



Henrietta Alexander

December 8, 1943 - February 25, 2025

We sadly announce that Henrietta Alexander, known as Retta to her friends, died February 25, 2025, at the age of 81. She was free spirited and young at heart until her health suddenly failed her. Henrietta was born December 8, 1943, in San Antonio to Henry Nance Jr. and Omah (Thomas) Lewis and lived her childhood and early adult lives in Chicago. She was the oldest child in a family of five children that included Burt, Carnell, Donald, and Anthony Lewis. Henrietta graduated from Harrison Technical High School in Chicago where she developed her creative endeavors, including sewing, dancing, fashion, and music. Soon after graduating, she married Alvin Mills with whom she had three children: Angela, Craig, and Tyrone.

As with many families that have complex stories, Henrietta discovered her father Henry Nance Jr. in her early adulthood. One year later, after a visit to San Antonio, she moved her family there with her second husband, Joseph Alexander, where she, again, was the oldest child in Henry and Gladys Nance's family that included Brenda, Herbert, Cynthia, Bryan, Deborah, Phyllis, and Wendell. Henrietta and Joseph had one son together, Joseph Bertrell Alexander.

Chicago helped shape Retta's and her young family's roots, San Antonio helped her connect with a side of her family she did not know growing up, and New Orleans let her express her creativity in her wardrobe, food, and music

and festival celebrations. Henrietta enjoyed traveling, bowling, playing cards, casino slot machines, and a good drink--a daiquiri, Baileys Irish Cream, and Lambrusco that Craig introduced to her for their weekly Saturday dinners all worked. Still, to remain active and alert, Henrietta worked until recently, helping care for Dr. Thomas Irwin's wife, Martha, with whom she developed a close bond, and they treated her like family.

Henrietta was a beloved mother, grandmother, great-grandmother, sister, and friend to many. She will be missed deeply by those whose lives she touched with her kindness and warmth. She is survived by her: daughter, Angela Robinson; sons Craig and Tyrone; numerous grandchildren, including Janeice Nicole (Christian) Vaughan, Bertrell Thomas, Brandon Mills, and Mykeia, Joquille, Joquinne, Joseph B. Alexander and others; great-grandchildren Jayla and Jordyn Vaughn, Bertrell, Aaliyah, Myreon Thomas and others; sisters Cynthia (William) May, Deborah Nance-Bradley, and Phyllis (Pastor Walter) Williams; and brothers Donald (Andrea) Lewis and Herbert Sr. (Linda) and Wendell (Gladys) Nance.

Additionally, Henrietta leaves behind a host of in-laws, nieces and nephews, cousins, and friends, most notably her best friend for over 60 years, Billie Williams.

The following preceded in her death: parents Omah Lewis and Henry Nance Jr.; stepfather Carnell Lewis; stepmother Gladys Nance; husbands Alvin Mills and Joseph Alexander; son Joseph Bertrell Alexander; sister Brenda (Nance) Toney; and brothers Burt, Carnell, and Anthony Lewis, and James, Larry, and Bryan Nance; and grandson Joseph (Jojo) Alexander.

Rest in peace, Henrietta; you will live on in the memories and hearts of those who loved you.

We will hold a memorial service in Henrietta's honor and will announce the details soon.

New Orleans Funeral and Cremation Service
"Celebrating Life"