



Chery Marlene Rodriguez-Schreiber

February 19, 1951 - April 7, 2026

A Life of Love, Service, Intellect, Adventure, and Family

Services for Chery Rodriguez will take place on Sunday, April 19, 2026, at 1:00 p.m. at Laguna Beach United Methodist Church. All are welcome. RSVP requested.

"My mother was one of a kind, her thoughtfulness and selflessness were unmatched, her intellect and experience set the bar, she had a huge heart which she wore openly."

— Ryan Rodriguez

1951-1974

Early Life, Family Roots, and Education



A young Chery (seated at right), already bright, warm, and full of life.

Chery Marlene Rodriguez-Schreiber was born on February 19, 1951, in Chicago, Illinois. At age twelve, she left the Chicago area with her family and lived briefly in Albuquerque and the Phoenix area before settling in Huntington Beach, California. That move began a life marked by curiosity, resilience, and a readiness to embrace each new chapter with warmth and purpose.

While living on Balboa Peninsula, Chery attended the University of California, Irvine, where she completed dual bachelor's degrees in under three years—one in Spanish and one in Social Science with an emphasis in Child Psychology and Development. She later earned her California teaching credential through UC Irvine, held a Child Development Master Teacher Permit and a Clear CLAD Certificate, and became the first BCLAD teacher in the State of California. She also spoke Spanish, German, Portuguese, and American Sign Language, reflecting both her intellectual gifts and her lifelong love of language.

After college, Chery moved to Mission Viejo, where she began her teaching career at MCAS El Toro. Her family history of aviation and service ran deep. Her father, Bill Schreiber, had been a World War II airman who served in the Army Air Corps in the European Theater, and that heritage became a meaningful thread in Chery's own life story.

"She was always friendly and outgoing. She always put others first and thought of others before herself."

1974-1987

Faith, Flight, and the Beginning of a Love Story



Wedding day with Juan at Laguna Beach United Methodist Church, 1982.

Those early working years were rooted not only in education, but also in faith and community. While teaching at MCAS El Toro, Chery taught Sunday School at Laguna Beach United Methodist Church, where her family served with devotion. Her mother, Vi Schreiber, was the church's Weddings, Memorials & Events Coordinator, while her father, Bill, hosted Bible study, served as a Sunday service usher, and helped with maintenance. For Chery, service was never abstract—it was something lived each week, with family, heart, and hands.

That same season also sparked her love of aviation. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, Chery worked as a flight attendant for LTU, Golden West Airlines, and Flight Crews International. She carried into the skies the same grace, intelligence, and easy warmth that later distinguished her in the classroom. She had a gift for talking to anyone and making friends everywhere she went.

It was during her aviation years, while on layover at the LAX Marriott, that she met her future husband, Juan Rodriguez, an AeroMexico pilot. He noticed her speaking Spanish to a staff member, struck up a conversation, and the moment became the beginning of a beautiful love story. After a year of courtship, travel, and adventure, they were married in 1982 at Laguna Beach United Methodist Church—a place made all the more meaningful because her parents had belonged to that congregation since the 1970s.

*"She was very kind, a faithful wife, friendly to all, and very loving." —
Juan Rodriguez*

1987-1999

Motherhood, Home, and Building Family Life



With Ryan during his early childhood—one of the roles she treasured most.



With Juan, welcoming Ryder and embracing grandparenthood with joy.

After their marriage, Chery and Juan continued their shared love of travel and relocated to Mexico City. There, she taught at The English Academy, now The Edron Academy, while building a life rooted in partnership, exploration, and purpose. Chery loved being a wife, and marriage was one of the deepest joys of her life.

In 1987, she became a mother to her son, Ryan, and discovered what she believed was one of her highest callings. When the family returned to California in 1989, Chery poured herself into motherhood with the same dedication she gave to every part of life. In 1991, she selected and purchased the family's first home in Corona, where she created an active, nurturing childhood filled with Mommy and Me programs, zoological adventures, Cub Scouts, and constant opportunities for Ryan to learn and grow.

In 1995, wanting to be closer to her aging parents, Bill and Vi, Chery selected and purchased the family's Laguna Niguel home—the home she considered her dream home. It became the center of family life, love, gathering, and memory for decades to come.

She was deeply involved in Ryan's Boy Scouts journey and leadership activities, always showing up, helping, encouraging, and building the kind of active family life that meant so much to her.

ACROSS FOUR DECADES

Educator, Advocate, Mentor

Chery's professional life was extraordinary in both scope and depth. She served Saddleback Valley Unified School District for more than thirty years as a teacher, bilingual teacher, and special education teacher, while her broader career spanned nearly four decades across Irvine Unified, Newport-Mesa Unified, Saddleback Valley Unified, Orange Unified, Capistrano Unified, and Laguna Beach Unified, as well as private school education. She taught preschool, kindergarten, elementary, high school, and adult education.

Her favorite institutions included La Madera Elementary, GATES, and Laguna Hills High School ESL. She maintained a longstanding connection to La Madera through repeated long-term substitute assignments and extensive substitute service during the later years of her career, becoming a familiar and cherished presence there.

Among the roles closest to her heart were teaching kindergarten, leading ESL night classes, and helping adult immigrants strengthen their English as they started new lives in the United States. She also had profound experience teaching students with Autism Spectrum Disorders and Asperger's. That work became one of the most meaningful expressions of her calling. Chery met neurodivergent learners with patience, structure, intuition, and advocacy, helping children feel safe, capable, understood, and valued.

