



# Sharon Vergez Vercellotti

DEC 21, 1941 - DEC 30, 2023



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# Sharon Vergez Vercellotti

DEC 21, 1941 - DEC 30, 2023

**S**haron passed away at 1:37 pm on Saturday, December 30, 2023 at the Fidelis I home in Mandeville, LA. She was born on December 21, 1941, in Baton Rouge, Louisiana to Thelma Galloway Vergez and Henri Leon Vergez of Covington, Louisiana, both predeceased. Sharon's brother, Henri Leon Vergez, Jr., was predeceased in 2018. He has left a daughter, Marcelline Cheong (Albert), born in 1978, and she lives in Oklahoma. Sharon's husband, John Vercellotti, and their two children, Ellen Theresa, born in 1969 in Knoxville, Tennessee, and Paul Auguste, born in 1975 in Blacksburg, Virginia have been a joy for Sharon over the years. Paul has a son, Kiran, Sharon's grandson, who was born on October 4, 2009. They live in Berkeley, California.

After many years with difficulty to control brittle Type I diabetes and other metabolic problems, Sharon finally succumbed to the effects of two serious strokes in July of 2023. She was paralyzed on her left side and robbed her of her ability to remember and speak. Sharon's family invites friends to a celebration and memorial of her life starting at 9:30 am to 11:00am in St. Peter Catholic Church on South Jefferson Street in Covington, LA on Friday, January 5. This will be followed by a funeral Mass at 11:00 am. After the Mass the Fielding Funeral Home will transport her remains to Pinecrest Cemetery for burial.

Sharon grew up in Covington in the home of her grandparents (Auguste Marcellin and Berthe Vergez) and parents at 113 East Twenty-fifth Avenue. This family site has been a fixture in Covington back to the beginning of the last century. Sharon was immersed in the activity of the blacksmith, wagon, and iron-working shop that supported the family. Her father, Henri, and grandfather, Auguste Marcellin, were both well known in Covington, especially for their many decades as volunteer firemen as well as Henri's service as fire chief for thirteen years.

In this milieu Sharon became skilled in many types of craftsmanship. She excelled in



## Obituary

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her early schooling. Graduating as Valedictorian of her 1959 Covington High School class she went on to earn a bachelor of science degree in chemistry from the Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge. She was encouraged to continue graduate work in chemistry and enrolled at The Ohio State University. She excelled in her research and studied there, publishing several papers on the iron macrocyclic ligands of hemoglobin models. After earning her master's degree in chemistry she made a conscious decision not to complete a PhD in inorganic chemistry, eager to instead broaden her experience in the biomedical area. She worked in an internationally diverse group of scientists at the University of Texas Graduate Medical Research Center in Richardson.

Sharon and John met at Ohio State and were married on September 3, 1966, in Covington at St. Peter Church. By this time, John was a faculty member at Marquette University in Milwaukee, WI. Sharon worked in the Hematology Department of the Marquette Medical School, where her knowledge of macrocyclic iron ligands was beneficial to her project. The Vercellotti's moved to the University of Tennessee at Knoxville where John was a faculty member in Chemistry and Sharon worked in a biochemistry lab at the Medical School. Their next academic home was Virginia Tech, where John was a tenured full professor of biochemistry. Sharon worked with an oxidation-reduction enzymologist using her enzyme complex kinetics skills and handled everything from enzyme isolations to characterization. Sharon and the family accompanied husband John to the G. Ronzoni Institute in Milan, Italy, for a sabbatical research year 1977-78. Sharon worked there on glycosaminoglycan enzyme kinetics.

During the ten years at Virginia Tech, Sharon said, "it became more apparent to me that there was a whole emerging field of biochemical research built on the ubiquitous metabolism of carbohydrates that spanned the gamut of pharmacology, immune responses, cancer medicine, materials science, human nutrition, and renewable bioenergy. The chemistry of carbohydrates is one of the cornerstones of all organic and biological chemistry." For the next forty-four years Sharon built the V-LABS, INC. in Covington as a company affording considerable support to the biomedical industries of the world. Moving into this world of entrepreneurism in



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science Sharon combined her magnificent ability to combine motherhood with the profession. Back in Covington the children were enrolled in the St. Peter Catholic School. Sharon was also active in the school parents club during those years. She also enjoyed being invited to give book reviews for meetings of the Altar and Rosary.

Sharon has used her laboratory in Covington to mentor many promising science, engineering, and medical students from the neighboring honors programs at Mandeville and Covington High Schools. Her knowledge of cost accounting for materials as well as time/effect has been handed on to these students. A total of twenty-eight fortunate students have worked with Sharon over the years.

Sharon has been honored for these efforts with an invitation to deliver the commencement address at St. Mary's -of-the-Woods College and receive the Degree Doctor of Humane Letters, Honoris Causa. There have been many other responsibilities which she has shouldered such as presidency of the Louisiana State American Association of University Women; an outstanding service award by the women's honorary in chemistry, Iota Sigma Pi; Fellow of the American Chemical Society; 2019 72nd Edition of Who's Who in America, full page write-up, as a distinguished American scientist and business person; and, most recently, The American Chemical Society Division of Carbohydrate Chemistry and Glycobiology Derek Horton Award in Industrial Carbohydrate Chemistry, in March of 2023.

