



Mrs. Mary Jean Brown

JUL 12, 1942 - MAR 24, 2011



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Mary Jean Brown, born July 12, 1942 in Tampa, Florida passed away on March 24, 2011. Jean taught 1st Grade at E.A. Lawhon Elementary in Pearland for 26 years.

She is survived by her loving husband of 46 years, Michael R. Brown; daughters, Lawren Hasten and husband Brian, Kim Jordan and husband Bill and Michelle Allardyce and husband Jeff; grandchildren, Sara Hasten, Colin Trevino, Travis Jordan and Austin Jordan; mother, Mary Alice Crawford; brother, Thomas L. Crawford and wife Linda; niece, Amanda Denn and husband Darrin; nephew, Lair Crawford and wife Amy; a host of other family and friends.

A gathering of family and friends will take place on Sunday, March 27, 2011 from 5:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. at the SouthPark Funeral Home. A Celebration of Jean's Life will be held Monday, March 28, 2011 at 10:00 a.m. in the Chapel of SouthPark Funeral Home with burial to follow at SouthPark Cemetery. Friends and Family are invited to gather at the Brown's residence immediately following the ceremony.

Mary Jean Crawford Brown I was born on July 12, 1942 to Herbert Eugene Crawford and Mary Alice Field Crawford in Tampa General Hospital on Davis Island, Tampa, Florida at 8:19pm. My mother's parents were Fred and Ethel Nichols Field. Fred's parents were August Field and Clara Alice McNeley Field. Ethel's parents were William Henry Nichols and Flora Carl Nichols. My dad's parents were Alman Andrew and Bessie Lou Ward Crawford. Alman's father was Thomas Crawford. At the time, my father had just joined the Navy and my mother was a registered nurse. She worked right up until I was born. Mom and Dad had met at a USO Dance in Tampa. Dad was from Georgia. We transferred to Chickasaw, Alabama when I was 6 months old while Dad was in the Navy. Then we moved back to Tampa when it was time for him to go overseas. My brother Thomas Lawrence Crawford was born on June 4, 1943. We lived in "The Bunglette" on Swawny Avenue until I was 8 years old. The



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Bunglette was a garage apartment at my mother's parent's house.. They would watch us kids while mother worked when Dad was away in the service. Dad had two sisters; my Aunt Virginia and Aunt Janelle. Aunt Janelle and Aunt Virginia lived with us in the Bunglette for about 6 months while their husbands were away in the service. While in the Navy, Daddy went to the Philippines and Japan and he brought back things from Japan like silk Kimonos and pajamas with the wrap belts. Larry and I used those for our Halloween costumes for several years. We didn't have any air conditioning and we had an actual ice box. Daddy worked as an ice delivery man while he lived in Tampa before he left for the Navy. I can remember sleeping on the porch and giving perms to my baby dolls. Larry and I used to play in the back yard and roller skate up and down the driveway. I remember picking avocados out of the yard after hurricanes and storms would come through. When we would go somewhere in the car, I could always see my grandmother through the kitchen window. She was always in the kitchen. We got to go to the Strawberry Street Library once a week if we were good. I always tried to be good because I loved going to the library. We ate a lot of meals at my grandparents. Grandmother was always baking lots of sweets. We were in and out of their house all of the time. She would always make us sit down and eat; we were always in a hurry to run off and play. She always made us eat healthy food before we could eat the sweets. I remember that when she would bake a cake, she would give us a saucer to decorate with icing. Grandmother would be the judge to decide which was better, and then we would eat all of the icing. There was a hammock hanging from the avocado tree and one day Larry and I were swinging a little neighbor girl named Carol Jean. We were trying to spin her all the way around; but when she was at the full height up in the air she fell straight down and broke her collar bone. We were so afraid we'd get in trouble for doing it, but all of our family was right there watching the whole time; so I guess we didn't get in trouble. Larry and I both went to preschool from ages 4 to 5. Then we went to Seminole Elementary. I liked it and band was my favorite subject. I was crushed if Mom would have to take me out to go to the doctor. I played the triangle. Then I went to Broward Elementary. My third Elementary school we went to was Twin Oaks Elementary. There I played the bells. I started private piano lessons at the age of 8. In the fourth grade, I was a



