



Sherry E. Graves

December 16, 1935 - March 1, 2026

Sherry Esther (Girmann) Graves, 90, of Fort Collins, Colorado, passed away peacefully on March 1, 2026. She was born on December 16, 1935, in Ogallala, Nebraska, to Edward and Helyn Girmann.

Sherry graduated from Chadron High School in 1953 and earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Secondary Education with majors in Business and History from Colorado State University in 1957. She dedicated her early career to teaching business education at several high schools, including those in Scottsbluff, Englewood, and at Fort Collins High School, as well as at Nouasseur Air Force Base in Morocco.

She married Dr. Robert C. Graves (Graves Dairy) on December 11, 1963. Bob was one of the founders of Rocky Mountain Bank, where Sherry served as the bank's first secretary. They lived on the ranch, where Sherry also worked in the dairy office, managed the monthly billing, and gave dairy tours.

Together, Bob and Sherry welcomed four children: Robert Lawrence, Laura Ann, Sarah Elizabeth, and Christine Anne. On August 15, 1976, their daughter Laura, at the age of seven, was diagnosed with leukemia. In 1979, Laura became the first person in the world with leukemia to receive a bone marrow transplant from a non-related donor, giving her an additional year and a half of life. Laura died on August 15, 1981, five years to the date of diagnosis and

passed away at the age of twelve. Inspired by this experience, Bob and Sherry became co-founders of the National Marrow Donor Program (now NMDP). Today, the program has impacted 147,594 lives, with over 42 million people worldwide registered as potential lifesaving donors. In 1990, when Dr. Donnell Thomas received the Nobel Prize in Medicine for his work in bone marrow transplantation, Bob and Sherry were honored guests at the Nobel Ceremonies in Stockholm, Sweden, an occasion that deeply touched them both.

After raising her children, Sherry worked for Larimer County as Clerk to the Board for 14 years. Following her retirement, she remained deeply engaged in her community. She volunteered at Poudre Valley Hospital, served on the Colorado State University Alumni Board, serving as President in 2012, and participated in Larimer Square Questers, Bible Study Fellowship, and many bridge groups. She also loved to travel the world, visiting Russia, Europe, China, Australia, New Zealand, Hawaii, Iceland and returning each year to Cabo San Lucas with her best friends, children, grandchildren and her sister, Marybeth.

Sherry was a very special lady, known for her gentleness, warmth, and quiet resilience. She loved growing up in the 1950s and all that the “Golden Era” represented, from dancing and playing the piano and even the trombone in her high school marching band. She was always proud of her Nebraska roots and deeply loved her parents and siblings. Devoted to her children, she was known as the “taxi mom,” never missing a sporting event or school activity, and always making sure Rob had breakfast and lunch in the hayfield. Sherry lived a life grounded in Catholic virtues, never claiming perfection, but consistently choosing grace, gratitude, and kindness. She cherished her friendships deeply and created meaningful relationships with so many throughout her life. Even during her silence these past two years, her beautiful blue eyes, warm smile, and loving presence continued to draw people close.

She touched countless hearts and will be profoundly missed by all who knew and loved her.

Sherry is survived by her son Rob (Lori) Graves; daughters Sarah (Scott) Nicol and Christine (Scott) Houldsworth; eight grandchildren—Bryan, Allyx, Trevor, Skylar, Amber, Lauren, Jack, and Sierra; six great grandchildren, with one on the way; her sister Marybeth Wood; and extended family. She was preceded in death by her parents, husband Robert; her brother Larry; her daughter Laura; her granddaughter Kelsey; and other beloved family members.

In lieu of flowers or gifts, donations may be made to The Sherry Graves Hope Fund at NMDP, which honors Sherry's belief that one cannot live without hope by supporting patients and families in need of a life-saving transplant, or to St. Joseph Catholic Church.

NMDP Foundation
The Sherry Graves Hope Fund
NW 5498
PO Box 1450
Minneapolis, MN 55485
Online: <https://go.nmdp.org/HonoringSherry>.

St Joseph Catholic Church (Prefer Checks)
In Memory of Sherry Graves
101 N. Howes
Fort Collins, CO 80521
Online: <https://giving.parishsoft.com/App/Giving/FD-398>

Please follow the LiveStream of Sherry's Funeral Service at:
<https://www.ckpmediaservices.com/sherrygraves>

Previous Events

Mass of Christian Burial

MAR 10. 9:30 AM (MT)

Saint Joseph Catholic Church
300 West Mountain
Fort Collins, CO 80521

Interment

MAR 10 (MT)

Grandview Cemetery
1900 West Mountain Avenue
Fort Collins, CO 80521
<http://www.fcgov.com/parks/grandview.php>

Interment will follow after Mass and Reception.

