

Dawnell Unsworth Valdez

July 18, 1979 ~ August 31, 2025

Dawnell Unsworth Valdez, age 46, passed away unexpectedly on August 31, 2025. She was and continues to be a beloved wife and mother, daughter, sister, and soon-to-be grandmother.

Dawnell was born on July 18, 1979, the only daughter of Ted Loel and Gerri Gallegos Unsworth. Growing up, she gave her brothers a run for their money, at least until they were big enough to put up a fight. She grew up dancing, later moving on to clogging and then softball in high school.

Dawnell welcomed her only child, Sierra, on August 11, 2000. She was a devoted single mother for most of her life, working tirelessly to provide for her daughter. Despite the struggles, she always showed up for cheerleading competitions and encouraged every academic goal. Her strength, sacrifice, and support laid the foundation for all of Sierra's successes.

Dawnell and Orlando were married in Sandy, UT on May 21, 2022. Together, they enjoyed paddleboarding, fishing, camping, riding motorcycles, attending concerts, and traveling. She loved to attend and participate in car shows with her husband, proudly displaying Jezebel—her 1963 Ford Fairlane they worked hard to restore.

Dawnell was very smart and proudly earned her master's degree from Western Governors University. She was incredibly detail-oriented, hardworking and organized– traits that helped her excel during her schooling and throughout her career.

She inherited her dad's love for motorcycles and was a proud two-time NHHA champion. She made numerous, lifelong friends, local and national, within the desert Hare and Hound racing community. When she retired from desert racing, she moved onto an Indian road cruiser where she enjoyed long mountain rides with her dad, uncle Kerry, cousin Chaz, and others.

Dawnell was an avid gardner and wonderful cook. Every year, her garden would overproduce and without fail she would share her harvests with those around her. She could often be found in the kitchen creating new recipes, recreating comfort meals, and challenging herself to learn family recipes from Grandma Tiva.

Dawnell had a very large heart. She was incredibly generous and cared deeply for those around her. She often showed this through thoughtful gifts. Prior to her passing, one of her favorite activities became sending her first grandbaby, Baby Boy Yingling, frequent Amazon packages.

Unfortunately, throughout her life Dawnell struggled with her mental health and with addiction. She fought valiantly until the end. While the pain of her loss is unimaginable, there is comfort in knowing she is resting peacefully and reunited with her dad.

Dawnell is survived by her husband Orlando Valdez, her daughter Sierra (Nick) Yingling and soon-to-be grandson Baby Boy Yingling, mother Gerri Gallegos Unsworth, brothers Doyle (Juli) Unsworth and Clint Unsworth, nieces

and nephews Nativada (Oscar) Ramirez, Randy Unsworth, Tristan Unsworth, Robert Unsworth, Leah Unsworth, and great-niece Magdalena Ramirez, beloved pets Billy Cat, Anteros, Athena, and Stevie, and granddogs Henry Mousse and Grizzly Bear.

She is preceded in death by her father Ted Loel Unsworth, grandparents Ken Unsworth, Grace Julander, Charlie Gallegos, and Tiva Gallegos, friends Amy Sue Day and Matt Glines, and beloved pets Meowser, Pooh Kitty, Cardea, and Soter.

A visitation will be held on Monday, September 8, from 6:00-8:00 PM at Larkin Sunset Gardens, 1950 East Dimple Dell Road (10600 S), Sandy, Utah. A second visitation will take place on Tuesday, September 9, from 10:00-10:45 AM at the same location with the funeral to follow at 11:00 AM. Interment and graveside will take place following the services. The funeral will be livestreamed via Zoom and can be accessed by clicking the "Watch Services" button above.

If you are struggling with mental health and/or addiction, please know that you matter and that help is available.