



Tashina Merlina Faye Pomani

December 25, 1993 - April 30, 2023

Family and friends of Tashina Merlina-Faye Pomani of Anadarko are invited to attend her Celebration of Life Memorial Service on Tuesday, June 6, 2023 beginning at 2:00pm at the Smith Funeral Home, 301 SW Oklahoma Avenue, in Anadarko, Oklahoma with Pastor Lynn Bellamy officiating. Tashina Merlina-Faye Pomani, known affectionately as Sheena, was born on Christmas Day, December 25, 1993 in San Diego, California to Mary Vickland and Frank Pomani. She passed from this world on Sunday, April 30, 2023 at the age of 29 years-old. When she was 3 years-old, Tashina was diagnosed with Type 1 (juvenile) diabetes. This meant that she spent her days enduring multiple glucose tests, insulin shots, and many insulin reaction scares. Growing up as a Type 1 diabetic meant her family, including her mother and all of her older and younger siblings, had to be trained in how to administer glucose tests, insulin shots, and glucagon shots in case of severe insulin emergencies. She had an entire medical team of specialists to handle all of the various medications and complications from diabetes throughout her childhood. Complications included high blood sugars, insulin resistance, seizures, and hypothyroidism. At the age of 9 years-old, her mother passed away and she was raised by her oldest sister, Melody, and brother-in-law, Stephen, along with her then-6 year-old sister and then-12 year-old brother. Tashina was an enrolled member of the Crow Creek Sioux Tribe and enjoyed singing northern-style powwow songs as well as composing her own songs. She was passionate in her spiritual beliefs, and was always reminding everyone to live

their best lives including repeating a phrase that her mother would say to her as a child: "Always remember you are happy, healthy, holy, joyous and free." She spent the majority of her childhood in southern California including Valley Center, Escondido, Rincon, and San Pasqual. She attended All Tribes American Indian Charter School for the 8th grade where she was named the 8th grade valedictorian. In 2007, the family relocated to Anadarko, Oklahoma. In high school, she participated in Upward Bound, and served as a library aide, a teacher's aide, and a reading mentor as part of leadership classes. During high school she worked as a youth counselor at Oakridge Youth Ministries Christian Camp and worked as a teacher's assistant at the Acorn Christian Child Care Center. She loved helping others and was always willing to volunteer at community health fairs and youth programs. In the summer of her junior year in high school, her endocrinologist gave her the news that her diabetes would overtake her before she was able to graduate from high school, due to constant struggles with maintaining her blood sugar levels and developing insulin resistance. Despite hearing that news, she continued on and graduated from Anadarko High School in the Class of 2012. Tashina was set to attend college at the University of Central Oklahoma where she received Oklahoma's Promise which meant her college costs would be covered. However, the news of how severe her diabetes had gotten and the toll it was taking on her body made her reconsider college. After making the decision to take a year off before attending college, she traveled to southern California, where the first signs of mental health struggles appeared. She struggled with mental illness all of her adult life and was diagnosed with bipolar disorder I, schizophrenia, anxiety, and PTSD. These challenges, compounded by her continued deteriorating health, made it difficult for her to hold a job, think straight, and complete everyday tasks, especially during times when she did not take her prescribed medications. Since the age of 19, Tashina struggled with suicidal tendencies and was in and out of hospitals and psychiatric facilities. She self-medicated with alcohol and drugs, which led to severe addiction. The vicious cycle continued until Tashina found herself at

various behavioral health facilities in Oklahoma, where she finally made the decision to enter into a drug rehabilitation and mental health treatment program to get help with overcoming her addictions and stabilizing her life. On the morning of Sunday, April 30th, Tashina was found unresponsive at the bottom of a stairwell in the Methodist Dallas Medical Center in Dallas, Texas. The only identifying information she had on her was a ticket from Oklahoma City to Dallas. The medical examiner and the forensics unit identified her by running her fingerprints through various databases and located the contact information for her youngest sister, which is how the family was informed of her passing. According to the police reports, she had attempted to get seen by the emergency room there and, because she was unable to give her identification and describe what was going on with her, the hospital told her they couldn't see her, and she left. She was found several hours later in the stairwell of the hospital. The autopsy was inconclusive and a cause of death is still pending further investigation and testing. She was en route to a rehabilitation and mental health facility for Native Americans in southern California. The last few people whom she spoke with over the phone described her as sounding coherent, optimistic, and "more like herself" for the first time in years. The family wants to share her story in the spirit of Mental Health Awareness Month, May 2023. Tashina is preceded in death by her mother, Mary Melody Vickland Redbird; her nephew Isaiah Whitefox Redbird Jr.; her niece, Illeana Marie Redbird; her paternal grandparents, Marilyn Medicine Crow and Delbert Pomani Sr.; and her maternal grandparents, Geraldine Jeanette Denman and Paul Melvin Vickland Sr. She is survived by her sister, Angelaura Pomani of Anadarko, Oklahoma; her sister and brother-in-law, Melody Redbird-Post and Stephen Post II of Clinton, Oklahoma; her brothers, Ahkeesha Pomani and Sundance Redbird, of Denmark, Wisconsin; her brother Isaiah Redbird Sr. of California; her nieces, Hozshona Post, Nevaeh Post, Echo Post, Merlina Post, and nephew Vizshon Post, of Clinton, Oklahoma; her nieces Mary Ann Redbird, Twilina Redbird, Naomi Redbird,

Avona Redbird, and Arianna Redbird of Whiteriver, Arizona; and numerous aunts, uncles, cousins, nieces, nephews, and friends. The family appreciates your prayers and your support.

Tribute Wall

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“ I became close with Tashina in middle school, I was immediately drawn to her charisma and bright spirit. We quickly became best friends and would even call each other sister. I'd never had a friend like her - someone I stayed up all night talking to, swapped clothes and shared makeup with, went to gatherings together, listening to music, hanging out as often as possible. I knew I could tell her anything and she could tell me anything. As life got more complicated the older we became, her friendship became more and more special to me. She was there through every heartbreak, milestone, and accomplishment for 12 years so it's hard to share just one memory. They are all so special to me. Tashina was kind, bubbly, intelligent, and wasn't someone to ever hold back. Her presence in my life was and is irreplaceable. I will forever be thankful to have had her in my life and to been able to know her how I did.

Katy - May 21, 2023 at 12:00 AM