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majorette in the band with a baton and a cute little skirt and boots with tassels. Larry was a drum major. When I was in 3rd grade we lived on Bird Street and my best friend was Gay Parrish who lived near us. She was a majorette also and we would march and play outside every evening. We would have sleepovers and Larry would torment us when we were at my house. He and his friends, and Gay and I would try to put the water hose into the ground as far as we could until we'd get in trouble. My favorite subject was Geography and my least favorite was Math, but I got good grades then. Dad worked on banana boats at that time. He was in charge of the refrigeration. We had our first television here which was black and white with only 3 channels and a test pattern was on most of the time. Larry and I did a lot with our grandparents. We went to lots of dances at the Shriner's and fraternities. We loved ballroom dancing and playing cards with the adults. We weren't allowed to cry when we lost. If we had to cry, we had to leave the room. I spent a lot of time in the bathroom crying before I could go back out. It taught us good sportsmanship. I went to Oak Grove Junior High just two blocks away. I was a Girl Scout during Junior High. I was in band in Junior High and High School. We were up for Allstate Band and even made a record. We played for football games. My boyfriend was named Bob Sullivan and he was the quarterback for the football team and he played the flute in the band, but obviously not at the same time. He ended up running off with my friend Ruthie and got married later. My Best friend was Lynda Ackerly. We moved to the house on Knollwood. We had it built and it had a Florida room with a juke box and pinball machine in it. It had a built-in barbeque pit on the patio and we had lots of parties. They would usually start out as parties for us teenagers and then they'd turn into the adult parties. I got to change out the records on the juke box. It was nice; you'd just push a button to pick the next song. We'd often go to the drive-in on Friday nights and have dancing parties on Saturday nights at the house. Aunt Virginia, Uncle Teen, Linda, and Ronnie (my cousins) lived within 4 miles of us. I did a lot of babysitting. We'd go lots of places with them. We went to church with them at the Baptist church. Linda was 5 years younger and Ronnie was about 10 years younger than me. We went on camping trips in cabins with spiders in them. One year we had a Halloween party and a group of us teenagers went on a scavenger hunt. I can't believe they put a stop



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sign on the list. I don't think that they'd think we'd actually get one, but I did. I got the screwdriver and took it down myself. They made us put it back. In 1952 my Mom received a call from Grandfather Alman, my grandfather on my dad's side. He was retired from being the Tampa Chief of Police and he was an alcoholic. He thought he was calling someone else, but he told her that he had just killed his wife, Bessie. Mom called Aunt Virginia and went over and sure enough, he was just sitting on the end of the sofa and the police were there to arrest him. It appeared as though Grandmother Bessie had been in the kitchen preparing dinner and he shot her. I don't know where Dad was at the time. He must have been on the boat. I wasn't really aware of what was happening at the time but I do remember everybody having to go to court.

Grandfather Almond threatened to kill the whole family when he got out of jail. I started 9th grade at Chamberlain High School in Tampa. I only went there for 9 weeks and Dad moved us to Texas. We moved partly because of his dad's threat and partly to get a fresh start; get away from the people he was hanging out with (he was drinking too much), and start a new job he was offered. Mom had already packed him up and sent him away several times. He had started his own air conditioning business. He was doing the work just fine, but he was not good at collecting payment. What little he collected he spent on drinking. We rented a tiny condo on LaBranch Street. We lived there six months then rented a home in the Gulfgate area. I hated Texas. I did not want to move. I had to ride the city bus to school. In Florida, I just got in the band, and I was a pianist for the dance band, and I had everything going for me. I joined the band in Texas and it was the only class I was passing. I failed everything else. My father didn't understand how someone could fail PE. I said "it's easy if you don't dress out". We had to wear these "onesy" type outfits with bloomer shorts and a tie waste band. It was horrible. I was "sick" all of the time so I could go to the office. I ended up having to repeat the semester and make up classes in summer school. I graduated at the end of summer school. The summer after 9th grade, Larry and I took a Greyhound Bus back to Tampa and stayed with my Grandparents. I thought it would be better to live with them so I could be happy again; but it just wasn't the same there after all, so I decided to come back and straighten up and fly right. We bought a new house on Woodgreen in 1958. I didn't really have any



