



## REMEMBERING Minerva Shull

November 20, 1937 - March 4, 2020



### MINERVA SHULL

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It is with great sadness that we announce the unexpected passing of Minerva (Gonzalez) Shull who went home to her Lord and Savior on March 4th, 2020, at the age of 82. She passed away peacefully while taking an afternoon nap in her home at Chartwell CedarBrookeRetirement Residence in Mission, BC, Canada.

Minerva was predeceased by her father Juliano "Ramon" Gonzalez and mother Venancia Hernandez of Puerto Rico and her husband, Dr. Nestor B Shull of Penticton, BC (DOD: Jan.06.2011). Minerva is survived by her older brother Quique, older sister Luz EleniaGonzalez Deleon, and younger brother Ramon "Monchito" Gonzalez all of Puerto Rico; and her younger sister Mirtelina Gonzalez Motta of Atlanta, GA. Minerva is also survived by her three sons Clayton (LLyra), Nickolas (Shawwna), and Kurt (Lea Anne); 8 grandchildren Lindsay (DrewStorey), Lisa (Joe), Eric, Drake, Mariah, Tara, Samuel, and Lucas; and 2 great grandchildren, brothers Austin Shull and DeklanMonical.

Minerva lived a wonderful, fulfilling life. She grew up in Rio Piedras (San Juan), Puerto Rico, and was very proud of her heritage and the beauty of the island. Minerva is seen in one photo (below left) at about 15 years old with her parents Venancia and Ramon. Minerva is seen in the next photo (below right) taken in Puerto Rico when she was nine (9) years old with her two sisters, older brother, and cousin Johnny from New Jersey (1 year old baby).

During her school years she was known as "Speedy Gonzalez" as she could outrun all her opponents, and she was defended by her big sister Luz from other challenges during that period. She loved the ocean-scented breezes, emerald green waters, and the tall coconut trees spaced along the white sandy beaches of

the island. Her favorite beach on the island was Luquillo Beach.

Minerva had a passion for wearing long dresses in her early years which complemented her beauty and smooth complexion (many photos available). She had a poise, elegance and sophistication about her that was truly feminine for her times. She had a princess-like appearance during a wedding when she and her sister Luz were bridesmaids (photo below).

Minerva had a passion for eating fruit; in fact, one of her fondest memories was sitting under a mango tree, eating one mango after another until the bucket was empty. Later she also craved BC (Canada) blueberries, peaches and cherries when they were in season, often eating at least one more than she should have. When Clayton, her oldest son, purchased his present home in Abbotsford, in 2009, it was the month of May when Minerva was visiting after their recent move-in and looking at a large tree located 90-feet away at the far backside of yard. She noticed multiple "red things" hanging from the tree. She asked Clayton, "What are those red things. Go check it out for me." To her pleasant surprise, they were Bing cherries...and you should know what happened next.

Minerva left school at age 15, after completing Grade 8 (1951/May 1952). In 1952, Minerva took the opportunity to move to New York City to live with her Aunt Mary Rodriguez. There she worked with her Aunt in textiles manufacturing, Burlington Mills, on the 78th floor of the Empire State Building. She met her husband-to-be, Nestor B Shull, at Madison Avenue Baptist Church. The church was first chartered in 1848, and is still attended by Aunt Mary's daughter and Minerva's close cousin Nancy Rivera. Nancy still has many fond memories of Minerva from the many times they shared together between New Jersey and the Big Apple. Nestor, from Burnaby, BC, Canada, was a student of the Chiropractic Institute of New York from 1955-1958. The two were married on September 8th, 1956.

Minerva would recall some cold winters in Manhattan, New York, where Nestor and her would invite some homeless people into their home during the Christmas Season to stay warm overnight. Minerva would make them a nice home-cooked Christmas dinner. They all appreciated these acts of kindness. One in particular insisted they accept a gift from him, his only and most prized possession &#8212; the violin he used with the New York Philharmonic Orchestra (He passed away a few months later). Minerva's special generosity continued with senior people living in her low-rise condo in Abbotsford. She would make a number of special Christmas and Thanksgiving dinners and then deliver, or later have Clayton deliver, them to less fortunate people than herself in her building. She wanted them to experience at least one wonderfully, home-cooked meal per year. Their warm appreciative smiles were not forgotten.

