



Vonda DeLayne (above)

Vonda Richards, 34, known to her legion of fans and friends as Vonda DeLayne, departed this world on December 4, 1993, much to the dismay of the thousands of friends she had around the country.

Known through the United States as a gorgeous and talented woman, she began life as a man, finding love and success as a female impersonator in Dallas in the 1970s. During her years as a female impersonator, she amassed many titles—including Miss Metroplex, Miss Universe de Texas and Miss Texas/USA—and entertained scores of audiences in clubs throughout the South.

Following her transformation to the woman who most will remember her as, she moved to Miami Beach, where she quickly became the toast of that Florida city. Despite her legal change, she never forgot her roots in the gay community, remaining active in AIDS causes, as well as the pageant systems, Miss Gay USA and Miss Gay America, that she loved so well.

Vonda leaves behind friends and family in Atlanta, Miami, Houston, Dallas and across the nation who will long remember her giving nature and fun-loving sense of humor. She was never too busy to lend an ear or a hand for any cause or for a friend, and, like so many of her contemporaries, is one person who will never be replaced.

Vonda was buried in Stone Mountain, Georgia, next to her mother, as was her wish. A memorial service in Vonda's name will be held at 2 p.m. on Saturday, December 18 at White Rock Community Church in Dallas.