially blessed with friends who without a second thought extended their help to us these past months.

I am thankful that mother's struggle is over but I miss her in my life. Mother is at peace now and lifted from all of life s burdens and I am thankful she lived a full life. She is here with us in spirit and in our hearts.

# Tribute Wall



“ I?m so thankful for Geri?s move to Ca. that brought Sonney into my life, introducing me to Southwest décor that fills our home and yard, allowing me to photo family in real and unique settings. Hope Geri and my dad continue to share their birthdays.##imported-begin##Connie##imported-end##

April 07, 2010 at 12:00 AM



“ Well, Mother here we are at another bend in the road. I know you wanted to see your 84th, but rest in peace knowing you showed us all what real courage is. You faced life with purpose, dedication, & curiosity. I will always be thankful you taught us that hard work, focus, & honesty will help us be good people. I enjoyed the stories about our childhood. Diane & I were a real handful. You will always be in my dreams & my heart. Victor is waiting for you on the dance floor. Love Sonney##imported-begin##sonney##imported-end##

April 07, 2010 at 12:00 AM



“ I was Gerri's favorite Russo. As all the Russo family remembers - this is what each of said at Dad's funeral - that we were his favorite. Gerri made us all feel special and seemed so proud that she had 10 children! Though infrequent, I cherished the visits I made to see Dad and Gerri and saw how happy they were. My last visit was about 4 years ago, and, as usual, Gerri was looking ever lovely and gracious, despite her health. I have two of Gerri's art pieces that I treasure, besides the lovely pressed flower cards. Thank you to Sonny, Connie, Diane and Buddy for sharing your Mom with us. She was a very special lady.##imported-begin##Marilyn Russo##imported-end##

April 07, 2010 at 12:00 AM



“ Dear Diane and Family,  
No words can express the loss of your mom. Our thoughts and prayers go out to you. Just know we are thinking of you. We know you will miss her, but your special memories will help your hearts to heal each and every day.

With Love and Sympathy,  
Ray and Colette Skeff##imported-begin##COLETTE  
SKEFF##imported-end##

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April 06, 2010 at 12:00 AM



“ Sonney, Connie and Family!  
Our thoughts and prayers are with you at this time of you loss of your Mother.  
We know she was a great person because she has left wonderful legacies.

Love,  
Pam & Steve##imported-begin##Steve & Pam Thomas##imported-end##

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April 05, 2010 at 12:00 AM



“ What a vivacious woman and wonderful Mother!  
Our best thoughts - and prayers - are with you.##imported-begin##Maggie and Frank Henderson##imported-end##

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April 05, 2010 at 12:00 AM



“ Aunt Diane and family,

*You and your family are in our thoughts and prayers. When I met your mom several years so, I found that she is a very sweet and caring woman with a smile on her face, which we see all of that in you. Please know that if you need anything, we are here for you.##imported-begin##Eric and Wendy Palmer##imported-end##*

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April 05, 2010 at 12:00 AM



“ I want to thank you Aunt Geri for being part of my life and for being a perfect example of strength. I will always remember your awesome talent as an artist. Some of your art is display in my home and is something I will always consider a family heirloom. I will remember your wit and zest for life. I love you and miss you.##imported-begin##Jerri Oreson##imported-end##

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April 05, 2010 at 12:00 AM



“ I am thankful for being able to visit my aunt Geri in Feb of 2006. She cooked a great dinner and told stories of my Dad when he was a boy. We shared more than a few laughs. Thanks for the memories. Love Larry##imported-begin##Larry Meyer##imported-end##

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April 05, 2010 at 12:00 AM



“ Geri holds a very special place in our lives. Always ready with a chuckle or sage advice, she had a way about her that made you feel welcomed and loved.

Early into her relationship with Dad, then 2-year old Travis emerged from her bedroom wearing one of her wigs! I was mortified I didn't even know that she wore a wig!!. Not so Geri, she roared with laughter.

She was full of mirth and zingers: she loved to shock people by announcing that she had 10 children.

When we visited on New Year's Day, Geri was looking very regal, holding court wearing her red pantsuit and walking with her cane only when Sonny was looking. ...this is the picture that we will treasure always.

Thank you Geri, for the joy that you have given to all of us.##imported-begin##Diana and Eric Lee##imported-end##

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April 05, 2010 at 12:00 AM



“ Mom, Bud and I love and miss you very much. You enriched our lives more than you will ever know. Thank you for being my Mom and sharing your life with us.##imported-begin##Diane Ellis##imported-end##

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April 04, 2010 at 12:00 AM



“ "Momma Russo" is what you always said with a giggle when we spoke. Your subtle, sharp sense of humor always kept us on our toes. Its overwhelming to integrate and adjust to such a large, sometimes encompassing family, yet you managed to do so with grace and humor. You are loved and will be missed by all of us. I can't ever thank you for making our dad's last years so happy.##imported-begin##Gigi & Dan Welch##imported-end##

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April 03, 2010 at 12:00 AM



“ We so much appreciate the joy of knowing you and the happiness you shared with Dad Russo. We especially enjoyed your gifts of personally made cards. You enriched the lives of many folk. Many years ago you gifted us with 2 signed pen and ink renderings of the Russo family members and wood laminate pictures which are displayed in our home. Yes ..your life blessed many..##imported-begin##Loretta & Ed ##imported-end##

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April 02, 2010 at 12:00 AM



“ Geri - you brought so much spirit and spunk to life. I am so grateful you and our Dad had a chance to share love and adventures together.

Your zest, sense of humor and creative expression will be missed by me as you have been a source of inspiration since I've known you.

May angels escort you to your new home where you can kick up your heels and go to as many dances as you want. Hold on Heaven - here she comes...

with great love, respect and gratitude for sharing so much of yourself,

Luna##imported-begin##luna russo##imported-end##

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April 02, 2010 at 12:00 AM



“ Mom, we really loved having you with us the last two months. We are sure going to miss you. Muffy is running around looking for her Grand Ma. We love and miss you. Bud & Diane##imported-begin##Buddy & Diane Ellis##imported-end##

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April 02, 2010 at 12:00 AM