



Alison Rae "Ali Rae" Willis

February 29, 1980 - April 27, 2026

Ali Rae: A Leap Year Legend and Eternal Sunshine

Alison Rae Willis didn't just enter the world; she arrived like a rare cosmic event on February 29, 1980, in Springfield, Illinois. Being a Leap Year baby suited her perfectly—she was one-of-a-kind, impossible to forget, and always seemed to possess a bit of magic that the rest of us only get to see every four years.

Ali was a literal ray of sunshine. To know her was to be seen by her, usually through the lens of a memory so sharp it bordered on superhuman. She was the world's unofficial historian of the "little things," able to recount the exact sandwich someone made for her three decades ago with the same vividness as a video call she had just yesterday. If you spent time with Ali, you were etched into her heart forever.

For over nine years, Ali brought that same warmth and reliability to Publix, where she was a loyal and cherished employee. When she wasn't at work, she was likely fueled by her "addiction"—a cold Coca-Cola—or plotting her next big win. Ali was the undisputed "Slot Machine Queen," and her favorite place to be was at the casino with her dad, chasing the jackpot and enjoying every second of the bright lights and excitement.

She lived her life as a vibrant mashup of her favorite things. She was a front-row soul for the Backstreet Boys and Taylor Swift, often performing her own versions of their hits—Ali never let not knowing the actual lyrics get in the way of a great song. Whether she was hitting the lanes for a round of bowling, swimming laps in the pool, or masterfully solving puzzles on her tablet, she did it with a spirit that was infectious.

Her passions were as eclectic as they were intense. She loved Boeving, talking to boys online, and was a fiercely loyal—if occasionally misguided—fan of the Dallas Cowboys. Above all, Ali loved just being with her mom and her "favorite loving companions," her puppies Rocky and Gracie Mae.

Ali's bright light continues to shine through her parents, Connie and Mike Willis; her sister and #1 favorite brother-in-law, Wendy and Mike Carr; her beloved nephew, Jack; and her step-nephews, Mason, Ryan, and Easton.

She taught us that joy isn't found in the big milestones, but in the memory of a ham sandwich, the pull of a slot machine, and the melody of a song you're making up as you go. We'll be looking for her in every sunrise and every Leap Year to come.

A memorial service will be held at James A. Dyal Funeral Home on Sunday, May 3, 2026 at 1pm at 303 S. Main Street Summerville, SC 29483.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to the Special Olympics of Charleston, the Charleston Miracle League, and the Pet Helpers Clinic, three important organizations to Ali.

Upcoming Events

Memorial Service

MAY 3. 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM (ET)

James A. Dyal Funeral Home Chapel
303 S. Main Street
Summerville, SC 29483