



Ms. Retha Ann Keys

July 14, 1967 - January 4, 2026

Retha Ann Keys, was born on July 14, 1967 in Greenville, NC. She passed away peacefully on January 4, 2026 in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, surrounded by her loving family.

Retha was known by all as a true social butterfly—a woman who never met a stranger and could light up any room she entered. Her vibrant personality, quick humor, and warm spirit made her the life of every party. She had a deep love for music, fun, and all things turquoise, and she proudly collected an impressive array of silver and turquoise jewelry that reflected her bold and joyful style.

Creative at heart, Retha loved to crochet, cross stitch, and craft natural soaps. Her talent was undeniable-she won numerous blue ribbons at the Pitt County Fair for her beautifully detailed crochet and cross-stitch pieces. She also had a great passion for photography and vintage cameras, often taking pictures at events capturing precious moments with family and friends.

One of Retha's greatest accomplishments was her 30 years of sobriety, a milestone she carried with immense pride and humility. Through the Narcotics Anonymous program, she completed her step work, sponsored many, and became a mentor to countless individuals seeking recovery. Her compassion and honesty made her a powerful speaker, and she volunteered regularly to share her story at NA meetings, prisons, and community events.

After beginning her recovery journey, Retha continued her education-first earning an associate's degree in human resources with honors, followed by a

bachelor's degree in Sociology, graduating Summa Cum Laude. Always seeking ways to give back to the system that helped her heal, she worked as a substance abuse rehab counselor for private company and later as a healthcare technician at Walter B. Jones Rehabilitation Center until her health declined.

In 2002, Retha was diagnosed with heart failure, and in 2013 she received an LVAD machine. She faced her health challenges with remarkable strength, humor, and creativity-often dressing up her LVAD bag to match her outfits. Despite pain, exhaustion, and illness, she continued to live life fully, joyfully, and on her own terms.

Retha leaves behind a loving family who will forever cherish her memory, her daughters, Brittany Johnson and Spain Keys; her mother, Shirley Keys; her brother, Reginald Keys; her beloved grandchildren, Damorion Dudley, Lyric Green, and Indigo Wasserstein; her uncle, Cornelius Keys (Diane); aunt, Janice Keys; a host of cousins, extended family, and countless dear friends whose lives were touched by her kindness, humor, and unwavering spirit. Retha's legacy is one of resilience, creativity, and generosity. She will be deeply missed and forever remembered.

Previous Events

Viewing

JAN 17. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (ET)

Corey's Chapel
5238 County Home Road
Winterville, NC 28590

Celebration of Life Service

JAN 17. 11:00 AM (ET)

Corey's Chapel
5238 County Home Road
Winterville, NC 28590

Tribute Wall

AH

“ 5 files added to the tribute wall



Annette K Harris - January 23 at 06:19 AM

AH

“ Annette K Harris sent a virtual gift in memory of Ms. Retha Ann Keys



Annette K Harris - January 23 at 06:15 AM

JB

“ I was one of the nurses that had the pleasure to care for her and get to know her. She was a very sweet lady with a kind soul. Rest in peace, Ms. Keys.



Justin Byrum - January 20 at 08:09 AM

CS

“ *Cecily Sene lit a candle in memory of Ms. Retha Ann Keys*



Cecily Sene - January 18 at 01:25 PM

AB

“ *To the family,
I am very sorry to hear about Retha. We spent many years growing up together as next door neighbors on Griffin Street, and I have many fond memories of her. We shared many smiles and laughter because she was so much fun to be around. Over the years we lost contact, however, the love I feel for Retha, I still carry in my heart. Praying God's strength and peace comfort you all doing this difficult time.*
Angela Atkinson Berry



Angela Atkinson Berry - January 17 at 09:44 AM

VD

“ *Lighting this purple candle for a true queen,
my dear sweet, beautiful sister you will be truly missed forever and always in our hearts*



Valerie Snuggs Dillahunt - January 16 at 04:04 PM

CJ

“ Chantelle Johnson lit a candle in memory of Ms. Retha Ann Keys



Chantelle Johnson - January 16 at 10:56 AM

LR

“ To know you is to love you!!! have so many memories laughing and crying together. What can I say Really go to miss You So grateful to God for the time and the journey that we had We enjoyed!! Laughing Crying and late night conversations!! Yes Really Gonna Miss You My Friend



Linda Renteria - January 15 at 09:15 PM

MS

“ Shirley, Janice, Cornelius and the entire Keys Family, I am unable to attend the services for Retha. Please know that you have been in my thoughts and prayers and will continue to be there. Allow the Holy Spirit to sustain you in the days, weeks, and months to come. It is true- God will take care of you.

