



Rita C Simons

September 26, 1935 - May 1, 2026

Rita Catherine Augustine Simons

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Rita Catherine Augustine was born on September 26, 1935, in Carroll, Iowa, to Leo and Elizabeth Augustine. She grew up on the family farm with her three siblings: Eunice, Alvina, and her younger brother, Robert.

Growing up on the family farm gave Rita cherished memories and many stories she loved to share. Although she lost her father at the young age of 15, he left a lasting impact on her life, instilling in her a love of animals and kindness toward all living beings. Some of her fondest childhood memories included raising and caring for a fawn named Snooks, whom her father found on the side of the road during a cattle-buying trip out West, as well as her pony and various cattle she raised and showed, including at the International Livestock Show in Chicago.

Rita attended college at Duchesne College in Omaha. On a weekend visit home, she met her future husband, Gerald “Jerry” Simons, at a dance at the Starline Ballroom in Carroll. They were married for 68 years. Even after the building stood empty, for years she would point to the Starline Ballroom on visits back to Carroll and say, “That’s where I met your father.” Together, they had three children: Tia, Christie, and Brad. Rita and Jerry eventually moved to the Twin Cities to raise their family.

Rita valued learning and experiencing life as she and Jerry raised their children, passing on the values of knowledge and adventure. She planned

many experiences for her children during school breaks, including museum visits, field trips, and performing arts events. She learned to ski and enrolled her children in ski lessons, laying the groundwork for many family ski trips out West. Even breaking her arm one winter did not deter her, because time together as a family on the slopes was too important. In the summer, she traded skis for golf clubs and paddles, planning canoe trips to the Boundary Waters and spending hours kayaking on the Minneapolis lakes. Throughout her life, she continued taking college courses to expand her knowledge and explored her creative side through sewing, pottery, and weaving projects. After moving to Florida, breakfast on the beach, no matter the weather, was one of her favorite things to do.

The foundation of Rita's life was her faith. She not only actively practiced her faith, but also deepened it through Bible study groups, Eucharistic ministry, church board leadership, work at the Archdiocese of St. Paul, and service as a librarian at a parochial school in Minneapolis.

Most of all, Rita will be remembered for her warm, cheerful, and positive personality. She was unselfish and generous with her time and attention. She was filled with happiness, appreciation, and excitement for all of life's experiences. She loved her family more than anything and always showed up with a smile on her face. She was a cheerful soul with an overwhelming sense of positivity.

Rita passed peacefully surrounded by her family. God called her while her family held her hands in prayer. It is fitting that she was called home on May 1, a day recognized in the Catholic faith as the feast associated with the patron saint of a happy and peaceful death.

Rita is survived by her husband Gerald Simons, her three children Tia Simons (Tim Esse), Christie Wood (Greg) and Brad Simons (Nikki); along with six grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.

Grandchildren: Camille Hutchens, Gwen Hutchens (Eric Abrial), Max Hutchens (Lili), and Jake, Zach, and Nick Simons

Great-grandchildren: Remy Dechery, Micah Hoffman, June Hutchens, Henri

Abrial and Baby Abrial due October 2026

Rita is also survived by her sister Eunice Ausman of Carroll IA, and many beloved nieces, nephews, sister-in-law's and friends

A Funeral Mass will be held Saturday, June 27, at 11:00 am at St. John the Evangelist Catholic Church, 625 111th Avenue North, Naples, Florida

Interment will be at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church, Mount Carmel, Iowa

To sign her guest register or to leave condolences please visit www.shikanyfuneralhome.com.

Shikany's Bonita Funeral Home Family Owned and Operated since 1978 is in charge of arrangements.

Upcoming Events

Mass of Christian Burial

JUN 27. 11:00 AM (ET)

St. John the Evangelist Catholic Church
625 111th Avenue North
Naples, FL 34108