

## Hiawatha, KS



Sharon Lee Gernon, longtime Hiawatha resident, died on Thursday, September 29, 2022 at her home in Lawrence, Kansas.

Sharon was born in Sabetha, Kansas on July 19, 1944 and grew up in the Hiawatha, Kansas area. She was the oldest of three children born to Albert and Geraldine (Rosenberger) Winslow. Her mother was a teacher, and her parents owned and operated Winslow Ready Mix in Hiawatha for many years while also raising quarter horses and farming in the Hiawatha area.

Sharon began her early education in a one-room schoolhouse outside Hiawatha, sparking a love of learning that would forever shape her life. She graduated from Hiawatha High School in 1962 and subsequently obtained her bachelor's degree in education from the University of Kansas in 1966. While at KU, she was a member of the Delta Gamma sorority and served as chapter president.

Sharon was married to Robert Gernon on August 5, 1967. She taught elementary school for many years between 1966 and 1971, mostly in Topeka, prior to moving back to Hiawatha to focus on family and community. Among other things, she helped to found Happy Days Preschool in Hiawatha, played a key role in various KU alumni events in and around Hiawatha. Notably, she served on the USD 415 Board of Education for 12 years, assuming the role of President during the last 2 years of her tenure.

Following the successful launch of her two daughters, there were new mountains to climb and new adventures to be had in her adopted home of Lawrence, KS. She returned to the classroom, teaching early childhood and elementary school in Lawrence and also served as Beta Theta Pi fraternity house mother at KU for many years, earning the fraternity's national House Director of the Year Award in 2005.

Sharon was blessed with 4 grandsons who brought her much joy, occupying both her thoughts and her calendar. Her special touch with young children left many footprints on the hearts of her children and grandchildren.

Sharon will be remembered for a special combination of grace and grit. She was a tenacious advocate for the disenfranchised and most vulnerable individuals among us. And she was fiercely committed to living independently on her own terms.

Sharon is survived by her two daughters Rebecca Gernon (Marc Wilson) and Kristin Gernon (Lance Vannerson), sister Ilene Blum (Richard Whitaker), brother Gregg Winslow (Dorothy), grandsons Finnegan Wilson, Satchel Wilson, Oliver Wilson, Fletcher Vannerson, and beloved nieces, nephews, cousins, and lifelong friends.

Sharon was preceded in death by her parents, Albert and Geraldine Winslow, and her former husband, Robert Gernon.

Friends may call the Chapel Oaks Funeral Home after 10 a.m. Thursday, October 6, 2022 where the family will receive friends from. 6:00 p.m. – 7:30 p.m. that evening.

Private family services will be held.

Memorial contributions may be made in Sharon's name to Happy Day's Preschool and may be sent in care of Chapel Oaks Funeral Home 124 S. 7th St. Hiawatha, KS 66434.

Online condolences may be made to [www.chapeloaksfuneralhome.com](http://www.chapeloaksfuneralhome.com)