



Retha Jean Wilcoxson

December 2, 1938 - February 28, 2026

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Retha Jean Tate Frost Wilcoxson passed away on February 28, 2026, at the age of 87.

Retha was born on December 2, 1938, in a small farming town in Illinois to Ralph Tate and Beatrice Burkhead Tate. She spent her early childhood on an Illinois farm before her family relocated when her father transitioned from farming to working in the pipeline industry. The family traveled throughout Texas before eventually settling in El Paso, Texas, when Retha was approximately 12 years old.

She attended Ascarate Elementary and Ysleta High School in El Paso, TX, where she was part of the modern dance class. Dancing remained a lifelong passion, from her high school years to evenings spent dancing at home with her family to Elvis Presley and many other artists. In her younger years, she enjoyed dancing at the Red Barn in El Paso alongside her sister Peggy and her lifelong friend Beverly Wade, who survives her.

Retha never passed up an opportunity to showoff her driving skills and sports cars. When she was 17 years old a police officer noticed her exceptional driving skills and a Teen-Age-Road-e-o competition was coming up and was asked to compete in it. Retha did and she received a recognition of expert driving ability and proper driving attitude. Sometimes her driving attitude was sported with a fun, quick drag at a stop light.

Retha was a determined and resilient woman who raised her children as a single parent. She was among the generation of women in the 1950s and 1960s who forged new paths for independence, owning real estate, working full time, and maintaining financial independence with credit in her own name at a time when many women were not afforded those opportunities.

She worked for a large home development company and for attorneys in El Paso, building a strong reputation as a capable bookkeeper and businesswoman. While raising her children, Retha attended night school to obtain her real estate license and later founded her own house-flipping business, Tara Enterprises, completing her first home renovation alongside her children.

Retha was a lifelong learner and an avid reader who also wrote poetry. She built her own home in Deming, New Mexico, teaching her children many practical skills along the way, from construction and carpentry to basic automotive mechanics. Her philosophy was simple: if you were going to drive something, you should know how to fix it.

She believed strongly in hard work, responsibility, and self-reliance. Her children learned by working beside her, building rooms onto homes in which they lived in, repairing vehicles, digging ditches in the desert heat, or helping with projects that often became full family efforts.

She also loved playing pool and taught her children how to play who often played with her at the local spots.

Retha purchased a sweet Arabian horse she named Morning Star and enjoyed riding with her in desert sand hills in El Paso, TX.

Retha who sewed most of her children's clothing when they were young, making beautiful ruffled dresses for her daughters and ensuring her sons were always dressed like young gentlemen for church and school photographs.

Retha believed in helping others and often spent time donating clothing and delivering food to the unsheltered. She enjoyed visiting with the unsheltered and found joy bringing joy to others. Her last visit and delivery of Christmas dinners to the unsheltered was December 2025, just months before her

passing.

She possessed a sharp intelligence, quick wit, and unmistakable personality. She worked harder than most people could imagine and approached life with relentless determination. The word “no” was not in her vocabulary.

Even later in life, her work ethic never slowed. At age 68 she built a wrap-around front porch entirely by herself. At 69 she helped her daughter build a home, and at 74 she assisted her son with remodeling his house.

Above all, Retha was fiercely devoted to her family. She was proud of each of her children and claimed all her children as her favorites. She was always present for her children and grandchildren, offering support no matter the circumstances.

Retha was truly one of a kind—intelligent, beautiful, fiery, funny, resourceful, loving, and endlessly capable. She built not only homes and businesses, but also a legacy of strength, resilience, and independence that continues through the generations she raised and inspired.

She was preceded in death by her parents, Ralph Tate and Beatrice Burkhead Tate; her sister, Peggy Attwood; her son, Weston Gray Frost; her stepson, Gene Wilcoxson; and her grandchild, Levi Pedregon.

She is survived by her children Jacque Marvitt, Crystal Frost, Carrie Wilcoxson, and Glen Wilcoxson; her stepdaughter Tonya Wilcoxson; grandchildren Salina Frost-Vazquez and Alec Rosas; and great-grandchildren Kara Becerra, Madison Becerra, and Kalea Rosas, her younger sister Patty Tate, her niece and nephew, Annette and Ralph Attwood, along with her best friends Beverly Wade and Roberta Loranc along with extended family and lifelong friends who will remember her strength, humor, and unwavering spirit. Retha’s life was a testament to perseverance, independence, and love for family.

Tribute Wall



“ 2 files added to the album Memories Album



Mission Park Funeral Chapels & Cemetery - March 06 at 04:44 PM

CW

“ I miss you and love you so much, Mom. 🦋🦋, Forever your very proud Daughter, Carrie Dawn 🦋

Carrie Wilcoxson - March 06 at 12:48 AM