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boyfriends in high school until the senior year. I was always busy with the band. We didn't have any more big parties any more. We did go water skiing a lot. Dad got into different fads. For a while he was all about convertibles. Larry and I both had convertibles. I got my drivers license at the age of 17. I had to take the written test three times to pass. My car was a '54 Red Buick. Larry had a '53 Pontiac Convertible. Our dog, Buggs is in the back seat, really Larry's dog. In my senior year of high school I got engaged to Ellis Cunningham. He was in the Navy. We met through my father's work. His sister worked with my father. We were engaged for 9 months, with plans to marry after I graduated from high school. My father wanted me to wait until after I graduated college. I avoided wearing the engagement ring around him. I didn't do much of the senior activities like dances. So, my father took me to college and dropped me off at school in Huntsville. I started college at what was called at the time Sam Houston State College in September 1960. My major was Elementary Education. After about a month I realized that there were lots of other eligible guys out there so I called off the engagement. I tried to give the ring back but he wouldn't accept it. He said he'd just throw it in the deepest ocean. He was heartbroken. We tried dating again the next year but it didn't work out so I knew he was not the one for me. He eventually accepted the ring back. It may be on someone else's finger right now or in the deepest ocean; who knows. I enjoyed college. I dated, participated in activities, and met lots of different people. I worked in the cafeteria for 6 weeks and figured out that I didn't like that. My roommate, Gale took over for me and she would bring me breakfast in bed every morning. I helped students with piano. I worked in testing and guidance and was part time secretary the President, Dean Lowry. I tested seniors and prisoners on the ACT test. My second year I met Leon. We dated and went to his ranch. He was a real cowboy. His family ranch was called Buffalo Ranch, near Huntsville. We dated for about 2 years. I never had a ring but he proposed and we planned to marry after college. He was a history major and red headed. I guess I like red-heads. His career plans for the future was in politics. Then I met Michael Brown. I dated both of them for a little while. Leon broke up with me because of Mike. He went on to find another girlfriend. I met Mike through Larry. Larry and Mike were friends and one day Mike saw a picture of me in Larry's billfold



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and asked who it was and if he could set up a date. Our first date was a blind date and we went to a basketball game. It was winter and I was wearing a black coat and he says now that he wanted get that coat off of me so he could see my figure. He thought my hair was beautiful. We had lots of "Coke dates", where we would go to a restaurant and have cokes. We dated for 2 years and got engaged around Valentine's Day of my senior year, 1964. We went to the jewelry store to look at rings and a few days later he took me out to a little park, spread out a blanket on the ground, got down on one knee and proposed. Mike got a job when he graduated from Southwest School of Printing. He said we couldn't get married until he had a job and an apartment. The apartment was in Spring Branch. Mike and I got married on August 8th, 1964 at the Belford Church of Church of Christ in South Houston. The preacher's name was Farrell. I got baptized when I was 22, right after our engagement. Mike's mother insisted that I get baptized before we could get married. Mom made my wedding dress. The reception was at the church. My flowers were Tropicana roses. Sandra Williams was my Matron of Honor. We moved into another apartment after we got married. Six months later we moved to yet another apartment. My first job was working at a temp agency. I did that for about a year, working for oil companies such as Shell and Exxon, in background research and billing. Next I became one of the first Teacher Aides in Houston ISD. I helped teaching 1st Grade. One time Mike and I went camping in San Saba. There was a little cabin with a bed that had spring only, no mattress. It was so bad I ended up sleeping in the back seat of the car. I don't remember what Mike did. I never went camping again. I became pregnant with Lawren and worked until June. We moved into a little two bedroom rent house. Lawren Jean Brown was born in Sam Houston Hospital in Spring Branch on August 18, 1966. There were only 3 babies in that hospital and one was a boy, so I was pretty sure they gave me the right baby. Mike had been working the late shift so he came home from work and 2:00 am and had to go right to the hospital with no sleep. They had a whole team of nurses there to observe and I was a little embarrassed at having so many people watching. Mike tried to call Mom but Larry answered the phone and promptly fell asleep with the phone off the hook so Mike couldn't get through to Mom. She finally figured it out and made it to the hospital. I still named Lawren after