Luncheon

MAR 10 (MT)

Saint Joseph Catholic Church
300 West Mountain
Fort Collins, CO 80521

Light lunch immediately following Mass.

Tribute Wall



“ *Goes Funeral Care & Crematory created a Tribute Video in memory of Sherry E. Graves*



Goes Funeral Care & Crematory - March 11 at 12:56 PM



“ *Goes Funeral Care & Crematory created a Webcast in memory of Sherry E. Graves*



Goes Funeral Care & Crematory - March 09 at 01:49 PM

LN

“ *The love Christine has for her mom was always so evident. Christine fondly referred to Sherry as her best friend. My deepest condolences.*

Leslie Noble - March 10 at 01:28 PM

BA

“ Sherry will forever hold a special place in my heart. I had the privilege to film an interview with her about Laura and the whole family. From one of the first moments of sitting down with her I knew she was special and one of a kind. She spoke with such care, love, strength and affection and it carried to everyone in the room. And of course after we were done she insisted that we stay for lunch and spent the morning preparing sandwiches and fresh tea. We sat sharing stories, laughs and tears I got a chance to be in the presence of a unique and wonderful woman. She was yet another morning in my life as I got to sit with her and proudly call her my friend. Sherry you will be missed but we all better for you sharing yourself and your family with those who crossed paths with you. May God bless you always.

Barry Anderson - March 10 at 12:38 PM

SR

“ We met Sherry and Bob shortly after moving to Ft. Collins in 1961 through teaching, me at Leshar Jr. High, and Sherry at the High School. Playing ladies bridge together was a joy and great introduction to CO life. We traded notes on new born sons '65 and '66... For years we traded Xmas letters, keeping up on children and travel. I dearly missed not hearing from her these past two years, figuring she was ill. Death is so final, but Sherry will live in my heart forever. She was beautiful in every way.

Sonja Rasmussen - March 10 at 11:19 AM

JM

“ My Dear Aunt Sherry,
You were my one and only Aunt and you were fully in the role. Growing up I looked up to your strength. It was all something I didn't fully understand with Laura but I saw the love, strength, hope and devotion. You amazed me with your dedication to the foundation. To save others and give them hope. Your house was my third house behind Mom and Dad's and Grandma and Grandpas. It was Easter eggs, saddle riding, pizza, Sherry dips and desserts. It was a kitchen I knew what was in cabinets and a laundry room to travel light. I struggled moving so far away but your visits and open home made it easier. You held onto me which let me hold onto you. Thank you for all the memories and love. Thank you for being so good to my mom. My heart knows I'll see you again. I look forward to it and have peace with it. Julie

Julie Miller - March 10 at 09:05 AM

JS

Sherry was my "date" at a dinner party hosted by her sister MB. We had some really nice times whenever she came to visit. She was a blessing in all our lives and will be missed. Jerri Smith

Jerri Smith - March 10 at 12:49 PM

RB

“ Our love and happy thoughts how Sherry touched our lives, and shared a portion of her journey with ours. Our sympathy and love to all the family for healing.

Randie and Cindi Bell - March 06 at 11:41 AM

JK

“ I am deeply saddened by the passing of a woman whose kindness and generosity transformed the lives of thousands of strangers across the globe. Sherry had a rare gift for making every person feel welcomed and valued, and being in her presence felt sacred. I will always remember how she completed her daily crossword puzzles with a quiet confidence that reflected both her sharp mind and her gentle spirit. One of the most unforgettable moments was the standing ovation she received from hundreds of attendees at NMDP’s annual gala—a powerful tribute to the impact she made and the hope she inspired. May her legacy of compassion and connection continue to shine in the lives of all who were touched by her extraordinary heart. - joy king

Joy M King - March 05 at 12:41 PM



“ 1 file added to the album Sherry Graves Hope Fund



Goes Funeral Care & Crematory - March 05 at 12:25 PM

PM

“ So sorry to see Sherry's name in the obituaries today. I knew Sherry from when we both worked for Larimer County; she was always smiling and was such a positive person to be around. My deepest condolences to all.

Patsi Maroney - March 04 at 01:23 PM

PI

“ Sherry was my very special friend for over 52 years. We walked our daughters to school when they were kids, and then often continued on our walk to have pancakes and conversations. We shared secrets and celebrated our birthdays together. She was so proud of her family. She was such a beautiful, classy woman and will remain forever in my heart. Peggy Ingram

Peggy Ingram - March 03 at 04:59 PM