After Nestor graduated in 1958, he drove through harsh winter conditions across the USA in their green 1957 Ford 4-door Sedan station wagon while Minerva was pregnant, and crossed the border into Canada in December 1958. They moved into a small 1-floor bungalow located on Minerva's mother-in-law's 2-acre farm at 3038 Bainbridge Avenue, Burnaby, BC. Nestor opened his first Chiropractic office on Kingsway Avenue in 1959. The couple also welcomed the births of their first two sons, Clayton (July.20.1959) and Nickolas (Nov.01.1960). While Nestor worked

hard to build his Chiropractic practice, Minerva became a dedicated homemaker and mother.

Nestor's mother, Victoria Stella(Petruka) Shull, was very instrumental in helping Minerva cultivate and refine her cooking, canning, and gardening skills. This is where she learned how to make her delicious Ukrainian dishes, such as perogies and cabbage rolls,that she'd serve during holiday weekends and other times of the year. When the boys were older and away from home, they could always drop by and pick up a bag of frozen perogies and cabbage rolls to take home to enjoy. Her boys would express their thanks and give her a big hug and a kiss.

Minerva and Nestor both developed green thumbs for gardening. Their gardens were always very beautiful and bountiful with many varieties of delicious fruits and vegetables. When Minerva lived in a single-dwelling home in Abbotsford for about 15 years, she grew two varieties of rhubarb that she dearly loved. Before she moved into the condo, her oldest son, Clayton, dug up some of the rhubarb roots and duplicated its growth on his property, thus being able to continually provide his mom with the rhubarb she grew to love for her favorite fruit dish.

Nestor thought that a small community would be a great place to start a new Chiropractic practice and raise a family. Nestor purchased a house in Williams Lake, BC, on Mackenzie Avenue, in 1963 that was written off due to a major fire. He had it quickly restored (we still have the before and after photos). Sometime in 1963, the Shull family moved into that home.

Minerva and Nestor gave birth to their youngest son, Kurt (July.14.1965).

On August 17th, 1967, Minerva received her first driver's license, driving a standard Volkswagen Beetle. Her smile revealed it was one of her proudest independent accomplishments during a period when women were much more dependent than they are today. Later she worked in her husband's Chiropractic office as a receptionist, part time, and after hours laundered(washed, ironed, and neatly folded) about 100 gowns per week from home.

Later, in 1969, Minerva helped with Nestor's sideline business, constructing new homes. They built about 15 new homes together in Williams Lake over an 8-year period, about two per year. She became the "painter" and painted most of the homes inside and out. She also swung the hammer and mixed concrete on occasion when needed. She continued to launder gowns and worked tirelessly as a homemaker and mother for her three boys. As young boys we may not have fully appreciated how much work she did for us until we became parents ourselves and discovered how much work there was involved in raising our own children the right way. As we all got older we realized we could never take care of our mom as much as she took care of us, because we too were now raising our own children and working. That's just the way life and the maternal bond is.

Over time her gardening, canning, and cooking skills were being perfected. Anyone sitting down at her dinner table was in for a wonderful, delicious meal, and going for seconds. She would say to us boys, "If you finish your dinner, you can have desert." After each of us handed over spotless plates, we were entitled to either homemade apple, peach or pumpkin pies; fresh baked cookies; moist banana bread; or another specially baked desert.

During this time, Minerva was also the perfect example of a Canadian hockey mom, as she drove all three boys to hockey practices, often starting at 6 am. Trips to hockey games were next, as she continued to give them her full support and love.

