



Carolyn Gabbard

June 17, 1950 - November 30, 2025

Carolyn (Carol) Pennington Gabbard, age 75, went to be with the Lord on November 30, 2025, surrounded by the love of her family.

Carol will be remembered as a devoted wife, mother, grandmother, and friend. Carol spent her life pouring kindness, laughter, and beauty into the world around her. She was the beloved wife of Charles Gabbard, with whom she shared 42 wonderful years of marriage, having wed on January 14, 1983.

Born in Ripley, Tennessee, Carol carried the warmth and spirit of her small hometown throughout her life. She received Christ at Golddust Baptist Church in August 1963. Carol found comfort in Philippians 4:13—"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." To her, this verse was a reminder that contentment and strength in every circumstance come not from oneself, but from Christ's sustaining power.

After graduating in May 1968, Carol set off for the big city of Memphis, where she lived with three treasured friends—Kathy, Rosemary, and Connie. She worked several jobs before finding her professional home with Kroger, a company that became a meaningful part of her life for many years.

A devoted mother, Carol welcomed her son, Roger Whitton, in 1971. Her life expanded even more beautifully when she married Charles and lovingly

blended their families, embracing Charles Jr. (Chuck) Gabbard and Donna Kotara as her own.

Carol's passion for helping others shone brightly through her decade-long commitment to raising funds for the Muscular Dystrophy Association, affectionately known as support for "Jerry's Kids." Over ten tireless years, she helped raise an extraordinary quarter of a million dollars. In 1984, she was honored with the Kroger Community Service Award for her remarkable dedication.

Carol later built a successful and fulfilling career as a BeautiControl Senior Sales Director, leading a team of 146 consultants. With her leadership, enthusiasm, and gift for connection, she earned a place among the organization's top ten sales groups—a distinction that brought her tremendous pride and joy.

Among Carol's many treasures is a book of memories she created for her loved ones—pages filled with her happiest reflections, stories, and moments. In it, she wrote that her greatest joy came from visits with family and friends. She adored 1950s music, especially Elvis Presley, Ricky Nelson, and her favorite, Chuck Berry. She appreciated all things beauty, laughter shared with friends, and time spent with those she loved most.

Carol lived by a simple but powerful motto: Live well, love much, laugh often. She embodied those words daily.

For decades, Carol lived with the challenges of fibromyalgia, a condition that steadily stole many of the physical activities she once enjoyed. Yet despite its toll, she never lost her radiant spirit, her resilience, or her compassion for others. Her strength, humor, and grace inspired everyone around her.

Carol is survived by her loving husband, Charles; her son, Roger Whitton (Tullahoma, TN); her daughter-in-law, Lilli Ann; and her granddaughter, Keana Garciano-Whitton.

She is also survived by her son, Charles “Chuck” Gabbard Jr.; daughter-in-law, Shelly Gabbard; grandsons Trey Gabbard, Joey Gabbard (who resides abroad), and Nathan Gabbard; and granddaughter Danielle Hall, along with their spouses and beloved children.

Carol leaves her daughter, Donna Kotara, and son-in-law, Chris Kotara; grandsons Phillip Cockrell and Trey Kotara (Cochran, GA); and granddaughters Ashley Way, Amber Claunch, and Chelsea McCurren, along with their spouses and beloved children.

Carol is lovingly survived by her siblings Lynn Rose, David Binford (Darcy), Debra Sills (Jerry), and Sherry Binford. She is reunited in heaven with her brother, Randy Rose. She also leaves behind countless nieces and nephews who held a special place in her heart.

Carol’s legacy is one of generosity, courage, devotion, and love. She will be deeply missed and forever remembered by all whose lives were brightened by her presence.

The family will share information soon about an upcoming celebration of Carol’s life for friends and loved ones.