

## GABRIELA CABEZAS



GABRIELA CABEZAS (née GABRIELA MADARIAGA AUDIFFRED) On October 15, 2014, with her family by her side, Gabriela Cabezas passed away peacefully at the age of 67 following a long and courageous battle with cancer. Throughout it all, she remained positive and never questioned her faith. She continuously spread her eloquent and loving message of hope, love, and light to her family, friends, and the greater community through visits and e-mails. Gabriela firmly believed that her departed sister Teresita and brother Luis Humberto would return in spirit to help her cross over to life eternal where she would be reunited with the many family members and friends she had the privilege of knowing and loving here in this earthly world. Left to mourn her are her beloved husband Tono, daughter Marcela (Brendan McManus), beloved grandsons Nathan and Kellan McManus, and siblings Luis Horacio Madariaga Audiffred, Jorge Madariaga Audiffred and Lourdes Calande, as well as extended family and friends in Mexico, Chile, Canada, the United States and throughout the world. The eldest of six children, Gabriela was born in Mexico City on July 17, 1947. Following her formal education in Mexico, she worked for the Nestle Company and then for the American Chamber of Commerce as an Executive Bilingual Secretary. This was where she met some of her oldest and dearest friends and learned the values of teamwork, loyalty, and responsibility. Gabriela was a passionate writer and possessed a true love for languages. She fluently spoke Spanish, English, Italian and some French. Although she had studied English since the age of six, she found it humorous that people always commented on her accent when speaking English. In 1975, she decided to come to Winnipeg for a few months, which eventually stretched into the next four decades. She proudly worked at the newly opened Mexican Consulate that year. Ann Ross, Director of the Mount Carmel Clinic, offered her a position in 1976 as a secretary and interpreter for Chilean refugees. Accepting that position ultimately changed the course of her life. While working at Mount Carmel Clinic, she attained Landed Immigrant Status. More importantly however, it was at Mount Carmel where she met her future husband Tono. He would be her companero for the next 36 years that were blessed with immeasurable love and laughter. Gabriela then embarked upon her career as the confidential secretary for the University of Manitoba Book Store at the Fort Garry Campus. Here she made many dear friends over her 34 years of loyal service. For the 1999 Pan American Games, Gabriela was selected as one of 20 people to be trained as an official translator and interpreter for the Games. Through this event, she forged special friendships with several of her peers who she would come to call her familia elegida. Gabriela was very involved in her community. Her many contributions included being a founding member of the steering committee for The Immigrant Women's Association of Manitoba, a founder of the Spanish Community Mass at St. Ignatius Parish, and founding member of the first Mexican-Canadian Association of Manitoba. As well, she volunteered weekly for years at Al Café, a coffee house organized by Winnipeg's Chilean community. She also worked tirelessly on several projects to raise awareness regarding the plight of political prisoners in Chile. Family was the cornerstone of Gabriela's life. She was a devoted and loving wife, mother, grandmother, and sister. She

and Tono considered each day together to be a blessing. Together they forged a marriage that was filled with love, compassion, support, and understanding. Together they opened their hearts, minds, and home to many friends whom they considered to be part of their family. Gabriela taught her daughter Marcela of the many valuable life lessons she had learned from the four generations of strong women before her. Gabriela loved her daughter deeply and was extremely proud of Marcela and her accomplishments. Marcela married Brendan, whom she considered to be the son she and Tono never had but had always wanted. Her grandchildren, Nathan and Kellan completed her family. These two wonderful boys brought immense joy, love, and laughter to her life. They were a source of strength and inspiration. Gabriela repeatedly gave thanks for this great country that provided her with the care she required. She was thankful for the many kind doctors, nurses, health-care aides, therapists, facilitators, transportation volunteers, support group members, and social workers she met through CancerCare Manitoba and the W.R.H.A. Palliative Care Program who helped her throughout this long and difficult journey. Gabriela wanted to extend a special thank you to Dr. Marshall Pitz and Dr. Paul Daeninck for their compassion and kindness. As per Gabriela's wishes, cremation has taken place. In lieu of a funeral, Gabriela requested a Celebration of Life event be held. It is open to friends and family alike and will take place at 2:00 p.m. on Saturday, October 25 at the St. Boniface Golf Club located at 100 Youville Street in Winnipeg. Gabriela will be remembered at the Spanish Mass on Sunday, October 19 at 3:40 p.m. at St. Ignatius Parish, 255 Stafford Street, Winnipeg. In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be made to CancerCare Manitoba.