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him anyway. When Lawren was about 4 weeks old I had her on the changing table. I used to play with her feet and I heard her laugh for the first time and her laugh sounded just like mine. That was a special moment for me. Next I worked as a teacher aide for 2 years in HISD. Then I went to Aldine ISD and taught Kindergarten. I loved it and knew that teaching was really what I wanted to do. I had graduated college without a degree, so I went back to Sam Houston to get a degree in teaching. In September of 1969 we bought our first house in Aldine and only had to pay \$1.00. The loan on the house was \$18,000.00. During that time I became pregnant with Kim and had to quit teaching because you weren't allowed to be on campus if you were pregnant. Kimberly Kaye Brown was born on January 16, 1970 in Spring Branch Memorial Hospital. There were about 100 babies there and I wouldn't accept that she was my baby at first because of her dark hair, but the nurses assured me that she was mine. At about 6 weeks old she kept throwing up so we took her to the doctor and discovered that she was born with lymphoma (a lump in her lymph node in her neck). They did a biopsy, removed it and then everything was fine. In 1971 Mike got transferred to Virginia. At the time I only had to do 6 weeks of student teaching to complete my degree and start teaching. But in Virginia I would have had to take Virginia History to get my degree. I thought we would only be there a couple of years so decided not to finish my degree there. We move in September and Lawren started school right away. The first day of school she didn't get off the bus and I waited all afternoon. Finally I called the school and they found her asleep in the back of the bus. I was so worried. We took her to a flea market one time and she wouldn't hold our hands so we let her run off to teach her not to do that. We had her in our sights but she would always run the wrong way looking for us. Then she would panic. She was really shy and would not go to anybody which was embarrassing sometimes. She loved to play on her swing set with her imaginary friend. She would sometimes not make it to the bathroom because she didn't want to leave her friend. Mom and Dad got divorced soon after Kim was born. I needed Mom to stay with either Lawren so I could be at the hospital for Kim or for her to stay with Kim. Mom chose to stay with Kim at the hospital. Dad didn't like that and gave her an ultimatum, him or Kim. She chose Kim. One day we were all at dinner and talking about someone who was



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getting a divorce and Lawren told Mom "at least you are not divorced, Meemaw", and everyone had a good laugh because she just didn't know. Michelle Lynne Brown was born on November 9, 1972 at Saint Mary's in Virginia. She was due October 31 but she was late so they planned to have her on a specific day but that day all the beds were full so we had to wait a few more days. That was inconvenient because Mike had scheduled his vacation time to be home, so he had to reschedule. She finally decided to come into this world on the 9th. My first two babies came fast but Michelle took a long time. I started giving private piano lessons. It started with about 15 students a week after school. Kim would often sit on my lap as I taught the lessons. Then after they would leave she would play what the student was working on. She pretty much is a self-taught pianist. One day when she wasn't sitting on my lap, she and Lawren were playing outside. They were running around the outside of the house. We had a badminton net set up at the far end of the house. Kim didn't duck low enough under it and got her pony tail holder stuck in the net. I finished teaching my lesson and could hear her crying for help. She had twisted around so much that I ended up having to cut her out of the net. Another time Kim came in and sat on my lap and I could smell the aroma of campho phenique. I checked the bathroom and realized that she had brushed her teeth with it. I called poison control and after being berated for not keeping it out of her reach; they told me to give her milk. If she swallowed much she would throw it up, and if she didn't it meant she didn't swallow much and she would be fine. I had recitals at our house. After a time, there got to be so many students that I had to have it on two nights; then eventually had them at Larry's church. There were over 50 people and I made the piano cakes. I was the treasurer for the civic association for our neighborhood and we had Labor Day Block Parties every summer. The men did the barbeque and the women did the rest of the food. Those were good times. When we first got to Virginia I tried working for a day care. That lasted 1 1/2 days. That's when I decided to do piano lessons. I always wanted to be home for my kids because when I was young it seemed like my mother was always gone working. So the piano lessons helped financially and I could be at home when the kids got home from school. Then some people came to town from Texas we knew and he was starting at the YMCA. He wanted to start an educational program



