



Dona Marie O'Berry

September 11, 1929 - June 24, 2024

Dona Marie O'Berry, 94, of Orlando, Florida, died Monday, June 24, 2024.

Born in Marion,

South Carolina, she was the daughter of Donald Robert Jones and Mary Marie Hucks Jones. Originally from Horry County, SC, Dona Marie was reared in Tampa, Florida. Dona Marie enjoyed recalling childhood memories such as going for walks on Bayshore Boulevard, and catching the streetcar just outside the house where she lived on Tampa Street to go downtown with her friends to watch movies at Tampa Theatre - for only a dime. She would also talk of her family being able to buy produce and deviled crabs from street vendors that would go by her family's home. She spent her childhood summers at her maternal grandmother's ("Big Mama" Rosa Byrd Hucks) Huckslin Inn at Myrtle Beach, SC, during the 1930s and 40s. During her childhood, she also lived in Baltimore, MD, and Morganton, NC.

She graduated from Tampa's Sacred Heart Academy in 1947, where she sang in the choir and played on the basketball team and played a male role in her senior class play, and Florida State University in 1951 with a bachelor's degree in Elementary Education. Dona Marie met her husband, Philip Charley O'Berry, on a blind date, arranged by one of his Coast Guard friends. She was an elementary school teacher at Dale Mabry Elementary School in Tampa, FL, until she married on December 20, 1952; at Elizabeth City Elementary School in Elizabeth City, NC; at Egypt Lakes Elementary School in the early 1960's;

and at Temple Terrace Elementary School in Temple Terrace, FL, where she also was assistant principal in the 1970's. She specialized in teaching gifted children, and especially enjoyed teaching language arts and American History, and reading aloud to her students. In Tampa, she was also a member of Oak Grove United Methodist Church, teaching Sunday School, participating in ladies' circles and leading children's choirs. When once asked what she would have done as a career had she not been a teacher, she said, "I would have loved to be an opera singer." She used her beautiful singing voice to sing praises to her Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, at the numerous churches of which she was a member during her lifetime. She was also a member of Eastern Star.

She retired from teaching in 1975 and moved to Dade City, FL, where she helped with the renovation and interior design of an 1879 family home that sat on 48 acres. There, she attended First United Methodist Church. In 1977, she moved to Anna Maria, FL, having owned a vacation home since 1973. She relished living in the beach environment and became real estate agent and developer in Anna Maria, FL, in the early 1980s with her husband. There, she attended Roser Memorial Church and later became a member of Island Baptist Church. In 1988, she retired to St. Cloud, FL, and then to Kissimmee, FL, where she was a member of First United Methodist Church St., Cloud, where she was a Sunday School teacher and Bible study leader.

Dona Marie enjoyed playing cards with family and playing Bridge with her peers. Family was most important to her and for 20 years she hosted many family members at her second home in the ski community of Beech Mountain, NC, where she also enjoyed traveling throughout the neighboring mountain communities, especially enamored with the dogwood and rhododendron blossoms in the spring and the palette of autumn colors of the trees she did not get to see in Florida.

Dona Marie was a delightful conversationalist who was very personable and hospitable. She loved decorative arts and cared about the environment in which she and her family lived, creating homes into which her husband and children were proud to bring friends and family. She once enjoyed oil painting with her husband and had an appreciation for the finer things in life and imbued her children with this quality. She loved fine jewelry, flowers, fine china, crystal, pewter and silver wares, and music -- including playing piano.

Dona Marie was predeceased by her parents, her husband, and her first-born son, Philip Kyle O'Berry; and her only brother-in-law who was like a brother to her for more than 50 years, Robert William Gee.

Survivors include son Donald Kerry O'Berry and his wife, Lynn Ellen Bunch O'Berry, of Annandale, VA; and their offspring, Dona Marie's grandson, Cameron Scott O'Berry, and his wife Julianne Elizabeth Englund O'Berry, and Dona Marie's great-grandchildren, Hayes Cameron O'Berry, June Capri O'Berry, and Noah Daniel O'Berry, all of Coatesville, PA; Dona Marie's granddaughter Kelsey Jane O'Berry Martinez and her husband Richard Ariel Martinez, of Midland, VA; and Dona Marie's grandson, Ryan Jordan O'Berry, and his wife, Autumn Catherine Chestnut O'Berry, of Woodstock, GA.

Survivors also include Jeffrey Kent O'Berry and his husband, Thomas Alan DeVol, of Sarasota, FL. Also surviving is Dona Marie's only daughter, Denise Marie O'Berry Smith, and her husband, Curtis Wayne Smith, of Orlando, FL; and their offspring, Dona Marie's grandson, Christian Philip Smith, of Montreat, NC, another grandson, Jesse David Smith, and his wife Bekah Dawn Johnson Smith, of Orlando, FL; and Dona Marie's great-granddaughter, Hazel Jean Smith; and Dona Marie's granddaughter, Sarah Elizabeth Smith Tucker, and her husband Samuel Paul "Sam" Tucker, and Dona Marie's great-granddaughters, Arden Elise Tucker and Amelia Rei "Millie" Tucker; and

another grandson, Benjamin Curtis Smith, of Orlando.

In addition, Dona Marie is survived by the widow of her first son, Kyle, Victoria Bee Vause O'Berry, and Dona Marie's granddaughter, Hannah Marie O'Berry, both of Rutherfordton, NC.