She was equally committed to professional solidarity and civic life. Chery valued her memberships in the California Teachers Association and the National Education Association. She also maintained extended membership in the Laguna Niguel Women's Club and had lifelong involvement in YMCA programs—where she discovered one of her great passions, Zumba.

Her academic preparation and credentials reflected the rigor she brought to her work: dual bachelor's degrees from UC Irvine, a California teaching credential, a Child Development Master Teacher Permit, a Clear CLAD Certificate, and her historic distinction as the first BCLAD teacher in the State of California.

A Life Lived Beautifully



Sharing one of many joyful moments with a beloved Pomeranian by her side.

Outside the classroom, Chery lived beautifully and fully. She loved crafting silk floral arrangements, worked as a fresh flower florist, enjoyed concerts, music, and dance, and formed deep relationships throughout the Laguna Niguel and Laguna Beach communities. She was friendly, outgoing, outspoken, and sincere, with an uncanny ability to talk to anyone and make them feel welcome.

Animals were another lifelong love. Chery was rarely without one of her beloved Pomeranians by her side, and her dogs often became a bridge to community. Whether out walking, visiting neighbors, or simply spending time locally, she made friends easily, dog at her side and heart open. She often volunteered at and donated to the Laguna Beach Animal Shelter, a cause that reflected her enduring compassion for every living creature.

She was a known and cherished member of both the Laguna Niguel and Laguna Beach communities, and her lifelong involvement in the YMCA gave her another home in the community where she found both friendship and one of her favorite passions: Zumba.



Celebrating Juan's retirement—faithful, loving, and always proud of family.

The Chapter She Loved Most



Halloween fun with Ryder—costumes, laughter, and making memories together.

At her 75th birthday celebration with Ryder, who loved being by Nana's side.

In 2016, Chery entered one of the happiest chapters of her life when she became "Nana" to Ryder. She thoroughly loved being a grandmother and did everything she could to make his world brighter. Their memories together were full of delight—Zoomars, Pretend City, playgrounds, splash grounds, Costco sample trips, dance parties, costumes, gifts, laughter, and lessons about animals.

Ryder remembered her simply and beautifully: "Nana was nice, caring, and kind." He said she was always thinking of him, taking him places, and buying him things he liked. He especially remembered her saying, "Always be a good boy, listen to your daddy, and try your best."

As a mother, Chery taught Ryan to be unapologetically himself, to love endlessly, and to never stop learning or striving to improve. She valued family above all else and found her deepest meaning in being of service—to her husband, her son, her grandson, her students, her animals, and her community.

"Nana was one of the nicest, smartest, and best people I have ever met."

— Ryder Rodriguez

2019-2026

Living Fully, Loving Deeply

In 2019, just before the pandemic, Chery began to show signs of mild cognitive impairment. Yet even as those early symptoms appeared, she refused to let them define her or deter her from living fully. She continued to pursue the things she loved most: Zumba, concert-going, community engagement, treasured activities with Ryder, and everyday life with family. Even into her impairment, she took special pride in attending Ryder's Little League activities and looked forward every day to visiting La Madera, where she had once taught, to pick him up with Ryan.

In 2023, Juan retired as a Captain with Southwest Airlines and devoted himself fully to her care. In 2025, Chery was formally diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease. The Alzheimer's Society provided a wealth of resources during that journey, and the family remains deeply grateful for that support. Through every stage of her decline, Juan remained unwavering in his commitment to keep her at home, caring for her with devotion, tenderness, and constancy.

In 2026, Chery experienced a rapid decline in health. Even then, her loving spirit remained present. She spent Easter with her family, happily greeting Ryder that morning, hugging him, and saying, "Hey honey," before sudden respiratory complications developed that evening. During her final two days, Juan, Ryan, Ryder, Lisa, and Josh remained by her bedside, holding her hand and surrounding her with love. On Monday evening, she spoke her last words, calling out her son's name—Ryan—and letting him know she was not in pain. On Tuesday morning, April 7, 2026, she passed peacefully with Juan and Ryan still beside her.



Still celebrating life, family, and milestones together.



Even into later years, she delighted in tradition, family, and joy.

LEGACY

A Heart Worn Openly

Chery will be remembered as brilliant and compassionate, accomplished and warm, outspoken and tender, adventurous and faithful, creative and deeply grounded in family. She loved being a wife, a professional, a mother, and a grandmother. She loved children, animals, music, dancing, flowers, travel, teaching, community, and life itself.

She is survived by her loving husband, Juan Rodriguez, her son, Ryan Rodriguez, and her beloved grandson, Ryder Rodriguez.

"Nana was nice, caring, and kind."

— Ryder Rodriguez

"She was very kind, a faithful wife, friendly to all, and very loving."

— Juan Rodriguez

Service and Memorial Information

Services for Chery Rodriguez will take place on Sunday, April 19, 2026, at 1:00 p.m. at Laguna Beach United Methodist Church. All are welcome. RSVP requested.

In Chery's memory, donations are requested to the Positive Movement Foundation, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit dedicated to providing underserved and at-risk children and youth in San Diego County with resources, mentorship, and emotional support through school partnerships, essential tools, and life skills.

The family also welcomes memorial gifts to the Alzheimer's Society, whose support and resources were meaningful during Chery's illness; to the Laguna Beach Animal Shelter, where Chery often volunteered and donated; and to Laguna Beach United Methodist Church, the church where her parents were longtime members and where Chery and Juan were married in 1982. Flowers are also welcome and are requested to be delivered to McCormick & Son Mortuary, Laguna Woods, by Saturday afternoon, April 18.

Chery Marlene Rodriguez-Schreiber will be remembered as one of a kind: thoughtful, selfless, brilliant, loving, friendly, faithful, and full of life.