



Joyce Yvonne Keel Merrell

December 13, 2018

Joyce Yvonne Keel Merrell, 85, was accepted into the loving arms of her Lord on December 13, 2018. She was born in Pitt County, NC but lived most of her life in Portsmouth, VA. She was a member of Calvary Baptist Church.

Joyce, who was also referred to as “Sister” by both relatives and friends, lived a full and eventful life. She grew up in Everetts, NC and remembered her “country” roots fondly, often relating fun adventures with her siblings and the love of her parents. She moved to Portsmouth as a young girl, eventually becoming a proud alumni of Woodrow Wilson High School. She never forgot her North Carolina roots and her trips back home were so very meaningful to her. She became a mother to three children, which became a huge sense of pride for her until the very end. Some of her greatest joy was on display when she was in the presence of her grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Family was always central.

Joyce had her fair share of challenges. From young adulthood, she was plagued by a multitude of health problems. She spent a number of years as a single parent and did her best in a number of sales and clerical jobs to provide for her family. Her faith as a Christian was key to her resilience. In times of trouble, Sister was grateful that her family wrapped their loving arms around her and her children. Despite all this, she had a great sense of humor; she loved to laugh, be silly and just have plain fun. Holidays and family gatherings

were events she looked to with anticipation and fully enjoyed. She loved her marathon conversations with family and friends.

The last four years of her life were at Emily Green Shores, where she died. She loved interacting with residents and staff there, where she was famous for making faces, wanting to dance, and generally enjoying all the activities the assisted living had to offer.

Joyce Keel Merrell was a survivor. However, the struggle did not take away the “inner child” in her or her love for family. She will be missed by all.

She was predeceased by her parents, Grace S. and Samuel W. Keel, Sr.; grandchild Melanie Yvonne Taylor; two brothers, Frederick Van Steele and Samuel W. Keel, Jr. She is survived by her daughter, Joyce Elaine Taylor and her husband Howard; sons Edward M. Flanders, Jr. and his wife Virginia, Mark W. Flanders and wife Kimberly; her sister Mary L. Ozment and husband Albert; grandchildren Christina E. Czerwonka, Samuel F. Taylor, Elizabeth B. Jeffers and William D. Flanders; great-grandchildren Grace Czerwonka, Sarah Czerwonka, Chandler Branton, Brayden Jeffers and Anna Jeffers; many nieces, nephews and wonderful family members.

Our family would like to recognize the amazing Betty Flynn, who was Joyce’s caregiver for a number of years. We would also like to thank Compassionate Care, who provided such outstanding hospice support to Joyce and the entire family.

A funeral service will be held Monday, December 17, 2018, at 2 pm at Loving Funeral Home. Burial will be at Olive Branch Cemetery on Monday, immediately following the service. The family will receive friends at the funeral home Sunday, December 16, 2018 from 2-3:30 pm. Memorial donations can be made to Emily Green Shores, the H.E.R. Shelter or American Heart

Association.

Cemetery Details

Olive Branch Cemetery

1 CPL James Williams Ave.
Clifford Street and City Park Ave.
Portsmouth, VA 23701

Previous Events

Visitation

DEC 16. 2:00 PM - 3:30 PM (ET)

Loving Funeral Home Churchland Chapel
3225 Academy Ave
Portsmouth, VA 23703

service

DEC 17. 2:00 PM (ET)

Loving Funeral Home Churchland Chapel
3225 Academy Ave
Portsmouth, VA 23703

Tribute Wall

SU

“ *Elaine, Mark and Eddie, we were so sorry to hear of your mother's passing. Our thoughts and prayers are with you all at this difficult time, especially here at Christmas and also from recently losing your dear Uncle Sammy. Please let us know if there is anything we can do to help. Your family has always been dear to our hearts. You have our deepest sympathy. - David and Sandra Umberger*

Sandra Umberger - December 19, 2018 at 04:43 PM

MF

Sandra, thanks so much. I am just seeing this. David and you have been such good friends to our family and we greatly appreciate your kind words.

Mark Flanders - January 04, 2019 at 11:28 AM

TD

“ *To Mark Flanders and family, your TCC family is deeply sadden by the loss of your mother. May you hang on to God's unchanging hands. May He be your ROCK and your STRENGTH during these difficult hours. A mother's love is everlasting and her legacy will live on forever in all those who knew her and loved her. You all have my deepest sympathy ---Toni Dixon, TCC - Norfolk Campus*

Toni Dixon - December 17, 2018 at 02:20 PM

MF

Thanks, Toni. Knowing all the loss and grief you have experienced recently, it means so much that you took time to write this. I hope that all my TCC family has a wonderful Christmas and holiday season and that you and yours have an especially terrific one. Take care-Mark

Mark W. Flanders - December 18, 2018 at 02:45 PM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum* was purchased for the family of Joyce Yvonne Keel Merrell.



December 15, 2018 at 06:01 PM



“ *Sentiments of Serenity Spray* was purchased for the family of Joyce Yvonne Keel Merrell.



December 15, 2018 at 12:39 AM



“ *Peaceful White Lilies Basket* was purchased for the family of Joyce Yvonne Keel Merrell.



December 14, 2018 at 07:44 PM