



Sharon Gonzales

April 13, 1945 - November 28, 2025

Sharon Lucille Engle Gonzales was born on April 13, 1945, in Abilene, Kansas, and passed away on November 28, 2025, held close by her family. She shared a remarkable love story with her husband of 57 years, Richard Gonzales—a leather-jacketed city boy who swept the farm girl off her feet. Together, they were affectionately known as "Salt and Pepper," Richard's playful name for the duo whose opposites balanced each other beautifully. Their home was filled with the love (and occasional chaos) of three children—Brian Gonzales, Jill Gonzalez-Bravo (Miguel), and Joy Fry (Jason)—and the grandchildren who brought Sharon such delight Rachel, Eden, Antonio, Keller, Lilly, Elena, Eva, and Isabel. Sharon was preceded in death by her parents, Raymond and Pauline Engle, and her siblings Elaine Derrick, Duane Engle, and Albert Engle.

Compassion guided every chapter of Sharon's life. After graduating from Miltonvale Christian High School in 1963, she earned her nursing diploma from Stormont School of Nursing in 1965, a BSN from Pittsburg State University, and an MSN from the University of Kansas. Sharon cared for countless relatives through illness and at life's end, offering dignity to each. When Parkinson's Disease arrived, her children returned that devotion. Even as symptoms progressed, Sharon's voice remained—singing hymns throughout her final years, every word remembered—a gift to those caring for her until just days before heaven called her home.

Beyond her family, Sharon distinguished herself as a nurse whose career spanned from bedside care to serving as Vice President and Chief Nursing Officer. She shaped the nursing profession as an inspiring administrator, professor, and speaker, and was honored as Oklahoma Wesleyan University's Outstanding Alumnus. Sharon believed in the "intelligent caring" of nursing, an approach grounded in genuine relationships, tender care, and representing Christ in every interaction. A strategic builder of cultures rooted in forgiveness and grace, she reminded colleagues and graduates alike, "We all need each other. Invest in the success of others—develop a culture of we-ness." She anchored this belief in Ecclesiastes 4:10, teaching that "a threefold cord is not easily broken."

A strong advocate for women in leadership, Sharon navigated the contradictions of her era with wit and courage, charting new territory while also perfecting casseroles and bran muffins, proving that ambition and motherhood were not opposites but a juggling act she performed with remarkable flair.

And what flair she had. Sharon treated shopping like a sport, with an uncanny ability to find the perfect gift, perfect outfit, and perfect deal. Yet beneath that polished exterior was a woman wonderfully silly and joy-filled. Sharon was a captivating storyteller whose humor—often at her own expense—brought laughter so deep it made faces ache.

Sharon's steadfast faith in Jesus Christ shaped every aspect of her life. She often spoke of setbacks as blessings that redirected her path, trusting rather than striving, living by her cherished conviction 'When I gave it to the Lord, He put me where He wanted me... divine leading and intervention!' Sharon's presence was a gift to all who knew her. Her family finds comfort knowing that her lifelong encouragement to 'go light the world with the love of Jesus' will

continue to shine brightly through the countless lives she touched.

Sharon leaves behind a family who adored her and a legacy of faith, service, humor, and love that will endure for generations.

Sharon will be privately interred in Mount Hope Cemetery in Topeka, Kansas, near the Singing Tower—a location her family found fitting.

Visitation will be 9:30 to 11 a.m. Saturday, January 10, 2026, at Grace Point Church, 5400 SW Huntoon Street, Topeka KS 66604, where Celebration of Sharon's Life will begin at 11 a.m.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to Oklahoma Wesleyan University for the Sharon Gonzales Nursing Scholarship sent in care of Kevin Brennan Family Funeral Home, 2801 SW Urish Road, Topeka KS 66614, or online at <http://www.okwu.edu/give>.

Previous Events

Visitation

JAN 10. 9:30 AM - 11:00 AM (CT)

Grace Point Church
5400 SW Huntoon Street
Topeka, KS 66604

Celebration

JAN 10. 11:00 AM (CT)

Grace Point Church
5400 SW Huntoon Street
Topeka, KS 66604

Tribute Wall

CL

“ Dear Rich and Family,
I was so sorry to hear of Sharon's passing. I met her in Wichita at various nursing leadership meetings and then became close friends with her when she started at the VA. She was so much fun to be around and inspiring as a nursing leader. Linda Guhr and I visited you when you moved to Coffeyville and we came back as a surprise for her retirement celebration. I have a cherished nursing pin that she gave me once - whenever I wear it, I still get compliments. Sharon loved God and her family. I was truly blessed to have her as a friend! I wonder what Christmas in Heaven is like?

Crystal Lindaman

Crystal Lindaman - December 18, 2025 at 11:57 AM



Thank you. I know her first Christmas in heaven was amazing I bet. Especially bc she could walk 💜👍

Joy Gonzales Fry - February 01 at 05:52 PM

SM

“ I am so sorry to read of Sharon's passing. My parents, Larry and Grayce Powell, were good friends of Richard and Sharon while we lived in Pittsburg. I have several photos of us at our cabin in Oklahoma, a few in Pittsburg, and many mental images of her making authentic meals for us to try. You taught us how to make blanket forts in your living room. I have many other fond childhood memories of your entire family, too numerous to share. You all came across my mind and I happened to search you up to see where you all ended up. When this popped up it saddened me. My prayers are with you all.

