



Ruth Owens Sylvester

October 21, 1926 - August 15, 2024

Ruth held on until the Astros moved into first place but departed this life in the middle of a pennant race after almost 98 years. She was preceded in death by her husband, James Robert "Bob" Sylvester; her daughter, Patricia Holden; her brother, William Owens; and her parents, Joseph Owens and Maria Leal.

She is survived by her daughters, Mollie Schaffer (Randy), Jamie Hendershot (Randy), and Robin Moreno; her grandchildren, Dr. Randy III (Cristina) and Josh (Emily) Schaffer, Miriam Fiaschetti, Matthew (Tim Czerlinsky) and Tatyana Hendershot, Jonathan and Joseph Holden (Cole Winter), Marta Hansen (Eric), and Anna Fontenot (Andrew); and her great-grandchildren, Sabina, Jacob, and Wyatt Schaffer, Angelica, Armando, and Alexandria Fiaschetti, Benjamin Holden, and Noah Hansen; her sister, Patricia Owens Jordan; and her companion, caregiver, and best friend, Sylvia Doyle (who kept her alive the past ten years). Ruth and Sylvia truly were the Thelma and Louise of their generation (without the unhappy ending).

Ruth worked in nursing for 44 years. She started as a staff nurse at St. Joseph's Hospital in 1947, an era in which the nurses had to dodge the

"handsy" advances of doctors without an HR department to support them. That toughened Ruth up a little. She survived a near-fatal automobile accident in 1951 in which her oldest daughter, Patricia, was paralyzed. Ruth spent almost two years in traction, while Patricia was in the Shriner's Hospital, and Mollie lived with relatives. That toughened Ruth up a lot.

Ruth returned to nursing in 1953. She went to work for St. Luke's Hospital and Texas Children's Hospital in 1964. She was the Director of the operating rooms during the Denton Cooley era, where she learned and kept the secrets of many surgeons. She retired as a Vice-President of Texas Children's in 1991.

Ruth's marriage to Bob also proved to be a full-time job. This tough World War II Marine-known as the "Old Soldier" and the "Old Sailor"-could be a lot to handle. By the time he passed away in 1998, Ruth was as tough as a boot and ready for anything.

Ruth loved her family, her friends, her profession, the Astros, and just being alive. At the end, she did not go gently into that good night; instead, she raged, raged against the dying of the light. We are grateful for her 97.8 years and will miss her forever.

The viewing and the Rosary will begin at 9:00 a.m. and the funeral mass at 10:00 a.m. on Wednesday, August 21, 2024, at St. Cyril of Alexandria Church, 10503 Westheimer Rd, Houston, Texas.

Tribute Wall

NH

“ I knew Mrs Sylvester 1975 when I was hired at St Luke's Hospital she said to me I can never understand you because you talk to fast, she says where are you from, I said Louisiana she said that is why I have to read your lips so I will call you Nate she gave me that name and her best friend Sylvia Doyle said I will call her Nate also, such a beautiful person may she rest in peace and God bless her family
Natleen Harleaux

Natleen Harleaux - October 06, 2024 at 02:26 PM

BC

“ Dear Mrs. Sylvester, you hired me as a new RN, just graduating from Houston Baptist University in 1974. I started in the Cardiovascular Recovery ICU 1 and 2. It was exactly what I wanted although I didn't know how hard it was going to be. Over the 12 and 1/2 years I worked there, you supported me all along the way. I had a lot of learning to do, but you gave me the love and patience I needed. After I went on in my career to be a Director of Nursing and Associate Administrator and CEO, in other hospitals, we always kept in touch. You even called me at Texas Orthopedic Hospital and said “ Barbara, make sure I get a private room”. And I said “Of Course”. You invited me to your Birthday party one year. I was so honored! We exchanged Christmas cards. Then I lost touch with you. I'll always remember and love you. Barbara Traylor Chastain

Barbara Chastain - August 20, 2024 at 07:30 PM

TS

“ My dearest precious 💕 Ro. My most beautiful memories are when you came in for your pedicures and manicures, we would share the most mouth watering recipes. And your amazing grand & great-grand children. I have already missed you more than you can imagine. But you will always live in my heart ❤️! Love you RO,
Tamra Servance

Tamra Servance - August 20, 2024 at 06:17 PM

CS

“ Mrs. Sylvester (never Ruth to me) had a huge impact on my life. She was a role model and mentor, not just professionally but also personally. She helped me rise through the nursing department and then she brought me over to Administration. She gave me the opportunity to learn and grow and she always supported me. She helped me through a divorce and taught me to save money for retirement. I owe my career to her guidance. She will always be remembered by me and all of the nurses whose lives she touched

Cheryl Stavins - August 20, 2024 at 06:15 PM

DD

“ In 1981 I interviewed with Mrs. Sylvester when she was the Director of Operating Rooms Service for St. Luke's, Texas Children's, and Texas Heart Institute (Dr. Denton Cooley's Institute). Having experience as an Assistant Director of Operating Room Service at Yale New Haven Hospital in CT., she hired me to be one of her Associate Directors. Her kind disposition and thorough knowledge about the O.Rs., made her one of the best Managers I have had in my nursing career. I considered her as my guardian “Angel” throughout my tenure as Associate Director at the Tri Facilities. After leaving her employment to pursue other ventures, I would always enquire about her via one of her good friends Ann Parker(Retired Director of Instrumentations at the Tri Facilities), how my guardian “Angel” was doing? I am saddened to hear of her passing. She will always be in my heart as the “Angel” who saw me through the hectic times in the ORs.
Condolences to her Family.
Submitted by.....L. Edison Dewar, DDS

Dr L Edison Dewar - August 20, 2024 at 11:11 AM