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there, so I began as Director and Teacher. It started as 10 kids and grew to 60. We outgrew the room so they put a mobile trailer next to the building just for my program called Kinder Kollege. All the girls had the same Kindergarten teacher, Mrs. Bendall. She let me use her teaching supplies whenever she could. The girls took swimming lessons there and Kim and Michelle were students, and Lawren helped as an aide when she was older. Finally, I hired someone for help. Unfortunately it was the boss's wife and it wasn't working out so I had to get my boss to fire her. I hired Jean Collier who worked out well and we became good friends. I really wanted to be home when the kids got off the bus and be able to sit and talk. Of course all they wanted to do was go out and play with their friends. Then we'd all have dinner together at the kitchen table and I they all wanted to talk at they same time. My whole world revolved around my girls and I am so proud of them and still am to this day. I can never do enough for them in my mind. One year, Mom had come for Christmas and gone home to Texas. Then on New Year's Eve I had been feeling poorly and had a lot of bleeding. We had a party to go to that I really didn't want to miss. So I suffered through it and left right after midnight and threw up all the way home. Notice the pattern emerging of suffering through pain without regard for my health? We went right to the emergency room. So Mom had to come back before she even got unpacked to watch the kids. I had an ovarian cyst the size of a grapefruit and they had a hard time finding someone to do the surgery due to the holiday. It was during that time that Michelle pulled over the Christmas tree and busted ornaments went everywhere. My brother, Larry and his wife, Linda and Lair and their kids, Amanda moved to Richmond, VA in January of 1978. Larry was transferred there for his work. He started work in November of 1977. He stayed in Lawren's room while he was in town which Lawren wasn't too happy about, but he was out of town staying in hotels a lot too. He would always take us out to dinner when he stayed with us. One night we went out to a barbeque place on Midlothian and while we were eating an ice storm hit. Mike had to drive us back and we were sliding all over the road and only doing 10 to 15 MPH. We had no power that night and we sat around the fireplace roasting marshmallows. They bought a house in Parkwood. Mother was working at Methodist Hospital in Houston. Her neighborhood was going downhill



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fast so Larry and I decided we need to get her up in Virginia with us. So we told her she had to retire and moved her to a little house on Providence Road which my friend, the Hatcher's rented to her. We played cards a lot with either Larry and Linda or the Hatcher's taking turns going to each other's houses. It was fun until Mike would get mad and throw the cards and cuss and therefore ending the game. We took square dancing classes for a little while. Cindy Jones was my favorite day friend. I say day friend because Wally, her husband didn't like to play cards so we never saw them at night. We met them when we went to Jamestown. We recognized them from the neighborhood and thought it was funny for us all to have to go to Jamestown to meet each other. They had two daughters, Jennifer and Rebecca who were close to Kim and Michelle's age. Cindy and I joined weight watchers together. We both lost weight, but after our weekly weigh in we would always go to Dairy Queen for ice cream to celebrate. We started out at a small Church of Christ close to our house but decided to leave after we realized that we didn't agree with some of their philosophies. Then we went to Richmond Church of Christ on the other side of town. I taught Sunday school there and kept the kids active in Bible school and youth group activities. I also helped with the babies in the nursery at times. I remember one time we went to the beach after morning church and we all got really sunburned and we went to the evening service anyway. We all hurt. For our vacations we took road trips to Texas, Georgia, Florida, Tennessee, Washington DC, and Niagara Falls. When we went to Niagara Falls we took the boat ride on the Mist of the Sea. There were shooting a commercial with cameras from another boat and they told us not to wave, but we couldn't help it, we did anyway. Larry got transferred back to Texas after a few years so Mother went back with them but we weren't far behind. In December of 1981 Mike got transferred back to Texas. He went and lived with Larry while I stayed in Virginia so the kids could finish out the school year. We bought a house on Misty Lane in Pearland and moved on my birthday in 1982. The housing market was terrible at that time and it took us two years to sell the house in Virginia, so with two house payments we ate a lot of hamburger meat. I finished my student teaching through Sam Houston State University, teaching in Alvin ISD. After that I started substitute teaching in Pearland ISD, and then I began teaching 1st grade at Lawhon



