



## Shirley A. Gustafson

August 21, 1935 - April 26, 2021

Shirley Ann Gustafson passed away at home on April 26, 2021. She was born on August 21, 1935 in Detroit, Michigan to Rocco and Gilda Valenti. She moved to California when she was a toddler where she lived with her grandparents until her parents also came to California a few years later to enjoy the good life in the Kingsburg area.

She attended Clay Grammar School, Kingsburg High School, and graduated from Fresno State College with a BA degree in Physical Education. Her first teaching job was at Parlier High School, but the chance to once again be a Vikings at Kingsburg High School, soon had her joining the faculty at her alma mater in 1958. She enjoyed her time there with so many students who became her life long friends, but in 1968 she couldn't say no to the opportunity to teach on the Junior College level. She became a teacher at Reedley College, from 1968-1994, where she was a physical education teacher as well as Volleyball Head Coach for 22 years. Some of Shirley's best memories are of the years she and Duane spent traveling with the Volleyball team girls to their various games and tournaments.

While at Reedley College she received the honors of being inducted into the Reedley College Tiger Hall of Fame, and the California Community College Women's Volleyball Coaches Association Hall of Fame.

Shirley won many beauty pageants in her younger years, making it necessary for Duane, who later became her husband, to keep a close eye on her while they were dating! She and Duane were sweethearts in high school where she cheered him on as a cheerleader at all his sporting events. They were married in 1957 and would have been celebrating their 64th anniversary in June.

Shirley is survived by her husband Duane, brother-in-law Gary Gustafson and his special friend Greta Williams, sister-in-law Glenda Oliver and her husband Jim, and many nieces, nephews and cousins that were all very special to her. She was preceded in death by her brother Richard Valenti.

God Bless you Shirley for all the time you dedicated to young people during your life time while teaching and coaching. Many of them became a better person because you believed in them, and worked hard encouraging them to believe in themselves. You may not have had children of your own, but you were more than a mom to so many students over the years!

Viewing will be held 3:00 PM - 6:00 PM Monday, May 3rd, 2021 at Salser & Dillard Creighton Chapel, 1588 Lincoln Street, Kingsburg.

A Memorial luncheon and a Celebration of Shirley's life will be held at 11:00 AM Tuesday, May 4th, 2021 at Kingsburg Historical Park, 2321 Sierra Street, Kingsburg.

Donations can be made in Shirley's memory to the Reedley College Foundation scholarship program to benefit her existing scholarship of many years. Please make your checks payable to: Reedley College Foundation, and mail them to P.O. Box 227, Reedley, Ca 93654. Please write on the memo line: Shirley Gustafson.

Services have been entrusted to Salser & Dillard Creighton Chapel. Memorial

Tributes and condolences may be offered by logging onto [www.salseranddillard.com](http://www.salseranddillard.com).

# Previous Events

## Viewing

MAY 3. 3:00 PM - 6:00 PM (PT)

Salser & Dillard Creighton Chapel  
1588 Lincoln Street  
Kingsburg, CA 93631  
(559) 897-2908  
<https://www.creightonchapel.com>

## Celebration Of Life

MAY 4. 11:00 AM (PT)

Kingsburg Historical Park  
2321 Sierra St  
Kingsburg, CA 93631

# Tribute Wall



“ *Salser & Dillard Creighton Chapel created a Tribute Video in memory of Shirley A. Gustafson*



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**Salser & Dillard Creighton Chapel** - May 03, 2021 at 03:47 PM



“ *Arrive in Style was purchased for the family of Shirley A. Gustafson.*



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May 03, 2021 at 10:20 PM



“ *Shirley was a wonderful person! She was very influential on members of my family during Highschool and college years. The whole family always thought highly of her. She will be greatly missed, but leaves a wonderful legacy, especially among the youth that she encountered and encouraged!*

*With love from all the Gilbert Ewan Family* ❤️🌈

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**Ann Ewan Coker** - May 03, 2021 at 07:01 PM

EB

*Coach Gus was my volleyball coach from 1985-1987 at Kings River. She and Duane were my parents away from my home in Houston. She was one of the nicest people I have ever known. We kept in touch and she will be greatly missed.*

Edrina Pogue Baker - June 16, 2021 at 04:25 PM

MH

*Shirley and Duane hired me to clean their home long ago. Duane told me one day that Shirley cleaned before I got there. LOL. I would be cleaning and she would say sit down and Let's talk. She liked hearing about our family trips. I just loved Shirley. I'd see her in town years later and she would say hey Mary , "What you been doing" I truly admired Shirley and Duane. Shirley was loved by many and will be missed.. I was saddened to here of her passing. RIP my dear friend.*

Mary Hernandez - July 19, 2021 at 05:08 PM

MP

“ Mark and Kris Pinheiro purchased the Gracious Lavender Basket for the family of Shirley A. Gustafson.



Mark and Kris Pinheiro - May 02, 2021 at 07:05 PM



“ Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Shirley A. Gustafson.



April 30, 2021 at 09:11 PM

JN

“ I have so many great memories with you, from Christmas to summers swimming in the pool! I will never ever forget your amazing jello you made every Christmas! I wanted to eat the whole thing, or how you would have a can of olives just for me to eat and put on all my fingers. You were an amazing lady and will be missed deeply. The last time I saw you your smile lite up the whole room and you knew exactly who I was. I’m happy you got to meet my sweet babies! I love you Aunt Shirley!



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**Jamee Nelson** - April 30, 2021 at 04:37 PM

MH

*What a beautiful picture.*

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**Mary Hernandez** - July 19, 2021 at 05:11 PM



“ I first met Shirley at the Kingsburg Senior Center when I became an employee of the City many years ago. Shirley assisted the seniors with exercise programs and everyone enjoyed having her as their instructor. She will be missed by family and friends she made over the years of being there for others. Many she rest in peace.

*Blessings,  
Betty M. Ruegge*

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**Betty Ruegge** - April 30, 2021 at 02:53 PM

MC

“ *What a wonderful person. My Kingsburg high school teacher. The cool one who would let you stand on the PE porch and wait for the noon bell to ring, so we could secure a booth at Park Drive-In!! Of course we called her, M. Gus!! Later in years my in laws were best friends with her in laws, The Gustafson's and the Carlson's! The last time I saw her smiling face was at DiCicco's restaurant in Kingsburg where she was invited to join a group of her old high school students. She was So excited and so were we. She will be remembered by many  
Our condolences to Duane and family  
Elmer and Corene Carlson  
Doug and Marsha Carlson and family*

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**Marsha Carlson** - April 28, 2021 at 08:11 PM

KC

“ *The first wedding I went to I was 7. It was Shirley and duanes. I covered my face when they kissed. Shirley taught me to swim at the kingsburg pool. She was also my teacher when I was in high school. She will be missed. Kay young Cameron*

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**kay cameron** - April 28, 2021 at 05:53 PM

SC

“ *Shirley was a very beautiful lady that i got to meet. Will miss her so much. Rest in peace my beautiful lady.. Love you Sylvia Chavez*



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**Sylvia Chavez** - April 27, 2021 at 09:08 PM

DN

*I'm sad to hear*

*Of Gus's passing. We were all blessed to have her in our lives. We would vote her BEST PE Teacher with the beautiful smile. God be with you Duane. Dolene Clark Nelson*

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**Dolene Clark Nelson** - June 01, 2021 at 02:47 PM