



Frances Jane Rhea

March 7, 1939 - February 28, 2020

Frances Rhea, age 79 was born at home on March 7th, 1939 and passed away on the morning of February 28, 2020 in the arms of her daughter.

Fran was born at home in Milton, Delaware to Emma and Hayward Sockriter. In school, she most loved being part of the choir. She loved gospel music and would tell stories of being able to hear the gospel choir practice at a neighborhood church when her window was open at night. As a child she also lived with her grandmother for a while, helping at her bed and breakfast at Rehobeth Beach by the Boardwalk. At a very young age she met and married a dashing military man and began her family.

There were many moves in the coming years from one coast to the other and back again. These trips were a challenge for all, but as an adult with children I am amazed that she and Dad made these trips with four kids, two dogs and the occasional escaping hamster and all made it to their destination in mostly good condition. During these times Fran truly proved her strength to all around, such as when as a young wife with a husband deployed to Vietnam, she held it together while raising four rambunctious kids and providing daycare for five others.

Raising children was her reason for being. She loved her children and were at all of their school events. She would be the parent in the classroom, the parent on the bus, pretty much the parent who was everywhere you didn't want her to be, but she didn't care. She was there for you out of pure love and mama bear protectiveness. She pushed her children hard in school. She expected the best of us and wouldn't settle for less. It was a point of pride with her that her children be able to read and write before they started school.

In addition to her kids, Fran provided home daycare to many children over the years. I remember one mom bringing her child over on a weekend to pull a splinter because "only MeMa can do it". Her love of children only became greater with the arrival of grandkids. She was there for them, the same as she was for her own children. Teaching them to read and write and going to all of their school events. She so loved them all. She was not the cuddly, cookie baking, soft voiced kind of grandma. She was the, "get your homework done", "clean up your mess", "go get me a cup of coffee", "better watch your smart mouth" type of grandma. She was also the kind of grandma who would go out in the middle of the

night to check the WalMart delivery for that special Hot Wheel you wanted, or drive to 5 different McDonalds' to get you the one Happy Meal toy you were missing in the set. She was a unique person. She could vary from having the demeanor of a drill sergeant, to someone with the most beautiful generous heart, to a protective lioness with those she loved. At 4'10", she may have been small in stature, but she was a giant in spirit and one of the strongest women I have ever known. I have witnessed her put in check many over 6' tall males in this family, who probably wish I wouldn't bring that up.

Fran was a very honest person. She would tell it like it is, even more so as she got older. You always knew where you stood with her. She also never met a stranger. Going shopping with her pained most of us because she struck up conversations with everyone. She had great affection for people at her bank, at her doctor's office, at the grocery store, basically all of the places where you wouldn't want to be in line behind her.

In addition to her family, Fran took great pride in her work with the Gleaner's. She enjoyed visiting with all the people involved. Fran was quite social and loved to chat...often and a lot. If she was at home, there was usually someone visiting or she was on the phone. One never wanted to call if one were in a hurry. There would be pauses as she chatted with neighborhood kids who stopped in for a cookie or someone who popped their head in to say hello. You could say goodbye multiple times only to have it go sideways into another 15-minute discussion. It could be so frustrating. Oh, how I miss that already.

Another great love of Fran's was going with her dear friend, Tommy, to the casino. You pretty much knew if you couldn't get her by phone that she was either out shopping or having fun on the slots. She was not one for sitting still.

She was a tiny walking bundle of contradictions. She was smart, funny, bossy, loving, frustrating, charming and generous. She will be missed by many, not just the family who love her, but her many dear friends as well. Special thanks to her friends: Tommy, Beth, Ada, Sandi, adopted granddaughter, Jenna and so many others for their loving care as Mom's health failed. May we all take comfort that her pain has ended and she has joined her family in heaven.

Fran was preceded in death by her parents, three of her siblings and two of her children, Cheryl Caggianelli and Gary Rhea. She is survived by her children Coney Rhea (Tracie), Karen Rhea (Henry Camacho), her grandchildren: Danny Caggianelli (Mary), Serena Rico (Tim), Donny Caggianelli, Evanie Camacho, Megan Gill, Tiffany Camacho, Chelsea Sears (Ryan), and Natalie Rhea and great grandchildren: Emma, Avery, Rowen, Bailey, Bella, Brayden, Levi, Travis, McKenna, Brooklyn, Rylee and Ian.

Memorial services have been postponed till further notice. Thank you for your understanding.

Tributes and condolences may be offered by logging onto www.salseranddillard.com.