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Elementary. I loved my job there for 26 years. The last 10 years I taught half of the day for reading/teaching recovery and the other half of the day I taught 1st grade. Elizabeth taught the other shift and we became good friends. I won teacher of the year for Lawhon and was the 1st runner up for Teacher of the District. I officially retired on June 30th, 2005. I worked for three more years tutoring in Pasadena ISD. We went to the Pearland Church of Christ for many years. I taught Sunday school class, vacation bible school, and helped with the youth group. One year we took the youth group to Lubbock in the snow when Lawren was in high school. That was a long drive with a van full of teenagers driving slowly in the snow. I was part of a Bunko game group for 2 or 3 years that played once a month taking turns at each other's houses. Lawren met and 2 years later married Brian Hasten at the Pearland Church of Christ by Louis White on July 6, 1985. Kim was injured in a head-on collision after she was out of high school and we took care of her for a whole summer. Brian and Lawren gave me my first grandchild, Sara on November 18, 1991. I went to Austin to help Lawren take care of Sara and herself the first week after she was born. Kim married Oscar Trevino in July of 1994 and gave me my first grandson, Colin on December 28, 1994. After Kim divorced Oscar she married Bill Jordan on July 26, 2003 in their home and gave me two step-grandsons from Bill's previous marriages, Travis and Austin. Michelle and Jeff Allardyce were married on January 22, 2000 in a beautiful, historic church in Galveston. In the year 2000 Mike retired so we traveled the US as often as we could. Over a five year period, we traveled to 45 of the 50 states by plane, train, and automobile. The only five states we didn't visit are Hawaii, North Dakota, Idaho, Oregon, and Washington. We have been to Canada and Mexico. We took a cruise to Alaska in the "Inside Passage", and visited Denali National Park from the ship by train. I was diagnosed with metastasized breast cancer on September 15, 2005. The cancer had metastasized to my bones. I was treated at MD Anderson. I took oral pills for 4 years then when they stopped working tried a couple of different pills. In April of 2009, after a couple of months of severe pain in my hip, I was scheduled to have surgery to install a steel rod in my femur. Unfortunately on the Sunday before the surgery, I stood and my hip/thigh broke. I went by ambulance to MD Anderson Emergency room and eventually was admitted and had the



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scheduled surgery performed a few days later. I stayed in MD Anderson Hospital for one month to recover then went home with home health care. I went back for radiation treatments and infusion cancer treatment. I gradually improved over the next year or so and could walk with a walker as far as from my garage door to the car in the driveway. I began to be able to get out more and go to my favorite restaurants like Gringo's and Olive Garden. Then in August of 2010 I started to feel worse and went back to MD Anderson for a check-up on my leg and felt so bad that I went straight to the emergency room after my doctor visit. It was then that they discovered that the cancer had spread to my liver and my lungs. After I was released from the hospital I began chemotherapy. I had treatments once a week for 3 weeks, and then off for one week. That cycle wasn't too bad. Then I had 3 more treatments and did not tolerate that as well. I began to feel very poorly, couldn't eat or taste food, and was very weak and in pain. On a Monday in early October I had an appointment with Dr. Juarez, my Endocrinologist in Friendswood. Mike and Kim helped me get to the car and Lawren met us at the clinic to help and as soon as I got in the waiting room I began to feel so badly that we had them call an ambulance and take me to the emergency room. I went to Southeast Memorial and stayed for about a week, then went to Triumph Long Term Hospital for a month. I spent Thanksgiving there and Mike, and my girls with their husbands and kids came to see me and bring me Thanksgiving dinner. I went home the week after Thanksgiving. I have such great friends and family who visit me all the time and bring us meals. One of my greatest pleasures has been traveling. Mike and I love going gambling in Delta Downs, Grand Coushatta, Isle of Capri before the hurricane wiped it out, and casinos in the other states we traveled to like Oklahoma and Connecticut. In Connecticut there was a nice casino on a beautiful plantation. The only problem was that when we tried to find our hotel the GPS kept putting it on a ramp. We had to go around in circles until we finally found it. We traveled to the head of the Mississippi river and stopped in a town called Lacrosse, just like the name of my car. We have been to the Badlands, the Blue Ridge Mountains, and Redwood forest in California, Statue of Liberty, Niagara Falls, and Monticello, my favorite place in Virginia. My favorite places I've been are Alaska, Tennessee, Mount Rushmore, South Dakota, Branson, Missouri, Lake Tahoe



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and Salt Lake City, Utah. I have been truly blessed by having my family close by and always having had a great relationship with them all. I have had great friends who have shown to be true friends. The things I have cherished most are my husband and daughters, traveling, and teaching the children. I have always loved the children.

Written and compiled by Lawren Hasten

as relayed by Jean Brown

3/17/2011



Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Mary by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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