



Sharon Louise Garber

April 9, 1943 - April 20, 2025

Sharon Louise Garber (Burke), born April 9, 1943 to Richard Burke and Grayce Burke (Olney) in Los Angeles, California, passed away peacefully on Easter Sunday, April 20, 2025 at the age of 82. She was a loving and supportive wife, mother, and grandmother. She is survived by her loving husband of 53 years, William (Bill) Garber; her three children: Kathryn (Stephen) Tedford, William (Kerry) Garber Jr., and Jennifer (Brandon) Engen; and her seven—soon to be eight—grandchildren: Katelyn and Caroline Tedford; John Paul, Jackson, Leo, and Agnes Garber; Reese and baby boy Engen.

Sharon was raised in Pasadena California, where her parents owned a large chicken ranch. She learned early the value of hard work, but also how to have fun, and gave her mom and dad a run for their money at times. One evening, when her parents were out for the night and she was home alone, she called a cab and went down to one of their favorite restaurants for her very own night on the town. She ordered dinner and a Gimlet, the drink her parents always had. She hated the drink, but enjoyed her dinner, and took a cab back home before they returned for the night. She also enjoyed camping out with friends on New Years to get a prime spot for the Rose Parade, and cruising Colorado Boulevard in the evenings. Music was also a lifelong passion—she frequented concerts at the El Monte Legion Stadium, and once saw The Doors perform at the Troubadour. As a teenager working in a local drugstore, her knack for

spotting the next big hit earned her a reputation for having a true ear for music.

Sharon and Bill met while working at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL), where they both contributed to the Viking and Voyager programs - two of the most historic missions to outer space. Sharon worked as a secretary to the Director of the Engineering and Failure Analysis groups within the Electronic Parts Engineering section, while Bill worked for the Test Group within the same section. Sharon was instrumental in proofreading the specification manuals for various electrical parts used in the space programs, and heavily utilized her skills in editing and documentation in shorthand. As part of the Viking Mars Mission, both she and Bill signed microdot forms with their names. These microdots were placed on the two Mars landers, thus making them among the first married couples to have their names on another planet, where it still resides today. The same microdot can also be found on the Viking Mars Lander Proof Test Article in the Smithsonian's National Air and Space Museum in Washington, DC. After 48 years, the two Voyager spacecrafts are still sending data back to earth, and Voyager 1 is just short of 1 Light-Day away from earth.

During their time at JPL, Sharon and Bill bonded over their shared love of music, which ultimately led to their first date. She wore her high heels for an evening on Bill's ski boat. Unfortunately, Bill ran out of gas as they were approaching the dock at Little Naples, and had to row them the rest of the way in. She wasn't so sure about going on a second date... but ultimately they went on to be married in July 1971. During their honeymoon, they ran into issues when they encountered a strong storm on Lake Powell, and ended up taking on water from the 4 foot waves as they were trying to get back to their launch point. She thought for a moment that her married life was going to end up being quite short - but they ultimately went on to have many more adventures—some involving more empty gas tanks than they would've liked.

From JPL, Sharon worked for the physicist who ran the electron microscope lab, who left JPL to work for a fledgling startup company. Ultimately, she shifted her focus towards raising Kathryn and Bill Jr., and suggested that Bill pursue his electrical engineering degree. She supported him wholeheartedly while he attended night school after work, making him quick meals between work and class to get him through the additional 6 years of education. Also during this time, she leaned into her own hobbies of sewing, crocheting, and quilting with her mom's sewing machine. They also enjoyed taking many trips to Northern California with friends.

In 1980, Sharon and Bill moved up to Corvallis, Oregon, where they both accepted positions at Hewlett-Packard. She worked as a coordinator and secretary, performing equipment and inventory audits for testing machinery. It was here where she felt an unexpected kick in her belly. She left work and headed to her family doctor, where they confirmed what she suspected - she was pregnant. They headed up to Emanuel Hospital in Portland for an amniocentesis, and confirmed just before Christmas that she was about 5 months along with Jennifer.

A couple years later, she went to work at Oregon State University in the Cashier's office. She made many great friends along the way, and continued to expand upon her interests in sewing, quilting, gardening, caring for the family dogs, cooking, and baking. She helped to co-found a local quilting group, and through her genealogical research, became a proud member of the Daughters of the American Revolution. Through it all, she continued to be a fierce supporter of her family in pursuing their goals and interests - whether it be in baseball, school or church trips abroad, ballet, horseback riding, theatre, cheerleading, golf, the Scouts, Rainbow, higher education - she was there to encourage and remind us that we can do anything that we set our

minds to.

Her memory lives on in the stars she admired, the work she did to explore them, and the love she gave us here on Earth—in every quilt, every meal, every lesson, and every unwavering act of affection. Words can't fully express how much we will miss her, but we will strive to carry that same love and strength that she demonstrated forward with us in our daily lives.

Tribute Wall

HK

“ I remember the day I met your mom. She was so warm and welcoming and had the brightest smile. The thing I'll remember most is how thoughtful she was. After the birth of both of my girls, she sent me the cutest Hanna Andersson outfits. I was so touched she thought of me and went out of her way to mail me a hand written package. She really was the sweetest person. My heart goes out to the whole family. ❤️

Heather Kohl - May 08, 2025 at 10:52 AM

DQ

“ Bill & family - We are so sorry to learn of Sharon's passing. When we moved into the neighborhood, she was so welcoming and kind to include us. Love to you all.
Devon & Ian Quick

Devon Quick - May 03, 2025 at 08:19 PM

KA

“ Awesome that their names are on both voyagers!

Katie - April 30, 2025 at 10:40 AM

BH

“ So sorry to hear about Sharon. Gary and I enjoyed her Christmas letters. Gary and Becky Hartmayer

Becky Hartmayer - April 29, 2025 at 11:54 AM

DA

Sharon was such a joy and had a kind spirit. I will miss her sense of humor and her great cooking and baking skills. She always shared. Her husband Bill and her children were the most important people in her life. It was something David and I respected so much. A wonderful woman!

David and Darlene Aldinger - April 29, 2025 at 07:10 PM



“ 1 file added to the album Memories Album



McHenry Funeral Home - April 29, 2025 at 11:25 AM

WS

This Mt. Hood-like representation was created by Sharon's Grandson, John Paul Garber

William Garber, Sr. - June 08, 2025 at 12:39 PM

RT

“ *I have had the immense pleasure of enjoying Sharon's quick wit and generous smile each time she shared her time with me during Viking related activities. Her stories about the mission were only part of the fun she clearly had in this thing called life. She truly knew how to do it right! And her pride in family and wisdom about human interactions I'm sure have orders joy as well. I'm deeply saddened that she will not be in person with us, but she will be there in spirit and legacy. My heart goes out to Bill and the kids. 💖🌌*

Rachel Tillman - April 29, 2025 at 12:39 AM

DA

“ Bill, you and your family have been in my prayers. I have always appreciated the friendship Bob and I shared with you and Sharon. I remember an evening when the four of us were out to dinner and you told us that Sharon was expecting. A few months later, Jennifer arrived. I really enjoyed meeting Sharon for lunch over the years and sharing stories of our growing families. We both agreed that grandchildren were a blessing. I loved her stories of her dogs and all their tricks. But most of all...I loved her friendship. I will miss her.

Diana Albright - April 28, 2025 at 02:31 PM



“ 1 file added to the album Memories Album



McHenry Funeral Home - April 28, 2025 at 12:09 PM

KA

Wow, you look like your mother!

Katie - April 30, 2025 at 10:39 AM