



## Mary Elizabeth Willis

December 13, 1929 - November 21, 2024

Mary Elizabeth Willis, age 94, of St. Augustine, Florida, passed away peacefully on November 21, 2024. She was born on December 13, 1929, in Montgomery, Alabama, to the late Willie C. Tarver and Mary Magdalene Tarver.

Mary moved to St. Augustine in 1931, where she spent the majority of her life. She was a dedicated member of Grace United Methodist Church since Easter of 1952, offering her talents and time in service to others. Mary was a lifelong educator, teaching kindergarten, civics, and adult typing. She served in the St. Johns County Teachers Association, and as a district officer in the ADK Teachers Sorority. Her passion for education extended beyond the classroom, as she mentored students, interns, and college students, always encouraging them to grow and learn. Her great gift was the ability to teach little children. She retired from the St. Johns County School system at age 70.

A passionate advocate for knowledge, Mary was valedictorian of her high school class and pursued her interests at Florida State University, participating in the band and the circus, graduating in 1951. Her love of learning was evident in everything she did, and she shared this enthusiasm with everyone around her. Mary expanded her love of learning by becoming a world traveler, including a National Geographic tour of world heritage sites.

Throughout her life, Mary was a member of various organizations, including the St. Johns County Education Association (SJEA), National Education Association (NEA), the Cancer Society, and the St. Johns County Democratic Committee (as treasurer). She also served as treasurer for a non-profit educational corporation and remained active in meditation practices. She was a founding member of the St. Augustine Archaeological Association. She served for 20 years as an elected commissioner for Anastasia Mosquito Control District.

Mary's love for her family and her commitment to making the world a better place were the cornerstones of her life. She was a nurturing teacher who instilled in children a love for God, nature, and the world around them. She enjoyed being with her children and grandchildren, passing on her knowledge of the earth and its beauty. She also dedicated time to supporting her church, the cancer society, teachers, and students, always striving to make a positive impact on those she encountered.

Mary lived a rich and fulfilling life, dedicated to her family, her faith, and her community. A beloved mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother, she is survived by her children Suzanne Dixon, Cindy Ebersold (Lee), both of St. Augustine and Thomas Willis (Liz) of Cocoa. She is survived by her grandchildren Gabrielle "Gabbi" Willis, Leah Willis, Cooper Willis, John David Dixon, Stephen Dixon, and Elizabeth Dixon, along with great-grandchildren Conor, Caelinn, and Ciaran. She was preceded in death by her daughter Penny Lou Willis Wools.

A memorial service to celebrate her life will be held at 11 am on Saturday, January 11, 2025, at St. Johns Family Funeral Home with Father Tom Willis officiating. In lieu of flowers, the family kindly requests that donations be made in Mary's honor to Grace United Methodist Church, the St. Augustine Archaeological Association Eugene Lyon Education Fund, or a charity of your

choice.

Mary's legacy will live on through her family, friends, and the countless lives she touched with her kindness, generosity, and unwavering faith. She will be deeply missed by all who had the privilege of knowing her.

St. Johns Family Funeral Home is in charge of arrangements.

# Previous Events

## **A Celebration of Life**

JAN 11. 11:00 AM (ET)

St. Johns Family Funeral Home  
385 State Road 207  
St. Augustine, FL

# Tribute Wall



“ Carolyn Shoals lit a candle in memory of Mary Elizabeth Willis



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**Carolyn Shoals** - January 22, 2025 at 05:01 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Mary Elizabeth Willis.

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January 08, 2025 at 09:24 AM



“ Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Mary Elizabeth Willis.

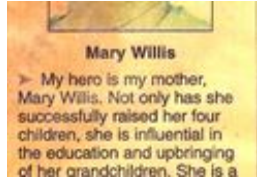


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January 08, 2025 at 09:24 AM



“ 34 files added to the album Life Tributes



St. Johns Family Funeral Home - December 31, 2024 at 12:02 PM



“ Rui-De Xue purchased the Divine Peace Bouquet for the family of Mary Elizabeth Willis.



Rui-De Xue - December 20, 2024 at 04:48 PM



“ Suzanne. Ray and I were sorry to hear of your mother's passing. Our hearts go out to you and all of your family. I will always remember your sympathy when my mother passed away You've had a lot going the last few years . We pray that GOD will carry you guys through this time . Peggy and Ray Pitcock

Peggy Pitcock - December 16, 2024 at 10:24 AM

EL

“ *Ms.willis was a great teacher she taught my daughter in kindergarten in 1997 until this day my daughter still talks about her her teacher taught her abc backwards she will never for get her rip ms.willis*



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**Ellennewton** - December 11, 2024 at 05:48 PM