



Obituary

Born: Wednesday, December 29, 1948

Died: Friday, October 19, 2012

Paula Anne Gawne, (nee Stevens) age 63, a resident of Pasadena for 18 years, and formerly of Texas and numerous other places, died of a sudden heart attack on October 19, 2012 at her home.

She was born on December 29, 1948, in Houston, TX, to the late Thelma Ruth and Henry Grady Stevens, Jr. After graduating from Denton High School in Denton TX, in 1967, she took classes at North Texas State University in Denton for a year before going to work at Parkland Hospital in Dallas. Paula also treasured her early education at Saint Paul's Catholic School in Mission TX, where she learned many valuable life lessons from Sister Mary Acquinas, Sister Mary Donna, and the other nuns who made such a strong impression. Additionally, she treasured the memory of Father Dan Laney, the pastor of St. Paul's, who was another lifelong influence on her for kindness, goodness, mercy, and a commitment to social justice.

Following her marriage in 1972, Paula was seldom employed outside her home. She worked briefly as a telemarketer in the late 80s, in Denton TX. Prior to her marriage, Paula grew up in the hospitals where both her parents worked and that exposure brought her employment as a nurses aide. She learned nursing from her mother, Thelma R. Stevens R.N., and the many other nurses her mother supervised.

As the wife of a US Marine, Paula spent many years following her husband Bill around to various posts of the Corps. Though she never served in uniform herself, she was deeply conscious of her role as a Marine NCO's wife.

Paula was a dedicated knitter. She also practiced other fiber arts including crochet, embroidery, cross-stitch, other sorts of decorative needle work, and the maintenance and mending of her family's clothes. She participated in the Maryland Renaissance Festival for many years, both as an attendee and an employee. A lifelong student of history, Paula was an avid reader who studied history of all sorts. She had grown up with, and knew deeply, the stories of her ancestors and how they had come to Texas from Tennessee, Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Virginia, and North Carolina. She held a deep and abiding love for Texas, though she often took issue with Texas politics. She was a fan of the late Molly Ivins, and shared many of Ms. Molly's views.

Along with her parents, she is preceded in death by her mother and father in law: Maureen E. and Charles Earl Gawne, and her son in law Dov Brown.

Service Summary

Visitation

3:00 PM to 5:00 PM, Thu Oct 25, 2012

7:00 PM to 9:00 PM, Thu Oct 25, 2012

G. J. Gonce Funeral Home, P.A.

169 Riviera Drive

Pasadena, MD 21122

Funeral Service

1:00 PM Fri Oct 26, 2012

G. J. Gonce Funeral Home, P.A.

169 Riviera Drive

Pasadena, MD 21122

She is survived by her beloved husband of 40 years: William Charles Gawne; her two daughters: Grace Brown, of Jessup, and Amanda Armbruster, of Pasadena; two granddaughters: Bethany Burke, of Pasadena, and Rhiannon Armbruster, of Santa Monica, CA; her brother H. G. "Steve" Stevens and his wife Diane, of Denton, TX; nephew H. G. "Robby" Stevens, of Ft. Worth, TX; four brothers-in-law: James M. Gawne, Phoenix AZ, Pierce J. Gawne, Denton TX, Sean M. Gawne, Mission Viejo CA, Patrick B. Gawne, Tucson AZ; four sisters-in-law: Agnes C. Gawne-Hamill, Seattle WA, Maureen A. Wilson, Avondale AZ, Kathleen E. Gawne, Red Rock, AZ, Sheila M. Jones, Fayetteville AR; and her lifelong friend who grew up with her as a sister: Sharon Richert of Lewisville TX.

Family and friends are invited to visit at the Gregory J. Gonce Funeral Home, PA, 169 Riviera Drive, Pasadena, on Thursday from 3 to 5 and 7 to 9 PM. Her funeral service will commence on Friday at 1 PM at the funeral home, with burial to follow in Maryland Veterans Cemetery, Crownsville. Those who wish may contribute to Heifer International at www.heifer.org and feel free to express your condolences here as well.

From her husband:

Paula was born on the 29th of December, 1948, in Houston, Texas. Her parents were in town for the holidays. Her mother, Thelma, liked to tell how she was holding the only straight flush she ever got when her water broke. After that entry into the world, Paula grew up with her parents in East Texas, mostly around Tyler and Jacksonville, but also in the South Texas valley town of Mission where she started school, until her dad got a job at North Texas State University in Denton. It was in Denton that Paula spent most of her school years, graduating from Denton High School in 1967. She spent two semesters at North Texas before going to work as a nursing aide at Parkland Hospital in Dallas. I met her in the summer of 1972, when she came to Tucson. She worked at the Handmaker Jewish nursing home, doing the nurses aide thing, and we walked all over the Old Pueblo talking about everything under the sun. Somewhere around early August we realized that we'd become quite attached to each other, even though she was five years older than me. We were married on the 21st of November, 1972, at St. David's Episcopal Church in Denton, in a very small ceremony with just her parents and a few friends present. For the next eight years, she followed me around the country as the US Marine Corps sent me higher and yon. Our first child, Marianne, was born at Oceanside Community Hospital, in California near Camp Pendleton, in 1974. Our second child, Amanda, was born at Camp Pendleton's base hospital in 1980. In 1981 I left active duty and we moved to Denton TX where I spent the remainder of the decade working full time and going to

school at North Texas. She was mother to my growing children, and wife to me, and friend to all who knew her during this time. She loved to be the woman who sat at the table in the kitchen, making people welcome there. During the years I was the resident observer at the North Texas astronomical observatory she was always welcoming toward the students who worked for me, often staying up late to make tea or hot chocolate for them before they drove home at the end of a night's teaching under the stars. In January of 1991 we moved to Maryland when I took a job at the Space Telescope Science Institute. She made our home in Parkville a welcoming place for the neighborhood kids at that time, and since we moved to our current home in Pasadena it's been much the same. "Miss Paula" was always the one our daughters' friends would come to for tea and sympathy. Of course there are a thousand stories I'll think of, but that's pretty much the gist of it. She's been the keeper of my home and my heart for forty years now. This morning, when I woke up, I found her laying on the floor beside the bed. It seems she just rolled out and was laying there on the floor. She was warm to the touch, but unresponsive. I called 911, the paramedics came. No breath. No heartbeat. They did all they could, but she was pronounced dead at the hospital. All who knew her knew she was a daughter of Texas. Her people have lived there a long time. In marrying her, I came to know and love Texas in ways I might never have otherwise. Maybe Molly Ivins will welcome her to whatever's next in store. -- Bill