



Mrs Sharon Ohlweiler Tufaro

February 27, 1950 - May 11, 2025

Sharon Ohlweiler Tufaro was born on February 27, 1950, in Rock Island, Illinois, part of the Quad Cities located along the Mississippi River, in the heartland of America, the daughter of Robert Ohlweiler, an industrial engineer, and Mary Ohlweiler, a nurse who emigrated from Germany in the 1930s, Sharon was raised in a family that valued both hard work and deep care for others. She was one of four siblings—James, Mary Jo (Bonnie), and Robert—who shared a childhood filled with warmth, imagination, and strong family bonds.

Sharon spent most of her youth in Canton, Ohio, but returned to her hometown for her senior year of high school, graduating from Allemann High School in 1968. She then attended St. Mary's College in South Bend, Indiana—Notre Dame's sister school—where she formed lasting friendships and embraced every opportunity to learn and explore. A highlight of her college years was a transformative year abroad in Innsbruck, Austria, where she mastered German, learned to ski the Alps with fearless joy, and deepened her love for travel and culture. She cherished her Innsbruck community for the rest of her life, gathering regularly with her classmates to celebrate their lifelong connection.

A chance connection with a Notre Dame friend led Sharon to Baltimore, where

she planted roots that would flourish for decades. She began her professional life as a preschool teacher in Baltimore City public schools, all while pursuing a Master's in Social Work at the University of Maryland. Even early on, her commitment to community was clear—volunteering with the Neighborhood Design Center to support city planning efforts in Northeast Baltimore. After earning her degree in 1976, she devoted her time to helping children find loving families through foreign adoptions at Catholic Charities.

In 1979, Sharon married David Tufaro, a real estate developer originally from New York, in a joyful celebration at Corpus Christi Church in Bolton Hill. From the start, their life together was one of deep partnership, laughter, travel, and mutual respect. They began their married life in Bolton Hill, restoring their beloved rowhouse and growing a close-knit community with fellow young families. Sharon's friendships with other neighborhood moms evolved into a lifelong sisterhood known as the "Way Back Club." Together, Sharon and David raised three daughters—Theresa, Jennifer, and Christina—in a home full of creativity, warmth, and unconditional love.

In 1992, Sharon and her dear friend Nancy Cusack followed a dream and opened Shananigan's Toy Store in Roland Park—named for Sharon and Nancy. With her boundless energy, eye for joy, and genuine love for children, Sharon helped create a store that became a beloved neighborhood institution. Shananigan's thrived for decades, even outlasting national toy store chains, because it was never just a store—it was a place of magic, imagination, and community. She and Nancy sold the store in 2005, but Sharon's touch still lives on in every corner.

Never one to sit still, Sharon pursued yet another calling later in life. Moved by a desire to help immigrants in her city, she began learning Spanish so she could better connect with and teach English to newcomers. At age 62, she earned a second master's degree—this time in Teaching English as a Second

Language—from Notre Dame of Maryland University. She went on to teach adult learners at Baltimore City Community College and volunteered at the Esperanza Center in Fells Point, where she led English and citizenship classes. Her students came from all over the world—South America, Africa, the Middle East, Asia—and she welcomed each one with open arms, unwavering patience, and a heart full of compassion.

Sharon and David shared a lifelong passion for travel and exploration. From the early days of strapping their daughters into car seats for cross-country ski trips to trekking across Europe on bicycles, they made the world their classroom and playground. Together they journeyed through Italy, France, Austria, Switzerland, Spain, Great Britain, Ireland, Argentina, and Patagonia—creating countless memories. One of their most recent and treasured adventures was a family trip to Italy in the summer of 2024 with their daughters, sons-in-law, and all six grandchildren—Elizabeth, Kathryn, George, Enzo, Frankie, and Mabel.

But perhaps nothing gave Sharon more joy than being a grandmother. She adored her grandchildren with all her heart, spending time reading with them, painting and creating, going on field trips to the Maryland Zoo and B&O Railroad Museum, playing in the sand at Dewey Beach, and delighting in the wonder of Disney World. She was endlessly generous with her time and attention, and her grandkids were lucky enough to bask in the glow of her love.

In 2005, Sharon was diagnosed with breast cancer. She faced her illness with quiet strength, dignity, and courage. Even as her cancer returned in 2018 and became more aggressive in 2021, Sharon continued to live fully—loving deeply, laughing often, and never losing her innate kindness. She was profoundly grateful for the care she received, especially from Dr. Antonio Wolff

at Johns Hopkins, who walked beside her throughout her journey.

Sharon lived a life full of color, purpose, generosity, and grace. She lifted everyone around her—whether through a kind word, a warm smile, or an act of quiet service. She was the heart of her family, a guiding light to her friends, and a gift to her community. Her legacy of love, compassion, and joyful curiosity will live on in the lives of all who were lucky enough to know her.

Sharon is survived by her husband, David, and three daughters, Theresa Tufaro of Evergreen, Colorado, Jennifer Nolley of Towson, Maryland, and Christina Tufaro of Towson, three sons-in-law, Eric McNeill, Dawson Nolley and James Eaton, her sister, Bonnie Zegar of Huntley, Illinois, sisters-in law, Joanne Ohlweiler and Frances Adams, and brother-in-law, Richard Tufaro, six grandchildren, Elizabeth Nolley, Kathryn Nolley, George Nolley, Enzo Eaton, Frankie Eaton, and Mabel Eaton, and numerous nieces and nephews.

The family will receive friends at the Mitchell-Wiedefeld Funeral Home 6500 York Road Baltimore, Md. on Thursday May 15, 2025 from 4-7pm. A Memorial Mass will take place at The Cathedral Of Mary Our Queen 5200 North Charles Street Baltimore on Saturday May 17, 2025 at 10:00am.

In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made in Sharon's memory to:
Esperanza Center, 430 S. Broadway, Baltimore, MD 21231 and Baltimore Tree Trust, 330 W. 24th Street, Baltimore, MD 21211

Previous Events

Visitation

MAY 15. 4:00 PM - 7:00 PM (ET)

Mitchell - Wiedefeld Funeral Home, Inc.
6500 York Road
Baltimore, MD 21212
(410) 377-8300
general@mwfuneralhome.com

Memorial Mass

MAY 17. 10:00 AM (ET)

Cathedral Mary Our Queen
5200 N. Charles Street
Baltimore, MD 21210