Stephanie (Powell) Moore - December 07, 2025 at 08:57 AM



How wonderful to hear from you! So thankful for your family! I have wonderful memories of the cabin and many family gatherings! I'm on FB and would love an update on your family. My dad and I were just going through pictures and found several with your family.

Jill Gonzalez-Bravo - December 09, 2025 at 10:09 AM

MA

“ *Mary purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Sharon Gonzales.*



Mary - December 04, 2025 at 04:01 PM

VH

“ *Our hearts are saddened to hear of Sharon's passing but know she's in the arms of the King and what comfort that is to her family. She was a beautiful woman and always had a hug for me when I saw her! My prayers for Richard and her family to be blessed by the wonderful memories you cherish.*

Vicki Haverkamp - December 02, 2025 at 06:29 PM

JF

Thank you. 🍷 It's so fun that Kari lives in Andover. The world is so small.

Joy Fry - December 09, 2025 at 07:54 PM

SP

“ Hello Richard,

I am sorry to hear about your wife. You and your family are in my prayers.

*Your friend,
Steve Peavler*

Steve Peavler - December 02, 2025 at 01:50 PM

JF

□

Joy Fry - December 09, 2025 at 07:55 PM

PE

“ *I've known Sharon since our VA days and later at St Francis. She was my friend, colleague, and mentor, always encouraging me in my professional goals. I loved how she lived her Christian beliefs. She fought the good fight, she finished the race, she kept the faith.*

Paula N Ellis - December 02, 2025 at 12:59 PM

JF

Thank you for sharing. Love hearing about her impact on others □

Joy Fry - December 09, 2025 at 07:56 PM

RC

“ *Roger and Rhonda Clore purchased the Simply E legant Spathiphyllum for the family of Sharon Gonzales.*



Roger and Rhonda Clore - December 01, 2025 at 08:14 PM

SA

“ Sharon Austin lit a candle in memory of Sharon Gonzales



Sharon Austin - December 01, 2025 at 05:28 PM



Joy Gonzales Fry - February 01 at 05:53 PM

SA

“ A remarkable, selfless, dedicated, loving woman who exemplified to all the family what professionalism, and Christianity, and family, should and can be. This I know, because I see it. I am sending my heartfelt sympathies for your loss. 💕💕

Sharon Austin - December 01, 2025 at 05:28 PM

JF

Thank you for sharing. ❤️ Miss my momma

Joy Fry - December 01, 2025 at 05:50 PM

JR

“ I went to nursing school with Sharon, she room with Kaye & we would ride back with each other, as she lived in Abilene & I lived near Beloit. We had some special times together, we had a lot of laughs, personal in the dorms & as nurses, so many memories. Sharon open up her home at one of our reunions, which was so kind of them. She loved her Lord & know that she is being welcome, “Well, done, good & faithful servant”. Prayers for Sharon.s family, hold onto the memories

Jolene Gentry Reed - December 01, 2025 at 02:35 PM



Thank you for sharing!!

Jill Gonzalez-Bravo - December 01, 2025 at 05:06 PM



Thank you for sharing ❤️

Joy Gonzales Fry - December 01, 2025 at 05:49 PM



“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Jill Gonzalez Bravo - December 01, 2025 at 01:59 PM



Sharon was an amazing mentor to me. She was a leader, confidant and a true friend. I will never forget the many “Sharon-isms”, words of encouragement and lessons learned. She exuded poise, dignity, a love for nursing and taking care of Gods people. I am so blessed to have experienced her friendship. Rest in Peace Sharon.

Melissa Hurley (former RT Manager @ CRMC - December 01, 2025 at 04:20 PM



Thank you for sharing!

Jill Gonzalez-Bravo - December 01, 2025 at 05:16 PM



What a beautiful tribute! ❤️ You are all in my thoughts and prayers during this difficult time. 🙏

Michelle Martinez - December 01, 2025 at 06:39 PM

TS

“ Sharon passed away at 9:35 pm. It was fitting that caregiver Elena was in the room with her as she began to fade while my bestie Jill was helping her dad prepare for his breathing treatment. Jill rushed back in time to be with Sharon for her final breaths on this earth.

Sharon loved her family deeply. It was evident in the way she opened her arms and her home not only to them, but also to their friends. My own family was welcomed so warmly by her gracious love and kindness.

Sharon loved to sing praises to Jesus with me, and I treasured every moment we shared. Jill often passed along Sharon’s wisdom at just the right times. One saying I’ll never forget is: “This too shall pass.” Hearing those words when I needed them most was a blessing I will always carry with me.

Sharon was truly a gift in my life. May God continue to bless her devoted husband Richard and her amazing children—Jill, Joy, and Brian—with peace, comfort, and love.

Tamara Siebert - December 01, 2025 at 01:04 PM



She loved you! From helping them move to respite care, you are a treasured friend!

Jill Gonzalez-Bravo - December 01, 2025 at 05:18 PM

VP

I learned so much from Sharon when she was the CNO at Coffeyville!

Vicky Portwood - December 01, 2025 at 07:09 PM

DW

A great nursing leader and a kind and caring person

Darlene Whitlock - December 05, 2025 at 05:24 PM