



Ms. Mary Oneal Joyner

June 1, 1931 - July 25, 2025

Mary Oneal Joyner, affectionately known as “Mo” or “Mo Mo” (pronounced Maw or Maw Maw), entered eternal rest on July 25, 2025, at the age of 94. Born on June 1, 1931, in Williamston, North Carolina, she was the youngest child of Lonnie and Willie Ann Rhodes. Named M. Oneal Rhodes at birth, she became “Mary” when her first-grade teacher lovingly gave her the name, one that would come to reflect the grace, strength, and warmth she shared throughout her life.

Mary dearly loved her siblings: sisters Penella, Gladys, Louise, and her brother Curley. As the baby of the family, she held a special place in each of their hearts.

In 1954, Mary moved to Baltimore, Maryland, where she raised her three daughters: Vera, Vickie, and Valera with her husband, the late William R. Joyner. A devoted mother, she remained at home during her daughters’ early years before later working with compassion and care as a nurse at Bon Secours Hospital until retirement.

In 1993, Mary returned to her hometown of Williamston, where she reunited with lifelong friends and extended family. A faithful member of Back Swamp Church of Christ, founded in part by her grandmother, Mary found renewed purpose and community under the leadership of Pastor Dr. Derrick L. Wilkens. She held a special fondness for Dr. Wilkens, Deacon Bowens, and Mrs. Bowens, who offered her ongoing spiritual support and friendship. Mary also found joy and fellowship at the local community center, engaging in neighborly

connection and simple pleasures.

Mary's life was defined by the deep love she shared with her daughters. Each relationship was unique: Vickie, her steady companion and devoted caregiver, formed a deep and unbreakable bond with her mother, especially during Mary's final years. In 2017, Mary moved in with Vickie and family, where she received devoted around-the-clock care for eight years. Vickie lovingly attended to Mary's every need with unwavering love.

Valera, whom Mary affectionately called "Boo," supported her mother in countless ways; managing her business affairs, offering comfort and advice, delivering favorite treats, and making frequent trips down Interstate 95 between Maryland and North Carolina to ensure Mary had everything she needed.

Vera, her eldest daughter, had a gentle spirit and a generous heart. Mary adored Vera's selfless nature and the quiet strength with which she gave love freely and without expectation.

During her years in Baltimore, Mary played an active role in caring for her grandchildren, Stephen, Stephanie and Stacy, forming connections with them that became treasured blessings. She lovingly nicknamed Stephen "Tickey," Stephanie "Baby Doll," and Stacy "Baby Girl" or "Sugar Plum." Stephanie often said Mo was her favorite person in the world, and Mo would lovingly say she knew just how deeply her "Baby Doll" loved her. Stacy, her "get-it-done specialist," affectionately called her "Momps," a playful name that captured their special closeness. Stephen (Tickey) her only grandson, was in her words "her heart stream."

She lit up whenever she spoke of her first granddaughter, Lori, and glowed with pride and affection for her great-grandchildren: Dana ("Dane Dane"), Davon Jr. ("Davie"), and Caden. Mo warmly embraced all family, including Stephanie's husband, Michael, their bonus children Michael Jr. and Malia, and even the family dogs, Prince and Wesley.

Mary cherished conversations with her cousin Wanda, nephew Lorenzo ("Buddy"), and dear friend Glenda, who were her regular phone companions.

When Buddy, his wife Melody, and their son Lorenzo Jr. visited, they shared cherished, intimate moments filled with laughter and love.

Mary had a playful and loving spirit, often calling on Stephen, Stacy, or Robert (her son-in-law) for store runs, to fulfil her needed request, or just to joke around and share a laugh.

Mary was a woman of deep faith, keen intellect, and boundless love. She was nurturing and sweet, with a playful spirit and a “spicy” wit that kept everyone on their toes. Her memory was sharp, her laughter infectious, and her presence unforgettable.

Though she mourned the loss of her beloved Vera, Mary often found peace in her faith. She once said God had promised to carry her personally to the other side when her time came. Surrounded by love in her final days, we believe that’s exactly what happened; she was carried home in grace, without pain.

She is survived by her daughters Vickie Cookley and Valera Commissiong; her son-in-law Robert Cookley; her grandchildren Lori Dixon, Stephen Cookley, Stephanie Randall, and Stacy Cookley; her grandson-in-law Michael Randall; her great-grandchildren Dana Goines, Davon Goines Jr., and Caden Dixon; bonus great-grandchildren Michael Randall Jr. and Malia Randall; her cousins Wanda, Jimmy, and Pam; her nephew Lorenzo Brown; niece-in-law Melody Brown; great-nephew Lorenzo Brown Jr.; her dear friend Glenda; and a host of other loving family members and friends.

Mary Oneal Joyner will be laid to rest in her beloved hometown of Williamston, North Carolina, at the cemetery of Back Swamp Church of Christ.

Her life was a blessing, her memory a treasure, and her love a legacy that will live on in all who knew her.

Cemetery Details

Back Swamp Cemetery

Williamston, NC 27892

Previous Events

Celebration of Life Service

AUG 6. 12:00 PM (ET)

Back Swamp Church of Christ
1414 Bear Grass Road
Williamston, NC 27892

Tribute Wall



“ *View and Download the Funeral Program* ”

Congleton Memorial Mortuary - August 28, 2025 at 11:35 AM



“ *Mae Bowens lit a candle in memory of Ms. Mary Oneal Joyner* ”



Mae Bowens - August 06, 2025 at 05:36 PM



“ *Patricia Griffin Frankie Griffin lit a candle in memory of Ms. Mary Oneal Joyner* ”



Patricia Griffin Frankie Griffin - August 04, 2025 at 12:22 PM



“ *Patricia Griffin lit a candle in memory of Ms. Mary Oneal Joyner* ”



Patricia Griffin - August 04, 2025 at 12:21 PM

CS

“ Cecily Sene lit a candle in memory of Ms. Mary Oneal Joyner



Cecily Sene - July 31, 2025 at 06:15 PM

EH

“ My Condolences And Prayers Are With The Family 🙏



Evangelist Gwen Hudson - July 31, 2025 at 07:32 AM

CS

“ Congleton Funeral Home and Staff wishes to express our sincere condolences on the passing of your love one. We light this candle in their memory.



Congleton Funeral Home and Staff - July 30, 2025 at 04:12 PM