Our family wishes to thank Fr. Dan Dashner of The Most Holy Trinity Catholic Church for his visits to the Fidelis I home to administer the sacraments and his prayers on behalf of Sharon. We were well acquainted with Fr. Dan from his earlier assignment at St. Peter Parish. The family thanks David Noll for his inestimable help that he has been to us during this difficult time, as a friend of our daughter, Ellen. We wish to express heartfelt thanks for all the tender care given to Sharon at the Fidelis I home. The attendants were there with her around the clock. During these difficult months the Compassus Hospice Care staff were so generously checking on everything from diet to blood glucose insulin administration. A large number of Vercellotti brothers and sisters siblings, nephews and nieces, scattered all over the country, so appreciated Sharon as a happy spirit who always would brighten a day.

Relatives and friends are invited to attend the Funeral Mass at St. Peter Catholic Church, 125 E. 19th Avenue, Covington LA 70433 on Friday, January 5, 2024, at 11:00 AM with visitation at church on Friday beginning at 9:30 AM. Interment will follow in Pinecrest Memorial Gardens.

The Vercellotti family invites you to share thoughts, fondest memories, and condolences online at E. J. Fielding Funeral Home Guest Book at [www.ejfieldingfh.com](http://www.ejfieldingfh.com).



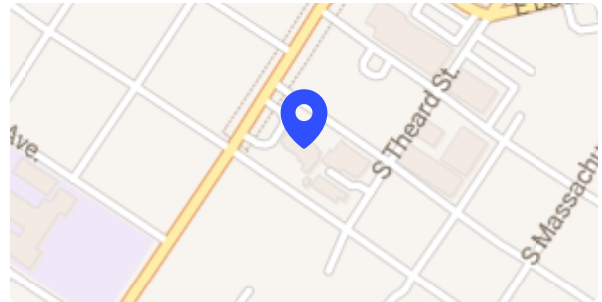
# Events

**Sharon Vergez Vercellotti**

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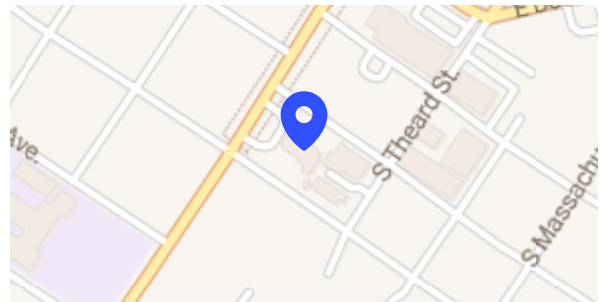
## Visitation

- Friday**, January 5, 2024
- 9:30 AM - 11:00 AM CT
- St. Peter Catholic Church**  
125 E. 19th Street, Covington LA 70433



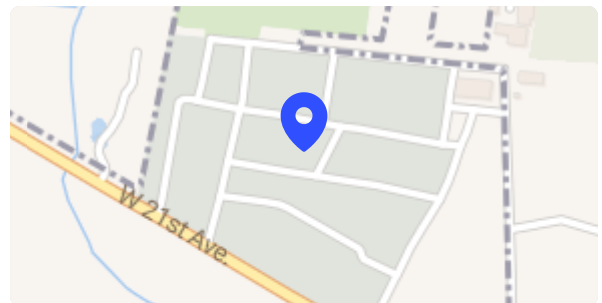
## Funeral Mass

- Friday**, January 5, 2024
- 11:00 AM CT
- St. Peter Catholic Church**  
125 E. 19th Street, Covington LA 70433



## Cemetery Details

- Pinecrest Memorial Gardens & Crematory**  
2280 W 21st Ave, Covington LA 70433
- (985) 892-5007**





## Tribute Wall

**Sharon Vergez Vercellotti**

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DP

**David Platt** posted:

Sharon influence my thinking for many years. She will be missed. She was clever and knowledgeable. I am very sorry for your loss. [www.hemefoundation.org](http://www.hemefoundation.org) David Platt

January 17 at 8:53 AM

CH

**Chuck Harrington** posted:

My family and Sharon's family were close friends for many years. Sharon was my friend before we started kindergarten. We both graduated from high school in 1959. She great was to visit with at family get together's . Always good conversation and fund. On several occasions she would provide a "tour" of V Labs for my daughters and show them her most recent work project. One of the most interesting was her work on removing mildew from packaged rice. Of course her scientific explanation was very detailed. John and family, I'm very sorry for your loss. Chuck Harrington

January 13 at 5:46 AM

AR

**Alice S Rogers** posted:

Sharon was a very special person, so intelligent but very humble about it. I admired and always liked her. We went to school together in Covington. The world lost a friendly and brilliant person. I'm sorry I didn't know about the funeral in time to attend.

