

Carine Christine Chalfoun

Carine Christine Chalfoun, 50, began the next leg of her journey, peacefully at her home in Cedar Creek, Texas, on February 18, 2020.

She was born on Aug. 8, 1969, to Cesar and Annette Chalfoun, who raised her and brother, Marc, to have a profound love for family, education and service.

Raised in Ho-Ho-Kus, NJ, Carine felt called to service early in her life. She began volunteering with the Ho-Ho-Kus Emergency Medical Service at the age of 16, and was often noted by her classmates to sprint out of her high school classes to answer when her pager demanded attention. After high school, she remained actively involved in several Volunteer Ambulance Services in New Jersey, before feeling the pull of the Lone Star State.

Carine relocated to Austin, Texas, in 1992 at the tender age of 23. It was Central Texas that would become her home base, and while she always kept a hint of a New Jersey accent, she considered herself uniquely Texan. Upon landing in Austin, Carine secured a position with the City of Austin Emergency Medical Services, where she dedicated her time and talent first as an EMT, and then as a paramedic and later, as a trainer. During that time, she developed a passion for law enforcement, splitting her time between ATCEMS and the Dilley, Texas, Police Department.

Eventually, law enforcement won, and in 1998, she left ATCEMS for a position with the Austin Parks Police, which would later merge with the Austin Police Department. She was promoted to Sergeant in 2007, and became a Senior Police Officer after the departments' merger in 2009. During her 16 years in law enforcement, Carine became recognized as a "go-to gal," often being assigned to special details, including training, logistics and as a team lead in organizing security for Presidential visits to Austin. She gained specialized training, and a love for emergency management, as a member of the APD Emergency Preparedness and Response Unit.

Prior to her retirement in 2014, Carine expanded her field of service yet again, becoming actively involved in Texas Search and Rescue (TEXSAR), an organization dedicated to assisting law enforcement with search and rescue of missing persons. That association is what first brought her to Caldwell County, as a facilitator for searches during the November 2013 flooding event. She, with the TEXSAR team, returned in May 2014 to assist in efforts to locate and recover a child swept away by another historic flooding event. During that time, she caught the attention of then-Emergency

Management Coordinator Martin Ritchey, who would soon custom-tailor a position in his office for a person of Carine's dedication and qualifications.

She left retirement in 2015 to fill the position as Caldwell County Assistant Emergency Management Coordinator. In that position, she was responsible for a broad range of tasks, and was perhaps best known as a trainer, and for providing "rehab" for Caldwell County first responders as they went about the business of securing the safety of Caldwell County's residents. She had a singular devotion to those she called "her first responders," and quickly developed a reputation for making sure everyone had a cold towel, an extra bottle of water and a snack when actively working a scene.

She was promoted again, to become Caldwell County's Chief of Emergency Management, in November 2018, and took great pride in her responsibility for the safety of Caldwell County's residents. She was single-minded and tenacious in encouraging the use of technology as a means of early warning, and embarked on a crusade to make sure "her people" were enrolled in any and all emergency response systems that would keep them informed and safe.

Over the course of her career, Carine obtained more than 100 certifications in specialized areas of law enforcement and emergency management, and recently completed an EMT course in order to become re-certified as an EMT. In addition, she held Associate's Degrees in Criminal Justice and Foreign Language, being fluent in no fewer than five languages, including ASL.

Despite her tough-as-nails, law enforcement exterior, Carine was also known as a caring and devoted friend, who could often be found crocheting blankets for her friends or their newborns, and who believed in the promise of "text me when you get home, so I know you're safe." Acts of service truly were her language of love, and everyone she met soon fell under the blanket of her fierce protectiveness and boundless enthusiasm and support. She was recently described by a former trainee and dear friend as a geode: a tough exterior to crack, with an almost indescribable beauty inside.

She leaves to cherish her memory her beloved parents, Cesar and Annette; brother, Marc and wife, Victoria, and their children, Alexander and William; aunt, Athalie Berberian and husband, Eddy; uncle, Alfred Bagdijan and wife, Claudine, and their children, Aida, Serge and Nathalie; uncle, Ray Ritzel; adopted aunt and uncle, George and Sonia Alemshah; cousins, Joe Berberian and wife, Ani, and Cynthia Porter and husband, James; her partner, Manny Magos; her heart-sister, Mickelle Bolls

and husband, Earl; and her treasured fur-kid, Fakyr. She also leaves a sweeping legacy of friends she loved like family, who are forever changed by her love, her servant's spirit and her dedication. A celebration of Carine's life will be held at the First Lockhart Baptist Church, 315 W. Prairie Lea St., Lockhart, Texas 78644, on Friday, February 28, 2020. The family will host a reception for her friends to share their memories and love at the Connection Center, 200 S. Blanco, immediately following the service.

In lieu of flowers, the family suggests donations be made to the Emergency Management Association of Texas; Attn: Carine C. Chalfoun Memorial Scholarship Fund, 2502 Pace Bend Road South, Spicewood, TX 78669. The Scholarship Fund will be earmarked to provide training resources to first responders and TEXSAR volunteers across Central Texas. *The family also asks that you honor Carine's memory by registering your mobile device for service warnings via WarnCentral.org, or an emergency response service in your area.*