Minerva cultivated some very close friendships in Williams Lake. Three special ladies that she met became lifetime friends: Wanda Melnick (from Poland) and two Spanish speaking friends, Rosalva Thuncher (from Mexico) and Pia Thompson (from Guatemala). Minerva, Wanda, and Rosalva were neighbors. Wanda had a flower shop close-by where she hired Minerva and Rosalva to help with flower arrangements during peak flower-sales periods, such as Mother's and Valentine's Day.

Williams Lake was a place for the great outdoors. Minerva loved going camping with the family on weekends to Lac La Hache, and later to Chimney Lake where our family built a Pan-Abode logcabin along the lake (House #12?).

About 20 years after leaving her job in NY from 1952-1958, her old boss and his wife, long retired, made the drive from NY to Williams Lake to meet Minerva one final time, proving the friendships she developed were strong, cherished and never forgotten.

Minerva and Nestor began their travel ventures while in Williams Lake, eventually filling dream destinations to Europe, Puerto Rico, and various US states (e.g. Hawaii, and Florida's Disney World, when Epcot Center just opened). The two-week Panama Canal Cruise was a trip of a lifetime where she had her whole family (9) together, including her mother. Minerva's love for traveling continued throughout her lifetime. She was always game for another cruise or any kind of vacation, or just took the regular trips to Puerto Rico, Williams Lake or Tennessee to visit family, relatives and friends. She accompanied Kurt and his family on 99% of their family vacations over the last 28 years. She and her granddaughter, Lisa, also enjoyed a very memorable Alaskan cruise together just a few years ago. In Minerva's last few years, when short and long distant travel became too difficult for her, Lisa (from Calgary, AB) would often come visit her "grandma" at least twice per year. Lisa found a kindred spirit in her grandma that would create an eternal bond between them. Kurt and his family (from Tennessee) would also come visit her as often as they could too, or have her come down to Tennessee. Clayton and his family were always close to his mom (Minerva), living in the same city.

After about 20 years, Minerva's family decided to move to Abbotsford, BC, in June 1980. Nick's family remained in Williams Lake. Kurt would finish Grade 12 in 1983 and then attend the University of Victoria (UVIC), while Clayton attended The University of BC (UBC) and BC Institute of Technology (BCIT). Minerva persisted in having her boys gain the highest education possible if they could achieve it. Her persistence was rewarded in the comfort in knowing that they would have a good life, and less likely one of possible struggle.

After a short time when the boys left home, Minerva began a 15-year employment with Edenvale Restoration Specialists where she worked in water and fire damage restoration, mainly as the company's laundry specialist. All those past years of washing, ironing and folding gowns for her husband paid off in this position. Minerva would bring a variety of colorful flowers (roses and dahlias) for the

company's front office, a gesture that was greatly appreciated by the owners. Unfortunately, Minerva's employment ended after she seriously damaged her back while trying to pick up a towel she dropped while taking a shower. It took 2-3 people to replace her job in the laundry room, which proved how proficient she was at her specialization. After back surgery at VGH and about a 1-year rehabilitation, she eventually was able to continue normal living but was not able to perform physical work of any kind again.

This new free time gave Minerva the opportunity to continue her talents in gardening, canning, and cooking. By this time she could have been ranked as an executive chef with her scrumptious food creations in the kitchen. Her yard at home on Otter Street exemplified the Garden of Eden with a golf-course-like lawn, beautiful roses and dahlias of all colors, fresh vegetables, and fruit trees (peaches, plums, apples, pears, and raspberries). It was always a welcome treat to stroll through the garden in the summer and stuff yourself with sweet raspberries right off the vines. Minerva canned or froze much of her harvest for use in the off-season months. Furthermore, Minerva's culinary skills remained very high for a long time. She became so fast and efficient that she could prepare a 5-course meal in less than an hour.

Because Minerva loved people and was very social, she devoted much of her free time helping older friends who were unable to drive, with rides to the grocery store, lunch, or a nice visit to the park.