Peace and Blessings,

Montrose A. Streeter

Montrose Streeter - January 15 at 05:25 PM

BH

“ *Barbara B. Henderson lit a candle in memory of Ms. Retha Ann Keys*



Barbara B. Henderson - January 15 at 04:05 PM

CK

“ *Cornelius & Diane Keys
A very sweet person. You will truly be missed.*



Cornelius & Diane Keys - January 14 at 11:25 AM

HR

“ *My friend Retha! You will be dearly missed!
You were a one of a kind, sweet person! You were just you! You were a friend, who said, everytime! I kept you straight! With a big smile on ur face! Soar high my friend!!* 📿📿📿



Hope R. - January 12 at 01:31 PM

TP

To the Keys Family praying that God will bring you through this time of sorrow, In Jesus Name Zmen

Theresa Pope - January 13 at 09:07 AM

TM

“ Sending my condolences to the Keys family and certainly praying for mom Shirley, Retha's children and rest of the family. I was certainly sad to hear of the passing of Retha. I have been knowing Retha and the family for years. We would see her a lot when we lived in Lakeview Terrace many years ago and also her mom was close friends with my mom Barbara. Retha was a special person to our family. We will continue to lift the family up in prayer knowing that God will certainly take you through this difficult time as you trust in HIM. We love you all.

Tammy Murchison - January 12 at 01:15 PM

GH

“ Gayle Hardy lit a candle in memory of Ms. Retha Ann Keys



Gayle Hardy - January 10 at 02:24 PM

DG

“ Doris Grady lit a candle in memory of Ms. Retha Ann Keys



Doris Grady - January 10 at 02:23 PM

TD

“ *Trisha Daniels lit a candle in memory of Ms. Retha Ann Keys*



Trisha Daniels - January 09 at 05:35 PM

AB

“ *From the Class of 1985* 🌹



Amanda V. Biggs - January 09 at 04:01 PM

AK

“ *R.i.h. my cousin never forgotten*

Alisha Kornegay - January 08 at 08:20 PM

TS

“ *My Deepest Condolences to the family!* 🙏❤️
Class of 1985



Toni Staton - January 08 at 10:03 AM

TJ

“ *Teresa Johnson sends sincere condolences and heartfelt prayers to the Keys family*

Teresa Johnson - January 08 at 03:38 AM

JB

“ Eddie and Jackie Barrett you're in our thoughts and prayers.

Jackie cratch Barrett - January 07 at 05:06 PM

SE

“ Sondra Early sent a virtual gift in memory of Ms. Retha Ann Keys



Sondra Early - January 07 at 04:58 PM

MJ

Retha you was a shining jewel when you walked into our lives in R VA. I never will forget the love you gave my family. I can still hear talking about my mom fried chicken😭 Take your rest Queen you fought a good fight and will be missed ❤️❤️❤️❤️

Marceline Jones - January 15 at 01:47 PM

BH

“ Barbara Barrow Henderson lit a candle in memory of Ms. Retha Ann Keys



Barbara Barrow Henderson - January 07 at 03:50 PM

AM

“ *The Mills family, sens our sincere prayers and condolences to the keys family.*



Angeline Mills - January 07 at 02:24 PM

EH

“ *May Jesus Christ Continue To Comfort And Strengthen The Family* 🙏🙏🙏



Evangelist Gwen Hudson - January 07 at 08:56 AM

LP

“ *Lacreshia Peterson lit a candle in memory of Ms. Retha Ann Keys*



lacreshia Peterson - January 07 at 07:35 AM

PD

“ *Peggy Daniels lit a candle in memory of Ms. Retha Ann Keys*



Peggy Daniels - January 06 at 11:01 PM

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 - January 06 at 07:04 PM

JT

“ My sincere condolences to the Keyes Family. Aretha was a beautiful ,kind,easy going person. Always with a smile on her face. Sending love to you all. Juanita Thompson ❤️

Juanita Johnson Thompson - January 06 at 04:58 PM