



Mary L. Smith

August 26, 1937 - November 19, 2023

We lovingly remember Mrs. Mary Lois Ryan Smith, affectionately known to many as Ma, Grandma, GaGa, Ms. Mary, “Champ,” and “DIVA.” At the age of 86, she peacefully entered into eternal rest on Sunday, November 19, 2023, in Richmond, Virginia. Born to Roscoe Ryan and Lois Barnes Ryan on August 26, 1937, in the same city she always called home, Mary was a beacon of faith, love, and kindness in the lives of all who knew her.

From a young age, Mary's life was anchored in her faith. She found spiritual solace and joy first at Mount Calvary Holiness Church, and later at Saint Paul's Baptist Church. As 'Ms. Mary', her commitment to her faith community was evident in her role as a greeter, where she shared her radiant smile and warm spirit with everyone she met.

A passionate dominoes player, Mary's competitive yet cheerful spirit was a delight to all who joined her in this favorite pastime. Her laughter and friendly banter around the dominoes table will be fondly remembered by her family and friends.

Mary's journey through life was marked by dedication and service, both in her professional and personal endeavors. A graduate of Richmond Public School, she later contributed significantly to her community through her work at VCU Health System, retiring after a remarkable 25 years of service. Her career was

not just a job but a manifestation of her caring nature.

At the heart of Mary's world was her family. Known as 'Ma' and 'Grandma' in her loving home, she shared a beautiful and enduring love with her husband, Jesse L. Smith. Together, they nurtured a family filled with love and respect. She leaves behind a rich legacy through her devoted husband, Jesse; daughters Robin D. Ryan and Donshea A. Smith; brother Daniel L Ryan; sisters Elizabeth Best and Ella Clark; her beloved grandchildren, to whom she was 'GaGa', including Chelsea Ryan-Watford, Jerl "Jay" Ryan, Najlaa'a McIntosh, and Khanowk McIntosh; her grandson in-law Earl Watford; and her adored great-grandchildren Zahara Watford, Ziva Watford, Zhuri Watford, Halimah McIntosh, James McIntosh, and Gyasi McIntosh.

In her community and among friends, Mary was known as 'Champ' for her resilience and 'DIVA' for her vibrant personality. Her memory will also be cherished by her godchildren Corri Ryan and Emanuelle Harris, her lifelong friend Kelly Downtin, and dear friends Elle Pleasure (Bo) and Joann Kidd (William), along with numerous nieces, nephews, and other relatives.

Mary's passing was preceded by her brothers Roscoe "June" Ryan and James Robert Ryan, her sister Margaret Ryan Bills Davis, and her treasured mother, Lois Barnes Ryan and her father Roscoe Ryan.

As we bid farewell to Mary Lois Ryan Smith, a remarkable woman known by many names but loved universally, we celebrate a life lived with unwavering faith, boundless love, an ever-present smile, and a spirited hand at the dominoes table. Her legacy of kindness, strength, and joyful competitiveness will continue to inspire and guide us.

Mary often said, "Eat all your food so you'll grow up to be big and strong," a sentiment that truly encapsulates her nurturing spirit. In this spirit, we extend

our deepest gratitude to Dr. Michael Sheehan, whose support and care were invaluable in her final years, and to all the caregivers and medical staff who attended to her.

A service to honor and celebrate Mary's life will be held at Saint Paul's Baptist Church, on Wednesday, November 29, 2023 at 12:00 noon. Viewing will be held at 11:00a.m. The family extends an invitation to all who were touched by Mary's life to join in commemorating her remarkable journey. In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be made to St. Jude's, a cause close to Mary's heart. Following the service, the family welcomes friends and loved ones to join them for the repass at St. Paul's Baptist Church, Creighton Road to share memories and celebrate Mary's life.

Previous Events

Visitation

NOV **28**. 12:00 PM - 6:00 PM (ET)

March Funeral Home -Laburnum Chapel
2110 E. Laburnum Ave.
Richmond, VA 23222

Family Hour

NOV **28**. 5:00 PM - 6:00 PM (ET)

March Funeral Home-Laburnum Ave.
2110 E. Laburnum Ave.
Richmond, VA 23222

Celebration of Life

NOV **29**. 12:00 PM (ET)

St. Paul's Baptist Church
4247 Creighton Road
Richmond, VA 23223

Tribute Wall

SF

“ To Donshea, my deepest sympathy is extended to you and your family in this time of bereavement. I pray for God to cover you with strength and comfort to endure.

Blessings,

Sharon Matthews Fortune

SHARON FORTUNE - December 19, 2023 at 06:40 PM

DM

“ To Robin, Donshea and your entire family, we extend our sincere condolences to you during this time of sorrow. The stories you shared of your mother make it clear that she was a warm and welcoming person. It is obvious that her spirit lives on in her children.

Delores, Margo, Xavier and Brandon

Delore J Marable - November 29, 2023 at 11:54 PM

BP

*I would like to extends my deepest condolences Robin,to you and your family. May God provide you with peace and comfort during this time.
Brenda Durrah Partridge
And family*

Brenda Partridge - November 30, 2023 at 12:49 PM

PH

“ Mrs. Smith was a very kind and loving person. She will be greatly missed in our family! Joann, Emmanuel, William and all of our family will never forget her. I know that she would want us to stay strong because she is in Gods hand now! Much love to the Smith family



Patricia A A Harris - November 29, 2023 at 11:36 AM



“ Divine Peace Bouquet was purchased for the family of Mary L. Smith.



November 28, 2023 at 08:04 AM

TF

“ The Perkins Family planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Mary L. Smith.

The Perkins Family - November 28, 2023 at 08:04 AM

QF

“ I would like to extend my deepest condolences to Mr. Jesse , Donshea, Robin, and the Smith Family in the passing of Ms. Mary. Mrs. Mary was a compassionate, kind, and caring woman.

With Sympathy,
Q Fulton

Q Fulton - November 25, 2023 at 05:23 PM

AO

We are borne to the realm of this life aspect as transients. We arrive through our mother portal. A mother that is fully a tree of life. I pray for all mothers that gave us the right of passage. I acknowledge the painful sacrifices of our mothers. Mrs Mary Smith's daughter Donshea Smith is highly regarded as a personified woman and mother. Thanks for nurturing her to be highly regarded. Rest well Mary !!

Adebayo Owodunni - November 28, 2023 at 12:56 PM



“ *Treasured Lilies Spray was purchased for the family of Mary L. Smith.*



November 25, 2023 at 04:12 PM



“ *We the March Family and Staff wish to extend our deepest and heartfelt sympathy in the passing of your loved one. Our prayers go out to you and your family in your time of loss. We know and understand that you have received many expressions of love and we will continue to lift you up in prayer. May the memories you cherish of brighter and happier days help to ease your sorrow and comfort you always.*

March Funeral Homes - November 25, 2023 at 02:47 PM