



Ms. Rita Veronica Leanza

May 2, 1936 - April 2, 2022

Rita Veronica Leanza was born in Brooklyn, New York on May 2, 1936, to her parents, Charles Leanza, and Lena (Bavuso) Leanza. She passed away April 2, 2022, just shy a month of her 86th birthdate. She was Sister to Vito Charles Leanza (deceased) and Aunt to Charles Victor Leanza, Jeanann (Missi) (Leanza) Melton, husband Dale Melton and Veronica Lena (Leanza) Williams, husband Jeffrey Williams as well as Great Aunt to Savannah and McKinnon Williams and Tyler Scoggins. Sister-in-law to Ann Leanza.

Although she was an Aunt, her nieces and nephew embraced her more like a “Second” mother, referring to her as their Hero. From the time her immediate nieces and nephew were born, she loved and treated them like her own children. She was always ever present in their lives to influence and assist them in achieving their best life. She doted over her great nieces and nephew like they were her grandchildren. She loved giving each one of them kisses (baci baci). She instilled love of family and traditions to be carried on.

She made a wonderful life for herself! She knew from a young age that she wanted to be a teacher and she made it happen. She spent most of her teaching career in Brooklyn at PS 179 (approx. 28 yrs.) and then became Assistant Principal at PS 170 after earning her Masters. She retired in December of 1995. One of life’s special moments to her was when she attended the 100-year anniversary of the school. To her surprise, students got up and affirmed to her what a special teacher she was to them. Soon after, there was a luncheon held in a restaurant in Brooklyn attended by approx. 25

students in her honor only. She was so touched by these occasions, she talked endlessly about them. To this day, countless numbers of her students revere her as one of their most favorite teachers they ever had. Some speak about her and the impact she made on their lives, crediting her with why and how they chose their careers in life. They also mention they too have a love of Opera music because Ms. Leanza played it in the classroom all the time. She travelled the whole world over visiting such places as Russia, Japan, England, Ireland, Germany, France, Egypt, countless trips to Italy, Canada, Alaska, cross-country in the U.S.A. and Cruises in Europe many times. Her most cherished place she visited however was Israel because she got to walk where Jesus walked. She raved about that trip for many years but also repeatedly talked of her trip to Italy travelling to see the preserved body of Saint Rita in the Italian Province of Perugia, which is north of Rome. She made these trips with family and lifelong special friends. She had some of the most devoted friends a person could ever have. Lastly, regarding travel, she planned in much detail a Leanza family trip to Italy and Sicily, not once but twice. 32 people accompanied her. She lost her voice being an interpreter to many, but she didn't mind.

Third to her love of family and travelling was her love of Opera music. She had such a passion for it! She was an annual member of The Metropolitan Opera in Manhattan. She got to meet her favorite opera singer Jose Carreras. He surprised her with her favorite flower, a bouquet of Red Roses. She attended quarterly her Mario Lanza Opera Luncheons that featured in person Opera Singers.

She was a true New Yorker through and through. Many can attest to this fact for many reasons. She drove like a NY City Cab Driver and knew her way around Manhattan like the back of her hand. She attended Broadway plays like many of us attend movies. She always knew the best places to go and loved to show family and friends around when they visited.

She was fierce and force to be reckoned with because of the FIGHT in her. She loved all her family, including extended family, and friends with such

profound loyalty and affection. She was a great storyteller about her life in general. She loved to talk about family history and told many stories about it. She thought of her students as all her children. She was an Ovarian Cancer survivor and would have completed 5 years of remission October 2022. She was one of the most generous people you could ever meet! She has left an indelible impression in many minds that will never be forgotten. "Our Hearts of broken now but our memories of her will make us smile again!"

Previous Events

Visitation

APR 9. 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM (ET)

Northside Chapel Funeral Directors & Crematory
12050 Crabapple Road
Roswell, GA

Funeral Service

APR 9. 2:00 PM (ET)

