Rita Ann Connolly McAllister was born in Council Bluffs, Iowa on July 26, 1931 to James Leo Connolly and Cecelia Swassing Connolly. She was the second of ten children. Her dad was an attorney and her mother was a homemaker. She was a very intelligent child and was strong willed. At the age of 3, her parents threw away an old rusted play stove that cut her hand. She chased down the trash truck to retrieve her beloved toy. She loved being a junior mother to all of her siblings. She met the love of her life, Charles (Chuck) McAllister at a dance. They fell in love and married on September 15, 1951. They lived in Omaha with their three children until August 1959. Rita and her family moved to Duncanville, Texas and extended their family with the addition of three more children. Rita stayed at home with the children and ran a tight but joyful ship. Rita and Chuck bought twenty acres of wooded land near Emory, Texas, where they built their dream house. Mom had high expectations for all of her children and loved them fiercely. The family camped all over Texas, pulling a hitched trailer behind their 1969 blue dodge. Rita loved animals and always took in orphans. Many of the neighbor children loved her and always felt welcomed in her home. She was so proud of all eighteen grandchildren and treasured her time with each one. She sewed many of her children’s clothes. She built seventy five doll houses and won several ribbons for her work at the state fair. Rita loved dancing with her husband and loved life. Although she suffered in the last few years with Alzheimer’s, her sweet smile and loving touch reassured us that she was ok.

She is survived by her six children, Teri Spiegel and her husband, Bob, Susie Nesmith and husband, David, Mike McAllister and wife, Cheryl, David McAllister and wife, Tracey, Bill McAllister and wife, Sherrie, Charlie McAllister and wife, Becky; eighteen grandchildren; siblings, Leo Francis Connolly, Timothy William Connolly, Nancy Theresa Jorgensen, Cecelia Mary Kunce, Rosellen Jones, Jeanne Marsh, Kathleen Fennell and Judith McNerney.

She was preceded in death by her parents, husband and sister, Janice Elaine Garbers.

Funeral services will be held at 1:00 p.m., Friday, July 6, 2012 at First Baptist Church Dallas, 1707 San Jacinto, Dallas, Texas 75201 with Rev. Ryland Whitehorn officiating.
Memorials

My Aunt Rita was always a favorite of mine. She was a no-nonsense woman who fiercely loved her family and her friends, and experienced life with humor and a sense of fun. I remember our many visits with Aunt Rita and Uncle Chuck and our cousins fondly. I remember one trip in particular -- we went to a fair and there was a booth where they would guess your age. The man was unable to guess her age, so she won a prize (she had so much energy, I'm sure it was a challenge, even for an experienced carnie, to make an accurate guess!). As we walked away, she advised me to always tell people (after a certain age) that you are 38, because no one really knows what 38 looks like. To this day, I do that, though I've passed 38 some time ago! I know that Rita was loved by many and will be greatly missed.

JULIE KUNCE FIELD, JULY 16, 2012

I am lucky to have Rita as my oldest sister and will miss her very much. I enjoyed her children and grandchildren very much. She looked beautiful.

JUDITH LEE MCNERNEY, JULY 14, 2012

Charlie & Family, Your Mother was such a lovely lady. I remember her from the Senior Luncheons at CCBC. We would visit with each other and she would tell me all about her family. She was a joy to know.

ROSE MARY LARKIN, JULY 11, 2012

My mother was an incredible lady. She had so many incredible gifts....strength, humor, a love of beauty, but most recently she had courage and perseverance. She could always smile, even in the last months. She would look at you with those incredible blue eyes and smile the most beautiful and heart warming smiles. Thank you mom for teaching me to be strong, stand up for what I believe in, and to love people. Two months ago she looked right at me and said, "No crying." I am trying mom. Thank you everyone for your
sweet memorials. I love you forever, forever you will be our mother.

SUSIE NESMITH, JULY 11, 2012

Susie, although I didn’t know your mother, I know she raised an incredibly talented, sweet daughter, so that speaks volumes to the type of person she must have been! May you find comfort in your memories and faith.

SHERRI WAKELAND, JULY 6, 2012

Sweet Rita, What a pleasure it was to have known you and an honor for you to call me your friend. I truly enjoyed our times together, either in the car on our way to a doctor appointment or at a gathering enjoying each other’s company. I will so miss your stories and tales of your childhood! You were a true lady of God and I know that all of your family and friends that had gone before you greeted you at the gate as Jesus walked you through. Have fun my friend. Dance and Sing! I will see you again one day!

PATTI COZART, JULY 6, 2012

To my dear aunt, I am happy knowing of the great time you are having now...no longer bound here and you are free to laugh, sing, dance, and praise the Lord. You were a dear aunt to me, treating me with love and tender care. I will miss your laugh, your sweet ways, and your gorgeous eyes. Thank you for your love. I will miss and love you all of my life, and when my life comes to an end, I will be very happy to see you again. Love always,

NANCY JEAN MCALLISTER MILLER, JULY 6, 2012

Susie, our thoughts & prayers are with you and your family at this difficult time. I remember 2 years ago going with Mrs. Meis’ ringers and piano players to play for your mom and her friends at Christmas. She was a sweet lady.

CHANNEY MUECH, JULY 6, 2012

My sister Rita was a wonderful woman. She will be missed.

TIMOTHY WILLIAM CONNOLLY, JULY 5, 2012

To sweet "Mama Mac," I am so glad to have known you and your family. I will always think of you with fond memories and remember the fun times we enjoyed. You were a special lady and the best doll-house maker ever! You will be greatly missed.
JD BLAND, JULY 4, 2012

Mrs. Susan Nesmith...Our thoughts and prayers are with you and your family in this difficult time.

TERESA, TREVOR AND KATELYNN MABREY, JULY 4, 2012

God Bless you and your wonderful family during this difficult time

LARRY AND PENNY MOSCONI, JULY 3, 2012

My thoughts and prayers are with you and your family in this time of sorrow.

MIDGE OWENS NASH, JULY 3, 2012

Matt and I and the kiddos love yall and are praying for you. Your mom looked like a lovely woman and I am sure you will miss her. Charlie you have her smile.

CECILIA ANN HUDES, JULY 3, 2012

Rita’s my oldest sister. She was 10 years old when I was born and she rode her bicycle 4-5 miles uptown to the hospital to see her mother and the new baby. In those days the new mothers were hospitalized for 10 days. Somehow she got into the hospital as children under 16 were banned. The nuns called her father. He was the hospital’s attorney so they let Rita stay until "Pop" could pick her up on his way home. She stayed with her mother and held me. Mom asked her if she would like to learn to change a diaper. So she practiced on me for the six babies she would have. She called me her first baby. I miss my second mother.

ROSELENN CONNOLY JONES, JULY 3, 2012
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