BALLARD, RITA FARLEY lost her valiant struggle against cancer on August 21. A native Atlantan, Rita attended East Atlanta High School where she announced to her classmates that she would one day be a movie star—a proclamation that earned her the lifetime nickname of “Hollywood”. When she was 25, she abandoned those plans to marry John Ballard, who made her the center of his existence.

Over the following years, Rita would embrace the roles of personal driver, coach, and cheerleader to three wonderful children whom she raised to follow God and who were baptized by their grandfather. As adults, Jeremy, Mia, and Megan respectively married Khatera, Derrick, and Benjamin to whom Rita became an unending source of love and awe. They later would give her the part she was born to play—doting grandmother to Khalif, Bravery, Zala, Sage, and Olin. For them and for all who loved her, she was their star.

In addition to her immediate family, Rita is survived by two sisters, JoAnn and Janice; three brothers, Daryl, Kenny, and Jerome and their spouses; her sister-in law Pam and her husband Bill; and a host of nieces, nephews, grandnieces and grandnephews. At any family function, no matter how large, Rita took center stage. The spotlight was always hers; there is no one who can replace her. Now, however, her star will forever shine in the celestial host. Our loss is Heaven’s gain.

Memorial services will be held Friday, 11:00 a.m., at First Presbyterian Church, with Rev. Rob Sparks and Jay York officiating. In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to The Foundation for Women’s Cancer 230 W. Monroe, Suite 710, Chicago, Illinois 60606.