Northside Chapel Funeral Directors & Crematory
12050 Crabapple Road
Roswell, GA

Tribute Wall

CD

“ 2 files added to the tribute wall



Chris DiMarco - April 18, 2023 at 10:35 AM

CD

I was so very sorry to hear about Rita's passing. I would have attended her wake/ funeral if I had heard sooner. Rita was truly such a caring, sincere and loving friend to my mom Eleanor Colucci. They were in grammar school together (🎓 photo above) and spent a great amount of time with each other during their younger years. Rita was also in my mom's wedding party. They had lost touch, each busy in their daily lives. As life often tends to do. As the years went on, Rita actually tracked down my mom. From that time on Rita became a big part of my mom's life again. Celebrating birthdays, going to shows, dinners, visiting friends, and of course going to operas. My mom always looked forward to their times together. I was so happy to have met Rita. She made me feel so very special and was as proud of me as my mom was when I received my masters in education. She had a very special way about her. I am so very grateful for the time she and my mom spent together. She truly gave my mom many special, and happy memories. Rita also loved my grandmother so very much, and often talked about the times she spent at my grandmother's house when she was younger. The colorful photo above is Rita with my grandmother at my grandmother's 100th birthday, along with my mom, Ida, and Claudia. Rest in peace Rita. I'm so glad I had the pleasure of meeting such a GREAT lady. I'm sure upon your passing my mom was up above waiting to greet you. I'll always remember what a GREAT, SINCERE, and TRUE friend you were to my mom. Rest in peace sweet lady. ❤️ 🙏 And my sincere sympathy to Rita's family. She spoke of you all often and loved you all very much.

Chris DiMarco - April 18, 2023 at 11:19 AM



“ Ms. Rita Veronica Leanza

October 08, 2022 at 11:37 AM



“ I was in Miss Leanne’s class and PS 179 in Brooklyn in 1966. I kept in touch with her over the years unfortunately I moved to Florida when I retired and just heard about her passing I do want to say that she was the best teacher anyone could ever have for her love of opera traveling and tradition she made a great impact on my life and they will never be anyone like her. May rest in peace Miss Lanza and may God hold you in his arms. Cathy Giordano

cathy giordano dominguez - July 09, 2022 at 04:58 PM



“ I had the privilege of knowing “Aunt “Rita for about 30 years or so. A couple of things that really stand out in my mind was Rita’s zeal for life. She really did make the most out of the time that she had on this earth. Then there is the amazing bond she had with her nieces and nephews, loving them as if they were her own children. She absolutely was like their second mother. On a lighter note, there are 2 things I learned from Rita to never do. One, never refer to Rita as a “bridge and tunnel“ person. That absolutely infuriated her and secondly, never ever cut her off in traffic! She could drive with the best of them including any New York City cab driver. I can still hear her yelling out the window, “up yours with gauze” ... Which of course still makes me laugh to this day. She was a special lady that will definitely be missed.

Kandy Parciasepe - April 09, 2022 at 06:51 PM



“ *Serene Retreat was purchased for the family of Ms. Rita Veronica Leanza.*



April 09, 2022 at 10:17 AM



“ *I am so sorry to hear of the loss of our Beloved Miss Leanza. In 6th grade, I had Miss Kimberg, who team taught with Miss Leanza. Miss Kimberg would teach Miss Leanza’s class about science and Miss Leanza would share her love of opera with us. I wish I could tell you that I developed a love of opera, but it certainly wasn’t due to her lack of passion in sharing her love of it with us. In high school, I wound up becoming a “Deadhead,” a lifetime fan of the Grateful Dead. Not exactly operatic, but certainly a style of music that evokes passion among its fans; the kind of passion that our Miss Leanza possessed and lovingly shared.*

Ken Berger - April 08, 2022 at 08:22 PM

W'

“ My memory of Miss Leanza was that of what many of us share in common an introduction to Music and opera - I cannot recall another teacher that I had that was like her - maybe my love of music - in many forms That still influence my life today was in part or whole from my experience from the teachings of Miss Leanza / I can still recall the boxed sets of opera records that crept into my collection -La Boemme / Madame Butterfly to name a few - hearing the news of her passing saddened me / all the comments I read cemented my everlasting memory of her as it looks like we all were given the same as if we were all one - may her legacy live on in all our hearts - grateful I was privileged to be at the luncheon for her a few years ago -her memory will be for a blessing - in our hearts forever - thank you Miss Leanza

warren berger- proud student class '67 - April 08, 2022 at 07:17 PM

JA

“ To my amazing cousin Rita, who taught me so much in my life. Both of us from Brooklyn, her my older cousin and mentor. Every Sunday, my dad would take me to Aunt Lena's home to visit with them and Nona (our grandma). Rita would talk to me and give me an insight on life. I loved you so much and miss you so much. We spoke at Christmas and you remembered me, it brought tears to my eyes. You were my hero, did everything you wanted to do in your life. Travelled everywhere, attended the opera, and got to know the tenor Jose Carreras. You had a great life and you are loved by many. Everyone who you came in contact with, including your students, saw that you had something very special about you. May you Rest In Peace and now you will be with your mom and dad, Aunt Lena and Uncle Charlie.