January 6 at 12:08 PM

CC

**Cynthia Chauhan** posted:

Sharon's soul has flownBut her legacy remains-Seeds she planted grow.

January 5 at 8:47 AM



# Tribute Wall

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**Louis Selk** posted:

Sharon was always around Covington when our family would visit in the 1950's. Her quick smile and cheer preceded her wherever she went. The conversations were usually about life in Covington and who was visiting who. Visits to the Vergez house were always special with Henri, Thelma and Sharon telling stories with Odile who usually accompanied us. Everything eventually moved to the kitchen where Henri and Thelma would demonstrate how to make a proper praline, with Sharon pointing out the subtle differences in the Henri and Thelma's two recipes and techniques. Stories of blacksmithing, firefighting, bird dogs and trout fishing were exchanged because Sharon would ask for them. The kids in our family would recall the stories on the long drive home. Later, when I was attending college in Dallas, we crossed paths again, usually at my Uncle Paul's house on a weekend. She would shed a little light on her studies but would always change the topic quickly. I've only seen Sharon a few times in recent years, but I will always remember every visit with her as an adventure. Louis (Butch) Selk

January 4 at 6:34 AM



**Cindy Young** January 5 at 2:55 AM

My memories of Sharon, "Ms V" cheer me as I recount the many times I've seen her on her walks around Covington. She always had an easy, warm smile for me even though I did know her well. I got the sense she was a self possessed and thoroughly kind woman who was easy to talk to. I was only in her home once and immediately felt the warmth of a happy home., To me she represents a gentility of days gone by when neighbors had time for each other. I cherish the memories of those simple encounters. My sympathy goes out for her family, friends and the many lives she touched. Cindy Y



**Gillian E.** planted a grove of 3 Memorial Trees in honor of Sharon.



January 3 at 10:45 AM



**Lynnette Soules** posted:

I will always remember Sharon from our days in the AAUW. She was such an intellect and yet she could be such a down to earth person and so enjoyable. May she rest in peace Lynnette Soules.

January 3 at 6:28 AM



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**Anonymous** sent a Garden Accent Stone - "Wherever a Beautiful Soul..." to the Vercellotti family.



January 3 at 5:44 AM



**Sheryl Rifkin St Amand** posted:

Oh dear how she will be missed! She would just always drop everything to entertain us at lunch with her excellent cooking and vibrant conversation. A sparkle in her eyes She had a sparkle in her eyes I will never forget. God bless you all and keep her in the arms of God and love. from Sherry Galloway St Amand

January 3 at 5:39 AM



**Anonymous** sent a Divine Peace Bouquet to the Vercellotti family.



January 2 at 2:43 PM



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MC

**Marcie Vergez Cheong** posted:

I will miss my Aunt Sharon greatly. I am so thankful I got to visit her during the Christmas holidays. I will always remember the example she set, of doing your best in everything. Sharon was so kind to me the many times I visited her lab. She would show me all the experiments she was doing to make our daily lives better. I still have the little wagon she gave me from her testing some candy holders for Hershey's candy to make sure they were safe for candy to be put in them to be consumed, it is a treasure to me. My lasting memory is how much she enjoyed judging the science fairs at area schools. She loved to help young children and show them how chemistry betters the world. I will always credit Aunt Sharon with the reason I once won the Science Fair in middle school, it was because she graciously helped me with my experiment. I will miss her greatly.

January 2 at 10:00 AM

GS

**Glen Shoultz** January 6 at 5:07 AM

I am so sorry to hear about Sharon. I was a classmate of hers from elementary through High School. She was such a smart person and very friendly. I enjoyed knowing her. My Dad was friends with her Dad. Prayers for the Family. Glen Shoultz

PF

**Pierre & Kathy Lange Fabre Family** January 5 at 6:37 PM

Prayers and condolences for the family. 🙏

RB

**Ronda Behrens** January 3 at 6:27 PM

Although her brother, Leon, and I divorced many years ago, both Sharon and John always treated me like family. She was always so welcoming when I would stop by the house and it would be like coming home again. The last few years i was able to bring her vegetables from my garden which always thrilled her. It made me so happy to see her joy.As brilliant as she was, she was also down to earth and a joy to be around. I will miss her. You gave so much to the world it's time to rest.

MB

**Melinda Blanchard** January 3 at 5:27 AM

I am so sorry. Sharon and I grew up together. We were next door neighbors and V Labs was also next door to my family home. Through the years, I saw her from time to time. She was one of the sweetest, kindest persons in the world. When we were kids, Sharon was on the back of my bike and fell off and got a concussion. She was fine, but I felt guilty for years! Her mother always gave us our shots at the health clinic down the street. I will never forget her, her sweet smile, and contribution to the world. Melinda Blanchard 1/3/2024

AC

**Albert Cheong** January 2 at 10:23 AM

My deepest Condolences



# Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Sharon by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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