



Rose Liberto

July 15, 1955 - May 7, 2020

Rose Robinson Liberto, a hospital nurse of Charlotte, N.C., died on May 7, 2020, of covid-19. She was 64.

Rose was a sister, a mother, a “Nana,” a beloved aunt and godmother, a high school development director and a longtime Girl Scout leader for three separate troops of girls.

She was best known for her work helping patients recuperate on the medical surgical wing of Atrium Health Cabarrus hospital, where she also mentored and trained dozens of nurses.

Rose was born in New Orleans, La., to the late Murl and Rose Robinson. She grew up in Algiers, a neighborhood in New Orleans, surrounded by a loving, if loud, family, complete with five siblings. She graduated from O Perry Walker high school in 1973. She later earned her associate degree in nursing from Delgado Community College around 2004.

She met her late, ex-husband, Peter Frank Liberto, while working as a file clerk at the law firm they both worked for. The two were married in 1974 and raised four children. Rose was active in the St. Dominic Church and School community in New Orleans.

She devoted herself to community service, volunteering as troop leader for her three daughters’

Girl Scout troops. She also volunteered as a Meals on Wheels delivery driver. And for many years, she worked as a first aid and CPR trainer for the American Red Cross.

Rose loved singing, usually to John Denver tunes, and cooking New Orleans dishes like jambalaya and red beans and rice. When she wasn’t playing or “stealing snuggles” with grandkids, she spent her free time reading and doing cross stitch. She loved camping and taking trips to the mountains with her sisters and daughters.

Rose was a survivor of stage four Hodgkin’s lymphoma cancer. Months of aggressive

chemotherapy inspired her to start a new career in nursing in her mid 40s, while also weakening her lungs forever.

She worked as a nurse first at East Jefferson General Hospital in Metairie, La. While she was one of the oldest, newest nurses, she quickly learned that life experience was a great asset when it comes to taking care of patients. After losing her house in New Orleans to the floodwaters of Hurricane Katrina, she moved with her daughter Shannon Liberto and her eldest grandson to Charlotte, N.C., where her son David Liberto and daughter Katy Janssen had both settled and started families.

She got a nursing job at Atrium Health Cabarrus hospital in Concord, N.C., where she worked for roughly a decade. Rose loved her job, possibly nearly as much as she loved her family. She treated patients with respect, dignity and great care. And she was also known as a fantastic teacher who would take on newly minted nurses and show them the ropes, with lots of extracurricular tidbits on how to have fun on the job threaded with extra safety precautions, so young nurses could protect themselves.

When the pandemic struck, Rose knew and talked about the dangers of continuing to work each day. But she also said she wasn't ready to stop working or retire, especially in the middle of a crisis. Her unit didn't typically handle covid cases. Yet, in April, Rose told her children that she and several coworkers took care of at least one patient who eventually went on to test positive for covid-19. She said she believed she had been exposed.

She celebrated Easter Sunday on April 12 with her family via a raucous Zoom call, where the family laughed and teased each other about Zoom backgrounds. When the call ended, Rose started crying, acknowledging to her daughter Katy Janssen that she feared it would be the last time she'd see everyone together. She had a cough and tickle in her throat she said were due to allergies.

By April 14, Rose developed a fever and shortness of breath, amid other flu-like symptoms. On April 16, she was admitted to the hospital, where she worked, and tested positive for covid-19. (Her daughter Shannon and grandson Sean Liberto also tested positive for covid-19 and have since recovered.)

During her stay at the hospital, Rose's feisty personality shined through. She tried to argue her way out of being transferred to the ICU, as her condition deteriorated. While in ICU, when a nurse trainee was trying to draw her blood, not all that successfully, Rose grabbed the needle and tube and drew her own blood, bragging to her children later, "I still

got it.”

The same evening she drew her own blood, Rose’s breathing got much worse. Her doctors suggested she would not survive without a ventilator. She spoke with her sisters and all four of her children for the last time. They traded many rounds of “I love you’s.” And Rose warned her family to prepare for the likelihood that she would not survive the ventilator. On April 22, Rose agreed to go on the ventilator.

Rose spent 15 days on a ventilator, while ICU nurses worked tirelessly around-the-clock to care for her. They flipped her onto her belly daily to get more oxygen to the back of her lungs. They kept her clean, calm and sedated. And they answered the phone twice daily in her ICU room, so her children and sisters could continue to chat with her, even though she couldn’t respond.

Despite several rounds of antivirals and one unit of convalescent plasma, which helped for a few days, her condition continued to deteriorate.

The afternoon she died, her daughter Katy was in her room, holding her hand. Her sisters and other children were there via Facetime. The nurses laid a rose and a pink stethoscope on her warm fuzzy brown blanket. And dozens of coworkers and nurses lined the hallways outside of the ICU to show their support for Rose and her family.

Her children will miss her deeply, especially this Mother’s Day. Rose had lived with her daughter Shannon, 38, and her two grandsons, Sean and Dominic, over much of the past decade. They’ll remember how she delighted in regularly making Sunday brunch, even after working late Saturday night shifts.

“She drove me crazy. But there was nobody else that I’d rather live with. She was my best friend and she was the one I could count on,” said her daughter Shannon.

Survivors include her son, David Liberto and wife Frances of Charlotte; daughters, Jennifer Liberto and husband Theodore Francis of Washington D.C., Shannon Liberto of Charlotte and Katy Janssen and husband Brendan of Concord; 10 grandchildren; siblings, Sharon Pierson, Michael Robinson, Mark Robinson and April Robinson. She is preceded in death by her sister, Donna Griffin.

A small, private graveside service will be held at Northlake Memorial Gardens. A separate memorial service for friends and family will take place later this summer, when social distancing standards relax. In lieu of flowers, please consider donating money, blood or

plasma to Blood One or the American Red Cross or donating to groups that provide personal protective equipment to frontline hospital workers.

James Funeral Home of Huntersville is serving the family.

www.jamesfuneralhomeLKN.com

Comments



“ Thank you for services and for having a caring heart. You are with you father resting in his comforting arms. May God be with your family during these difficult times. SIP Ms. Rose

stacey strickland - May 14 at 12:49 AM



“ May she rest in peace.

Timothy Griffin - May 13 at 10:52 AM



“ April, I'm so sorry to hear about your sister. She died caring for others. She is a true hero. My prayers for her, you and your family.

Mary Vernoy - May 12 at 11:32 AM



“ Nesha W. lit a candle in memory of Rose Liberto



Nesha W. - May 11 at 10:23 PM



“ Thelma Grant lit a candle in memory of Rose Liberto



Thelma Grant - May 11 at 10:17 PM



“ Delaine Morton lit a candle in memory of Rose Liberto



Delaine Morton - May 11 at 09:39 PM



“ Shannon lit a candle in memory of Rose Liberto



shannon - May 11 at 06:34 PM



“ Healing & Hope Sympathy Basket was purchased for the family of Rose Liberto.



May 10 at 09:59 PM



“ Your WSJ Washington bureau family purchased the Peaceful White Lilies Basket for the family of Rose Liberto.



Your WSJ Washington bureau family - May 08 at 05:41 PM