Jean Aurilia-Bavuso - April 08, 2022 at 06:36 PM



“ *Arrive in Style was purchased for the family of Ms. Rita Veronica Leanza.*



April 08, 2022 at 12:05 PM



“ *Miss Leanza was my favorite teacher at PS 179. I can still hear her saying “ While in my class I am your second mother” As a 4th grader my love of Opera comes directly from her. Like a 4 leaf clover she was rare and special. She will be missed. Rest in Peace*

Susan - April 08, 2022 at 05:34 AM



“ *Miss Leanza was simply the best teacher I ever had. Kind. Caring. I became a teacher and think of her everyday. I am so glad I got to see her as an adult to tell her how much she meant to me and how she inspired me.*

linda - April 07, 2022 at 08:17 PM

TM

“ Miss Leanza was an outstanding teacher and a second mom to so many of her 4th grade students. Her kindness, devotion, and genuine love for her students and career made her so special. She helped us strive to be the best we could be and introduced us to the world of opera and the arts. I cherish the time many of my classmates and I spent with Miss Leanza at a reunion.

My deepest condolences to all of her family, May you find comfort knowing how many lives your aunt had a positive impact on.

Rest In Peace Miss Leanza. You will forever be missed.

Terry Kaye

Terry Kaye Munsky - April 07, 2022 at 03:45 PM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Ms. Rita Veronica Leanza.



April 07, 2022 at 03:03 PM

CN

“ Class of 1965 PS 179 Brooklyn, NY purchased the Lavender Reflections Spray for the family of Ms. Rita Veronica Leanza.



Class of 1965 PS 179 Brooklyn, NY - April 07, 2022 at 12:48 PM

EM

“ To The Leanza, Melton and Williams Families,

It is hard to believe that over her career your Aunt Rita had a positive impact on thousands of students and I was one. My classmates and I were lucky to have had here as our teacher some 60 years ago and it was astounding that we were able to celebrate a reunion with her all these years later. There were many laughs and many memories shared that day.

My condolences to you all and may her memory be for a blessing..

Eddy Miller



eddy miller - April 07, 2022 at 09:59 AM

VS

“ Vicky and Santo Scacco purchased the Sweet Tenderness for the family of Ms. Rita Veronica Leanza.



Vicky and Santo Scacco - April 06, 2022 at 03:47 PM



“ Pink Tribute Spray was purchased for the family of Ms. Rita Veronica Leanza.



April 06, 2022 at 09:32 AM



“ *Lavender Reflections Spray was purchased for the family of Ms. Rita Veronica Leanza.*



April 06, 2022 at 07:11 AM



“ *Be My Love Bouquet with Red Roses was purchased for the family of Ms. Rita Veronica Leanza.*



April 05, 2022 at 02:51 PM



“ *Rita was a wonderful and loving woman. She helped me so much through a lot of difficult memories from my past. I am so pleased to have known her for over 30 years. She will always be in my heart and I will always cherish the good times and memories I had with her and the family.*



*Sincerely with love,
Janine Krutsinger*

Janine Krutsinger - April 05, 2022 at 02:14 PM



It was a pleasure to come to know Rita and hear her stories.i love her!! Her family always make me feel like family. I will miss being Rita's caretaker and I will always remember her.i tried to learn Italian from her but just couldn't get it!!

christeen sellers - April 05, 2022 at 03:34 PM

VS

We were good friends of Rita's brother, Vito. At his demise, we had the pleasure of meeting Rita and her beautiful niece, Veronica, Vito's daughter. We formed a bond with both of them. It was an honor to have known Rita and always enjoyed her company. She especially loved sharing stories with my husband, Santo who was born in Sicily. Our hearts are broken to hear this news. She was a remarkable woman and will be truly missed. May God grant her eternal life in heaven. Also our deepest condolences go to Veronica and family as well They're like family to us. Love you all

Vucky & Santo Scacco - April 05, 2022 at 04:17 PM

EI

For the last 60 years, Rita Leaza has been a part of my family. To my children she was Aunt Rita. To me, she was our Sophia Loren. She was beautiful inside and out. To my Ed and I she was a big part of our engagement. (Hopefully they are together looking down on us and laughing

. As a colleague, she was fantastic. Every child that entered her room was loved and given the best education there was. As a friend she will be very missed. Rita was a one of a kind. From her gravel. sexy voice to her demeanor.

Many thanks to Williams family for taking such good care of her. I will certainly miss her. We made such great memories together, Esley "kantor" Isseks and family

Esley Isseks - April 08, 2022 at 11:35 AM