



Rita Ann Benz

March 8, 1939 - September 9, 2016

Rita Benz died peacefully in her sleep on September 9, 2016, surrounded by loved ones. Rita's life may have ended, but while she lived, she lived life to the fullest.

Rita was no shrinking violet. Anyone who spent time with her, knew how much she loved color, sparkle, animal print and jackets with personality. Rita was always dressed for an occasion, which often included socializing with her and Jim's many friends.

Rita was born in LaCrosse, Wisconsin on March 8, 1939, the eldest child of Arthur and Thelma Moen. She spent her early years in LaCrosse, where she and her younger sister enjoyed fishing in the Mississippi River with their dad, shopping and picnics on the weekends. In high school, Rita played clarinet in the school band, where she met the love of her life, Jim Benz. The two shared a passion for music, which played an integral part of their lifetime together, attending concerts, season tickets for musicals at The Granada Theater, listening to favorite artists such

as

Frank Sinatra and Elvis, and ballroom dancing with the Stardusters.

Jim and Rita were married August 3, 1957, and both enjoyed their 59 years of marriage together, which included two daughters, Deborah and Linda. Their love

and devotion to each other was obvious to anyone who saw them together.

Rita was

a loving mother and grandmother.

In 1962, Jim and Rita moved from Wisconsin, relocating to many new cities through

Jim's work at General Motors. They lived in Santa Maria, Denver, Colorado, back to

Milwaukee, Wisconsin and eventually settling in Santa Barbara in 1973. Rita and

Jim had an active social life, enjoying golf, tennis, volleyball, bridge, and traveling. In

1977, Rita obtained her Real Estate License and was actively involved in real estate

sales until Jim retired so both could enjoy retired life together. Rita enjoyed meeting

people and showing them the city she had grown to love. Many of her clients would

become her good friends.

During their retirement, Rita and Jim traveled often with friends and family throughout the US, and Europe. Rita volunteered for the Assistance League of Santa

Barbara and the Cancer Center. She was also an active member of Grace Lutheran

and Trinity Lutheran Church. Rita was an accomplished artist with many oil paintings and water colors in her house.

Rita was loved deeply by her husband, children, grandchildren, and their

Yorkies.

She will be missed greatly by all. The family would like to thank the staff at Valle

Verde for the care, support, and compassion for Rita and her family during her last

weeks. We cannot thank you enough. Thank you also to the staff at Hospice for

their guidance and support in her final days.

Rita is survived by her beloved husband, Jim, sister, Margie Schroer, two daughters,

Debbie Barnett and Linda Chagollan, and three grandchildren, Tanya, Michelle, and

Heidi.

A celebration of her life will be held on Friday, September 16, 2016, at Trinity Lutheran Church, located at 909 N La Cumbre Rd., Santa Barbara, at 11 a.m.

In lieu

of flowers, please send donations to a charity you feel passionate about.

Cemetery Details

Santa Barbara Cemetery

901 Channel Drive
Santa Barbara, CA 93108
(805) 969-3231

Tribute Wall

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“ Please accept my family's heartfelt condolences on the loss of your dear loved one. May you find comfort in fond memories, and The Almighty God's promise to restore those asleep in death to perfect life on a paradise Earth.

Greene Family - September 19, 2016 at 12:55 PM