



Martha Elizabeth Sherman Muse

MAR 6, 1935 - MAR 3, 2026



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Table of Contents

Obituary	Page 3
Tribute Wall	Page 6



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Martha died Tuesday, March 3rd 2026. She was born to LaVern Rockholt Sherman and Odom Sherman Sr. on March 6, 1935 in Memphis, Tennessee the youngest of four children. Martha grew up in St. James' Episcopal Church, where she sang in the choir and was soloist, taught Sunday School, founded Chi Rho, (a group for teenagers), was a member of St. Cecilia's Guild, The Episcopal Church Women and produced the weekly Sunday Bulletin. She later attended Grace-St. Luke's Episcopal Church with her son Sherman, who sang in the Youth Choir, served as an acolyte, played baseball and basketball, and was a member of the church's Boy Scout troop. Sherman was Martha's devoted caretaker for the last several years of her life.

A lifelong Memphian, Martha was educated in Memphis City Schools: Maury Elementary, Bellevue Junior High and graduated seventh in the 1952 Memphis Technical High School class of 252 students. She was editor of the Tech High Yellowjacket school newspaper for an unprecedented two years, editor of the 1952 Tech Review yearbook, was a member of Tech's Top Ten, the National Honor Society, Young Life, the 50 Club, the Spanish Club, Tech's TV Quiz'em team, was a TV High School Editor for the only local TV station at the time, president of the Null Adams Chapter of Quill and Scroll, received the DAR Award for Good Citizenship, was a model on the College Fashion Board, voted both Most Likely to Succeed and also Best All-Around in the Hall of Fame, served as junior and senior class officers, and represented Tech at Tennessee Girls' State, where she was elected to the House of Representatives.

Martha was unable to accept any of the four scholarships she was awarded as a high school senior, and worked her way through college twice, being elected treasurer of her freshman class at Memphis State as a traditional student, and later receiving a BA degree in Journalism from Memphis State on May 12, 1984. She was on the Dean's List, president of the Memphis State Chapter of the National Society of Professional Journalists/Sigma Delta Chi, where she founded the Freedom of Information Congress, which brought national and international professional



Obituary

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journalists to Memphis, and she also developed a Techniques and Opportunities program for journalism students that brought professionals from various fields to share their expertise and help students learn to better cover their industry and events. She was also president of the Minerva Club (SAE Mothers' Club). Memphis State became the University of Memphis soon after her graduation.

Martha worked more than seventy years in marketing and public relations including The Cotton Trade Journal (the international newspaper of the cotton industry), where she was assigned to develop and publish a survey on international cotton acreage; WHBQ Radio and Television (RKO General, Inc.), Jay Scott Associates, where she conceived, developed and directed a year-long promotion that brought a winning TV "Dating Game" couple to be featured on and participate in the full week of activities for the Memphis Cotton Carnival; Rodeway Inns of America; Buck Jones and Haines, where she equipped and scheduled a hot-air-balloon flight and retrieval; Kirk, Inc; Holiday Inns, Inc. (Holiday Corporation), where she created and developed a logo costumed character including lyrics and music for songs to be used at various individual hotel and corporate-related events; Frye-Joure Associates (industrial-organizational psychologists), the Shelby County Assessor of Property where she won two countywide first-place awards for conceiving, writing and directing two employee-participation shows; owned and operated The Muses Gift Shop, and wrote and edited for many local, national and international organizations and corporations. She represented Holiday Corporation as an officer on the board of the Memphis Zoological Society, was president of the Alpha Beta chapter of Beta Sigma Phi sorority for business and professional women, where she competed for and was crowned their 1957 Valentine Queen and was also named their 1958 Girl of the Year. She studied dance and performed with Diana Day for several years (Had the high kicks, but was too short for the New York City Rockettes,); sang for weddings and holiday programs, and was widely-known for her beautiful penmanship, so she was sought after by friends and hired by businesses to hand-address thousands of invitations and announcements, as well as an occasional single envelope containing a message of great importance. For more than eleven years, she assisted all of several advancing legal teams in winning her case before the U.S. Supreme Court in Washington, DC. She received numerous awards and certificates of recognition for perfect attendance at church, school and work.

Martha was preceded in death by her parents, two sisters: Nina Alice "Little Sissy" Sherman, who died in infancy, and Charlotte Nell Sherman "Penny" Kerr of Pensacola, Florida and Dallas, Texas, and one brother Odom Sherman Jr. of Dallas, Texas. She is survived by her son James Sherman



Obituary

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Muse, Sr., two grandsons James Sherman Muse Jr. and Wesley Haynes Muse, all of Memphis, and several nieces and nephews and their families in Dallas, Texas; Charlotte, North Carolina and Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, and especially her surrogate daughter Maribeth Cashon Fowlkes and her husband Bob Fowlkes and their daughters Katie Fowlkes Badgett and Meredith Fowlkes Harwood and their families, all of Memphis and Collierville, Tennessee.

As she requested, there will be no public services. Memorials may be made to Christian Brothers High School, the University of Memphis, West Cancer Center and Research Institute, and especially to Dr. Matthew Tibor Ballo and his Radiation Program now expanding in Cleveland Clinic/Hillcrest Hospital in Madison Heights, Ohio; St. Jude's Children's Research Hospital, WKNO-AM/TV, WYPL-TV, or the cause of the donor's choice



Tribute Wall

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David Halpern posted:

I was fortunate to work with Martha and considered her a friend. She was not only extremely talented, but also the sweetest person and kind to all. Sherman, when she spoke about you her eyes lit up. You were so fortunate to have Martha as your Mother. Martha was one of a kind. God broke the mould when he made Martha.

March 4 at 3:59 PM



Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Martha by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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