



Mary Alice Chivis Keys

May 1, 1929 - May 13, 2024

Mary Alice Chivis Keys was born May 1, 1929, in Steelton, PA. She was the sixth of nine children born to Katie Johnson Chivis and Walker Howard Chivis.

Mary was very young when her parents died, leaving their nine children under the care of the State of PA. Soon after, Mary's oldest sister Louise married Willie Hurst, and they raised the siblings along with their own children, with loving help from aunts, uncles, her church family and the close-knit Ridge Street Community, affectionately known as the "Up-On-The Hill-Folk."

At a young age, Mary accepted Christ as her Savior at Mount Zion Missionary Baptist Church of Steelton, PA, serving in the church choirs, Sunday School, VBS, the Pastor's Who-So-Ever Ministry, among others. Over her lifetime, she became one of the beloved Mothers-of-the-Church. Mary received her early education at Steelton's historic Hygienic School for Colored Children, and was taught during segregation by teachers who held performance and achievements to the highest standards. She graduated from Steelton-Highspire High School.

At nineteen years of age, Mary married her childhood sweetheart, James Gilbert Keys. This union was blessed with four children, James Gilbert, Jr., Florence May, Daniel Brian and Patty Jo. For many of her young adult years, Mary reveled in her most important career, wife and mother. Mary and Jim,

with the help of family and friends, built their first home on Ridge Street. It still stands today.

In 1966, due to work relocation, Jim moved his family to Texas from Pennsylvania. Then, his job relocated to Ohio, where they settled in Yellow Springs. Mary joined the First Baptist Church of Yellow Springs where she served in the Choir, in the Christian Education Department teaching Sunday School along with Bible Study, Junior Ushers, Vacation Bible School, Missionary Circle and Chairperson of the annual First Baptist Church Calendar Tea for many years. She became active in the community, working as an instructional aide in the elementary school and the PTA. She volunteered at the YSO Senior Center, and supported her two youngest children all over Central Ohio for their sports activities.

Mary furthered her own education, taking college courses at Central State University. She ultimately went on to acquire her real estate license and practiced for more than thirty years.

In 1989, Mary returned to the Harrisburg area with her husband when he retired. In her senior years, Mary continued to be active in the community. The Red Hatters and Widow and Widowers Clubs were among her favorites. As a member of the Friendship Senior Citizens Center in Lower Paxton Township, Mary loved chair aerobics and Spanish classes.

She received training to become a Susquehanna Township Police Cadet and was a Hospice Volunteer with Hospice of Central Pennsylvania for more than thirty-five years. During Mary's volunteer tenure with Hospice, she became the face of Hospice of Central Pennsylvania and in the "Touching Lives," a quarterly magazine published by Hospice of Central Pennsylvania.

Always willing to be used by the Lord, she became a mother to the motherless

and a friend to all. Mary was the “Other Mom” to many members of the Harrisburg and Yellow Springs communities whose mothers had passed on. Just as Mary reveled in rearing her own children, she cherished the many adults who adopted her as their second mom.

Mary’s legacy lives on and she is survived by her three children, Florence May Keys Stewart (Robert) of Manassas, VA, Rev. Daniel Brian Keys of Mechanicsburg, PA, Dr. Patty Jo Keys of Harrisburg, PA; daughter-in-law, Paulette Alice Fears Keys of Palm Beach Gardens, FL; her five grandchildren, Atty. James Gilbert Keys III (Deanna) of Pembroke Pines, FL, Abdalla Aziz Stewart (Alexandra “Alex”) of Chester, VA, Joseph William Keys (Angela) of Plano, TX, Maani Adisa Stewart (Donna) of Woodbridge, VA, Danielle Nicole Keys (Bryant, Fiancé) of Fort Worth, TX; six great-grandchildren, Alani Lucia Keys, James Gilbert Keys IV, Joseph William Keys II, Melina Michelle Keys, Alyssia Renae Keys and Brielle Marie Collie.

Mary Alice was always shown deepest love and kindness by her nieces, nephews, a host of relatives, friends and her neighbors, all of whom looked out for her.

IN LIEU OF FLOWERS, CONTRIBUTIONS MAY BE MADE TO MT. ZION MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH, STEELTON, PA, OR FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, YELLOW SPRINGS, OH.

FAMILY AND FRIENDS ARE ENCOURAGED TO CLICK ON THE SHARE A MEMORY TAB TO POST VIDEOS, SHARE MEMORIES, CONDOLENCES, REFLECTIONS OR SIMPLY LEAVE YOUR NAME.

Previous Events

Flower Delivery

MAY **24.** 9:00 AM (ET)

Mt. Zion Missionary Baptist Church
20 Locust Street
Steelton, PA

Memorial Service

MAY **24.** 11:00 AM (ET)

Mt. Zion Missionary Baptist Church
20 Locust Street
Steelton, PA

Tribute Wall

BF

“ *Butler Family planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Mary Alice Chivis Keys.*

Butler Family - May 23, 2024 at 03:45 PM



“ *Emerald Garden Basket was purchased for the family of Mary Alice Chivis Keys.*



May 23, 2024 at 03:45 PM

RG

“ *To the family of my dearest friend Mary Alice. I am surely going to miss her.*

Rosetta Gaines - May 23, 2024 at 03:37 PM

NA

My Dad, Eugene Allen, always talked lovingly about Mary Chivis Keys. His older brother would hang out with her and her husband. The Three Musketeers. Although, Dad was younger, he would hear about all of their antics together and wish he was older to participate. We saw them when we were stationed in Dayton, OH for the two years that we were living there. Then again when they relocated.

I am just hearing about her passing. Rest in Peace to a life well lived. I know what the family is going through having lost Dad last September. It's amazing that they are all going at the same time, but I know that they are up there whooping it up and having a great time.

My Condolences,

Nancy K. Allen.

Nancy Allen - July 06, 2024 at 03:59 PM

LL

 RIP

Lee Lathan - December 31, 2024 at 03:57 AM

MA

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



marian - May 22, 2024 at 10:03 PM

CF

“ Charles Chivis and Family purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Mary Alice Chivis Keys.



Charles Chivis and Family - May 22, 2024 at 05:46 PM

VJ

“ Varo, Sr; Karen; Laura Jean; & Julie. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Mary Alice Chivis Keys.

Varo, Sr; Karen; Laura Jean; & Julie. - May 22, 2024 at 04:02 PM



“ Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Mary Alice Chivis Keys.



May 22, 2024 at 04:02 PM

LR

“ Lucille Ray lit a candle in memory of Mary Alice Chivis Keys



Lucille Ray - May 22, 2024 at 11:41 AM