During her early retirement years, Minerva could be found playing her favorite game, Bridge, multiple times per week at various locations around Abbotsford. She also enjoyed Bingo, Rummy-o and Skip-Bo. She continued these activities until her last days at Chartwell; still winning games. Winning was a special moment of self-satisfaction for her, as she would tell us when she won.

In 2017, Minerva had a successful heart valve replacement, but unfortunately this was followed two days later by a major stroke that severely affected her mental capacity (not physical capacity). It took her about a year to regain about 75% of her capacity. She had difficulty remembering some things, such as her favorite recipes. She also lost her ability to drive, an activity she loved most dearly with the privileged independence it gave her. Independent living in a condo had become a serious challenge for her. Two very close friends, Rosalva Thuncher and Leticia Villacorta were very instrumental in helping to rehabilitate Minerva during these days, allowing her to converse in her native mother tongue; Spanish. Her daughter-in-law Llyra, from Colombia, also had many Spanish speaking conversations with Minerva to help with her recovery. Her daughter-in-law Shawna and Granddaughter Lindsay prepared some nice meals for Minerva that she could conveniently take out of the freezer and heat up. Similarly, Clayton prepared some Colombian style soups and Paella that she always loved. Clayton would invite his mom over for bar-b-ques, which she loved in the Summer months.

Shawna stated, "I will miss Minerva dearly because she treated me like I was her daughter. She was the kindest person, and cared about everyone."

Granddaughter Lisa, stated, "Not only was she my grandma but I lost my best friend; The one person in the world that I could talk to about anything and

everything. Even with the limited words she later used in trying to describe things, I knew exactly what she was trying to say. I had mentioned to grandma many times that she was literally my best friend, and I wanted her to be my bridesmaid at my wedding. Grandma was the type of person who got really excited when others talked with excitement and enthusiasm about things. She would really brighten up my day, as I would hers. We talked every week, but now -nothing! A part of me is now missing,going from weekly chats on the phone to no longer hearing a single word of her sweet voice."

Lisa offered the following poem that helps describe how we miss Minerva:

Missing you

We don't know why you had to go

but we know that we will miss you so.

With your happy smile, and your sense of fun.

We can't take it in, that you are gone.

You brought joy to every life you touched and you are missed, so very much.

But, a beautiful soul lives on forever and memories of you we will always treasure.

Now your spirit, has been set free, to be with God, for eternity.

Enfolded in love, as you soar on high but for a while, we must say goodbye.

So Rest In Peace, free from all pain, till we meet in Heaven, united again. (author unknown)

Minerva began to realize that her declining health and compromised independence made life too challenging, and lonely too. So, with the help of her boys,it was decided it was time for something closer to a "stress-free" retirement &#8212; Assisted Living. Chartwell CedarBrooke Retirement Residence warmlywelcomed Minerva to their facilityon June 15th, 2019. During her initial 1-hour tour, she had already said hello to at least eight people she knew - she was popular having lived in Abbotsford for about 40 years. At this point she was very excited to move: She realized she could meet up with friends at Chartwell without having to drive anywhere and cook any more meals. She would describe her time at Chartwell like being on a 5-star cruise, without having to travel. The three meals per day were great, and she found the staff at Chartwell werecaring, heart-felt people, but still professional at every level of management.

Minerva expressed many times in the last several years how much she enjoyed her life, and how complete it really was. She maintained a positive outlook on life until the very end. She loved her three boys(equally) and her family and friends. Minerva was blessed with getting to see much of this beautiful earth that God created, and in her quiet faith, she also loved Jesus. Rest in peace, awesome wife, mother, mother-in-law, grandmother, sister, and friend. You will be missed so very much and will always have the most special place in all of our hearts. You were truly a beautiful person inside and out. We'll see you again in Heaven, and what a joyous day that will be.

A memorial service will be held at a future date when the current pandemic has

clearly passed by. Condolences may be directed to the family through <https://www.bakerviewcrematorium.com/>.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to the Heart and Stroke Foundation or the Red Cross. Minerva gave blood to the Red Cross over 50 times, saving many people.

