



Shirley Collins Shelton

April 25, 2019

On April 25, 2019, after a sudden brief illness, Shirley Diane Collins Shelton, age 75, of Pittsgrove, much loved daughter, mother, grandmother, sister and aunt, went home to be with the Lord. Shirley was born April 21, 1944 to Mabel and Robert Collins in Penns Grove, NJ

You can't talk about Shirley without first mentioning her boundless generosity. She would, in the most literal sense of the phrase, give you the shirt off her back. Or the shoes off her feet, if you happened to compliment the ones she was wearing. She did both, on many occasions. She did not have money, but she had a knack of being able to amass clothes, shoes, housewares, anything that someone in need might be able to use, and she kept it all in her car. She drove around in what can only be described as a magical vehicle – there was no end to the surprising things she could pull out of it. New sneakers still in the box and just your size, a full length, silk-lined coat with a fur collar that had belonged to an opera singer, a bushel of peaches or a case of toilet paper: it was a lot like watching *Let's Make a Deal*, only bigger and better.

She had the selfless soul of a care-giver, and she spent much of her life looking after family members and friends, some of whom could not care for themselves. Her patience and tenderness with children, the elderly and the ill was without limit.

The next thing to be said about her is that she was utterly without a sense of time. If she said that she was running into the IGA for minute, it was entirely possible that she would emerge after an hour. Or two. If you wanted Shirley to be somewhere at 2 pm, you told her you wanted her there at noon, just to make sure she'd be there on time...more or less. She was the perennial provider of dinner rolls or dessert for family holiday dinners, something that could be had at the end of meal, when she would inevitably arrive, smiling, singing out, "Here I am, you lucky people." On a side note, from the time she picked up her plate to fill it to the time she finally finished eating that meal, two to three hours could elapse. She liked a leisurely meal.

It would also have to be mentioned that for a very private person – and she was - Shirley could and did talk to everyone. She knew no strangers and was apt to strike up long and meaningful conversations with fellow shoppers or diners or just passersby. It was her nature, however, that at the end of the conversation, she knew all about you and you knew very little about her. Once she met you, she did not forget you. Her list of friends and acquaintances was endless. It did not matter where you went – in the middle of nowhere you were not in the least surprised when she would greet someone she had not seen in years, by name, and ask about something she recalled from the last time they'd talked.

Not for nothing, she had a wicked sense of humor but could not tell a joke. She would tell the punchline first, or forget it altogether or add 10 minutes worth of detail. The mistelling of the joke was usually funnier than the actual joke itself. This trait was inherited by at least one niece. What was inherited by no one was her unfathomable fondness for liver and onions, which she would cook with reckless abandon for many in her charge.

The last thing about Shirley is the biggest thing about Shirley: her love for her family and her devotion to them. Shirley had 3 sons whom she adored –

Stevie, (lost in an accident when he was a toddler,) Andy, and Jeff, both of whom are fine men. However, when Jeff married Kelly (Barba) and they had Patricia, her only grandchild, Shirley found the apple of her eye. She loved to tell stories about Patricia and always had a recent picture of her at the ready.

She was the much loved and cherished sister of Helen (and Milton) Clark, John (and Kathy) Collins, and Roberta Carman.

She was the long-time companion of Bob May, who will miss her more than he can say.

She will be remembered by her nieces and nephews and great-nieces and nephews, for her complete willingness to give them her time and attention, both of which she lavished on them. It was not at all unusual for her to pull up in her big, old car and pile them all in for a trip to the lake, the movies, for ice cream, popping in to take them to lunch or the mall. She could make a child feel like the most important and special child in the world, which is why every one of them could tell you, truthfully, "I'm her favorite."

Rest now and finally be at peace, dear Shirley, old soul, kind spirit, you old tomato sweetie. You were much loved on this earth. To have touched and made a difference in so many lives, you will never truly be gone.

Predeceased by her parents, Robert Collins and Mabel Ford Collins and brother-in-law Howard (Doc) Carman.

Nieces and nephews: Lisa Clark, Robert (and Jessica) Clark, Gary (and Valerie) Clark, Rebecca Clark (and Mike) Ireland, Donica Carman (and Rob) Maher, Desiree Carman Wright (and Buddy,) Rob and Jay Collins

Great nieces and nephews - Rob (and Sarah) Clark, Ryan Clark, Josiah (and Erin) Clark, Micah, Hannah, and Alethea Clark, Mikey (and Sami) Ireland, Katie and Noah Ireland, Jordan and Jadan Wright.

Other friends, family and acquaintances far too numerous to mention.

Graveside services will be held at Chestnut Grove Cemetery on Wednesday, May 1, 2019 at 11:00 AM. In lieu of flowers, contributions in the name of Shirley Shelton can be made to Our Lady of Lourdes Medical Center in Camden, NJ or to a charity of your choice.

Cemetery Details

Chestnut Grove

Elmer, NJ 08318

Previous Events

Graveside

MAY 1. 11:00 AM (ET)

Chestnut Grove
Elmer, NJ 08318

Tribute Wall

PH

“ I was one of the lucky recipients of gifts from the magical car, sneakers and a case of toilet paper the last time I saw her. She was such a gentle soul, so generous and sweet. I think another one of her talents was photography. I remember hearing a story about her taking several posed photographs one day only to find out she had no film in the camera at the end of the day. She was one of a kind and will be missed!

Pam Hurff - April 29, 2019 at 10:27 PM

SE

“ I didn't see Shirley as much as I would have liked. We truly were family & I will miss knowing that she is out there doing something sweet for someone. My sister passed away in September & the day before she died, Shirley came over to be with her for a while. She offered to stay with Barbara so that I could have a break. It was 95 degrees outside & she had no air conditioning in her car, but she came anyway. She also had a brand new pair of sneakers to give to my granddaughter Faith. Just the right fit. She had such love for everyone she met. The world was better with her in it & I know that I will see that sweet face on the other side. Shirley & my sister-in-law Hilda will be fighting over who can tell a joke better. She is with her wonderful little boy Stevie now. See you later my friend. I love you.

Sandra Eppinger - April 29, 2019 at 03:24 PM

CT

“ I knew Shirley for a very long time after working with her at a local glass factory. She was such a nice and friendly woman who treated everyone with kindness. She will be missed by me and many, many others. Rest in peace dear Shirley.

Carmel Tassone - April 29, 2019 at 01:03 PM

BD

“ *Didn't know her but she had to be a very special person wish I had known her.I would like to thank the person who wrote her eulogy it was a wonderful testament to her life.*

Barbara Davenport - April 29, 2019 at 11:05 AM