



Mary Louise (Brown) Colson

August 16, 1930 - January 3, 2023

Mary Louise (Brown) Colson, 92, passed away peacefully on January 3, 2023. She was born on August 16, 1930, in Lake City, Florida, to Ernest Fred and Louise Josephine Brown. She was born one day before, and delivered by the same doctor, of her childhood sweetheart and future husband, Wendell Harvey Colson.

Mary is survived by her husband of 74 years, Wendell Harvey Colson. They just celebrated their anniversary on New Year's Eve; her four sons, Wendell Jr. (Hazel), Mark (Tina), Philip, and Douglas (Suzanne); eight grandchildren, Wendell III (Trey), Christian, Nathan, Brett, Tyler, Blair, Jake, Jessica and eleven great-grandchildren. She adored them all and their spouses. She is preceded in death by her parents and two brothers, Ernest Fred, Jr and William Brown.

Mary had a kind and compassionate personality, consistently made friends easily, supporting conversation with obvious sincerity and understanding. Consequently, her early school days at local public schools went well, graduating from Columbia High School in Lake City, Florida, where she participated in elective activities, played basketball, softball, tennis, and made several life-long friendships.

She married her husband Wendell at 18 years old and was employed by a

Ford Motor Dealership and Southern Bell. Her earnings contributed to the young couple's existence. Employment ceased as motherhood began with the birth of her four sons. Raising children came naturally and she provided loving care to her boys making her a "wonder woman" in their sight. This image was real and filled a much-needed bond for their entire family with each son being born in a different Florida city as her husband pursued a banking career filled with managing start-up banks. Very few women could have managed the school disruptions caused by frequent moving and supporting each child in academic or athletic activities, yet she established a family home for any occasion. According to her husband, her accomplishments have not been surpassed by anyone and he realized quickly she made his career opportunities possible.

Winning friends and earning respect in new communities enhanced banking outreach for Wendell and caused the entire family to be well received by total strangers. Wendell recalls at one location, on the new bank's opening day, we were astonished to find customers streaming inside to open accounts, asking for "Mrs. Colson", unwilling to accept our explanation that she was the wife of the President and not an employee. We summoned Mary from home to please come to our lobby to meet and greet and express gratitude for their confidence in the new bank. Nobody realized Mary's outreach recommending the new bank extended to every place she dined, shopped, worshipped, and school functions. From that day forward, Wendell made certain she was "on duty" at every opening celebration saying she "worked the crowd like a politician campaigning for election" but said the difference was Mary's sincerity was immediately recognized and helped develop lasting friendships – not just in the banking business but continued forever all over Florida.

Mary and Wendell joined the Presbyterian Church and raised their children therein. From ball coach to tutoring, carpool driver and heckling at games, her participation and support was enjoyed by all. Her exemplary living no doubt

had an impact on her oldest son becoming a Presbyterian minister. While coping with four sons and throughout the empty-nester years, Mary found time to serve and enjoy civic, charitable, academic, and church organizations. Some of her accomplishments were:

Past President Orlando Regional Medical Center Auxiliary where she led a major portion of the fundraising to build a Hubbard House for families of patients; Member of PEO Sisterhood; Volunteered at Woman for Hospice in Central Florida; Church Circle Chairperson; Cub Scout Den Mother; Leadership in several cities by planning, organizing, and helping to execute projects beneficial to all; and lastly, an All-American parent who fed, clothed, and sheltered friends of her sons, regardless of race, color or creed. Many who have called her “Mama Colson”.

Later in life, Mary loved living on the water, boating, and was an avid Gator fan. She loved attending Gator games with her family and dressing in orange and blue. She was also known for her stylish collection of hats that she would wear daily. She loved meeting people and made new friends wherever she went.

Her husband, children, daughters-in-laws, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, niece, and nephew were all very special to her and the love she reflected to each one made the family exceptional. She was “Granny” to the older grandchildren and later became “GiGi” to the younger ones, a name carried on to several of the family’s friends she would meet at their sporting events and school activities.

Being known and loved by all who knew her for her wonderful personality, loving ways (with a splash of sass), and fun spirit is why she is so deserving of a Celebration of Life that will be held on Friday morning, January 27, 2023, at

11am at First Presbyterian Church of Orlando, 106 East Church Street
Orlando, Florida 32801. Please join the family for a service in the main
sanctuary followed by a reception in King Parlor. In lieu of flowers, please
make donations to Cornerstone Hospice Foundation 2445 Lane Park Road,
Tavares, FL 32778

Arrangements entrusted to Beyers Funeral Home of Leesburg, Florida.

Previous Events

Celebration of Life

JAN 27. 11:00 AM (ET)

First Presbyterian Church of Orlando
106 E Church St
Orlando, FL 32801
(407) 423-3441

Tribute Wall

RS

“ Our deepest sympathies go out to you Wendell and your family on Mary’s passing. She was a warm, caring person. Betty and I were fortunate to have known her as we all moved through our banking careers. God bless you.

Ray Sandhagen - January 25, 2023 at 06:22 PM

GK

“ So sorry to learn of Mary’s passing. Such a wonderful wife, mother, grandmother, great-grandmother and friend. I feel very blessed to have known her for four decades. Becky and I send condolences to my great friend and mentor Wendell and the rest of her large family.

George Koehn

George Koehn - January 25, 2023 at 05:40 PM



“ Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Mary Louise (Brown) Colson.



January 25, 2023 at 10:31 AM



“ Mary and Wendell Colson are two of the most generous people I have known. I loved the stories they would tell about growing up in Florida. Sorry to hear of her passing

Mac Bleakley - January 25, 2023 at 08:35 AM



“ *Arrive in Style was purchased for the family of Mary Louise (Brown) Colson.*



January 14, 2023 at 11:43 AM



“ *I have many fond memories of my dear Past neighbor, Mary. She touched many, including our entire family. ❤️*

John Heffernan - January 12, 2023 at 10:27 AM