Dona Marie is also survived by her only sibling, sister Mary Helen Gee of Anna Maria, FL; and Mary Helen's offspring, Dona Marie's nephew, Donald Robert Gee, and his wife, Joan Elisabeth "JoBetty" Clancy Gee, of Atlanta, GA; Dona Marie's nephew, William Scott Gee, and his wife Tammie Marie Wade Gee, of Cottontown, TN; and Dona Marie's niece, Shelley Marie Gee Calhoun, and her husband, Jeffrey Wilton Calhoun, of Houston, TX.

Dona Marie's beloved nieces and nephews from her husband's siblings include Ruth Ponsell, of Madison, FL; William Howard "Billy" Shytle, of Lacochee, FL; Donna Leigh O'Berry Campbell, of Dade City, FL; Cynthia Harris Ogle, of Greenwood, IN; and Evelyn Harris, of Ridge Manor, FL. Other nieces from Dona Marie's husband's siblings who predeceased her were Charlotte Marie Mathis Carpenter, of Trilby, FL; Sylvia Joyce Mathis Whitten, of Lakeland, FL; Kaye Harris Anderson of Thomson, GA; and Phyllis Cynthia Shytle, of Lacochee, FL.

The family would like to thank Sylvia Whitten (posthumously) and her daughter, Dianne "Dee Dee" Joyce Whitten, of Lakeland, FL, for their loving support of Dona Marie in her later years; Martha "Martie" Tucker, of Orlando, for tender, loving friendship and companionship; Mary Craig, of Orlando, for faithful friendship and visits; and Lynette Ports, of Orlando, FL, for being Dona Marie's loyal and understanding caretaker in Dona Marie's final years.

When one lives as long as Dona Marie did, dear friends are especially cherished support. For Dona Marie, these included Martha Gorman and

Marilyn Cornish, of Kissimmee, FL, and Shirley Norris of Orlando, FL.

Visitation will be at 10:00am with funeral services to follow at 11:00am on Monday, July 1, at Discovery Church, 881 Sand Lake Road, Suite 827, Orlando, FL, 32809. Graveside services will be at 2:00pm at Myrtle Hill Memorial Park, 4202 East Lake Avenue, Tampa, FL (enter at N. 50th street main entrance).

Flowers can be sent to A Community Funeral Home and Sunset Cremations, 910 W. Michigan Street, Orlando, FL, 32805, or if preferred, memorial donations can be made to the Alzheimer's Association or the Parkinson's Foundation in memory of Dona Marie.

Cemetery Details

Myrtle Hill Memorial Park

4202 E. Lake Ave
Tampa, FL 33610

Previous Events

Visitation

JUL 1. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (ET)

Discovery Church
881 Sand Lake Road Suite #827
Orlando, FL 32809

Funeral Service

JUL 1. 11:00 AM (ET)

Discovery Church
881 Sand Lake Road Suite #827
Orlando, FL 32809

Tribute Wall

OL

“ Overstreet L. planted a grove of 3 [Memorial Trees](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Dona Marie O'Berry.

Overstreet L. - July 05, 2024 at 01:20 PM

LE

“ Our deepest sympathy goes out to the family. I only met Dona a few times & she was such a sweet lady.

Leola - June 29, 2024 at 12:51 PM

MF

“ Much love, The Cannington Family purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Dona Marie O'Berry.



Much love, The Cannington Family - June 27, 2024 at 11:47 AM

NS

“ I did Ms. Dona's hair for years. SHE TRULY WAS A BEAUTIFUL LADY INSIDE AND OUT ! Always dressed up and makeup done. I missed her when she moved But Always thought of her. She's A BEAUTIFUL ANGEL NOW 🙏💕

Nancee Stephens - June 26, 2024 at 01:39 PM

DI

“ One of the sweetest people I have known, you will forever be in my heart
Deepest sympathies

Diane - June 26, 2024 at 12:36 PM

BT

“ Ben and Diane Tidwell planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Dona Marie O'Berry.

Ben and Diane Tidwell - June 26, 2024 at 06:39 AM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Dona Marie O'Berry.



June 26, 2024 at 06:39 AM

LS

“ Love, Martie Salt planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Dona Marie O'Berry.

Love, Martie Salt - June 25, 2024 at 09:46 PM



“ *Your Light Shines was purchased for the family of Dona Marie O'Berry.*



June 25, 2024 at 09:46 PM



“ *From December, 1965 when she and Phil sold my parents our house upon our move to Tampa to the day she died, Dona held and always will) a very special place in my heart. I can only imagine the mixed emotions going through the family right now- rejoicing that she is free from pain and illness and reuniting with Jesus and her family and friends and grieving the loss of her earthly presence.*

May the joy of her life provide a measure of comfort against the grief of their loss. And, may their best memories of her help to cover the huge hole in their hearts left by her passing.

With much love,

Connie Hunt

Connie Hunt - June 25, 2024 at 04:04 PM



My thoughts and prayers are with the O'Berry Family this week! God has blessed this family and clearly inspires this family to love and demonstrate Gods Patience and Love towards their family and communities. I was a 5th grader at Temple Terrace Elementary in 1970 and as I read Dona's life story I sense she was involved in my life during my formative years in a positive way! God is Good and Faithful and will be with you always💜

Eve M Martin - June 29, 2024 at 11:11 PM

JO

How nice to know one of her students remembers her fondly. She would have been so happy to know that; I know we are. I always said she was “teacher to the bone.” Thank you.

Jeff O’Berry - July 05, 2024 at 11:35 AM