



# Mary Lawrence Allen

AUG 18, 1932 - JAN 28, 2017



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MEMORIAL PARK  
Funeral Home & Cemetery

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## Mary Lawrence Allen

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Mary Lawrence Allen, 84, passed into glory surrounded by her loving family on January 28, 2017. Born in Lookout Mountain, TN, she would spend a happy childhood with devoted parents and sister in Webster Groves, MO. Life took a left turn with the loss of her mother to cancer when she was a young girl. Little did she know just how significant that “C” word would be in her life and family for seven more decades. Her father did his best to provide for Mary Lawrence and would even braid her hair for her when necessary. Her father had attended Vanderbilt and encouraged her to follow in his footsteps. She would pledge Pi Beta Phi and eventually catch the eye of a certain football player R.C Allen from Blytheville, AR. She became a cheerleader, homecoming queen, and Miss Vanderbilt. She and her beau were known as R.C and “Moon Pie”. She would marry R.C and move to Hawaii and a life in the Marine Corps. Spending their salad days in Hawaii was a life of peacetime drills, sharing a car with friends, and enjoying the islands. R.C. called it a “two-year government issued honeymoon.” They moved back to Memphis with their first son in tow and a job offer from Gaylord Container Company. (R.C. would build his own company Allen-Stone Boxes’ with Mary Lawrence’s support for over thirty years). Three more sons would be added to the family and then life would take a turn with a cancer diagnosis at the age of 30. She prayed that should God allow her to survive this illness- she would devote her years serving Him. To this calling she would be found faithful. Six additional primary cancer diagnoses would confront Mary Lawrence over the next 54 years. Mary Lawrence was ever orthodox in her faith but promiscuous with her time and money as doors for ministry and charity continued to open. Her sons would remark that the secret to her success was “keeping her dance card full”. Her initial ministry start was teaching a 4th grade Sunday school class. She started the church library (Growing Place) with a card table and some donated books. Her involvement in the Women of the Church, circle and prayer



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groups were a source of blessing and lifelong friendships. In later years, she would form a grief group for new widows (including herself) for encouragement and a safe place to share their issues over a wonderful meal. She became a ubiquitous presence in Memphis as she organized volunteers for the Reach to Recovery program to touch women who had gone through cancer surgery in Memphis hospitals. She loved her PEO sisterhood as they worked together to support philanthropy and education. She would serve as the Tennessee state President Mary Lawrence devoted increasing amounts of time knocking on doors, raising awareness and support for the American Cancer Society. She recently received the St. George National Award, which is the highest, award from the American Cancer Society for a lifetime of service and volunteerism. Mary Lawrence discovered a latent talent and love for art. She would use the proceeds from her art exhibits to support many Memphis ministries and charities. Her art can be seen in many corporate offices, homes, the Peabody Hotel and the Tennessee Governor's mansion. She loved her friends in the Memphis/ Germantown Art League and credited them for her progress and inspiration. She and R.C. grew very close with each incidence of cancer. They were proud of surviving a year in which they had three sons at Vandy and one at MUS. They enjoyed trips to see Nashville, Europe, Israel, and a second honeymoon in Hawaii. Family reunions at the beach with the grandchildren were cherished by all. Family times were full of time for golf, games, music, and football. Mary Lawrence and R.C. had a sense of urgency and appreciation for life. Mary Lawrence and R.C. were so proud that each of their sons would have a life of faith in Christ. Mary Lawrence Allen's life emulated the message from the apostle Paul in II Timothy 4:7, "I have fought the good fight. I have finished the race. I have kept the faith." A life well lived to the fullest indeed. May she rest in eternal peace. Mary Lawrence was preceded in death by father Col. Lawrence B. Feagin (Cassie), mother Mary Ellen Moore Feagin, husband R.C. Allen. She is survived by her devoted sister Ellen Feagin Hyndman. She is survived by four loving sons: Rives C. "Trip" Allen (Elizabeth), Lawrence Ross Allen (Maile), Jeffrey Norman Allen (Nanci), and James Edward "Jimmy" Allen (Lisa). There are 21 grandchildren AND 8 great grandchildren who have loved their "GrandMary" so much. The family will have a time of visitation this Thursday night February 2<sup>nd</sup> at the



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Memorial Park Funeral Home inside the cemetery at Poplar and Yates from 5-7PM. A memorial service will be held on Friday February 3rd at Second Presbyterian Church at One PM with reception following the service in the Connector. In lieu of flowers, gifts can be made to Advance Memphis, Neighborhood Christian Center, or the American Cancer Society. "Celebrating Life...Behind the Stone Wall"



## Tribute Wall

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SB

**Shari Black** posted:

Dear Allen Family:I just learned of Mary Lawrence's going to heaven. She was a lovely lady in every way. She truly blessed my life. You are all in my prayers during this time of sorrow. Blessings, Shari Black.

April 3 at 8:08 AM

LW

**Laura Weston** posted:

My mother Louise Parrish George will miss your company ! I love hearing all the Vanderbilt stories!

February 3 at 7:19 AM

MP

**Memorial Park** posted:

Your Light Shines was purchased for the family of Mary Lawrence Allen.

February 2 at 1:10 PM

PD

**Patsy Dougherty** posted:

I was privileged to attend Mary Lawrence's Prayer group last year. We met on the second Tuesday of the month in the prayer room at second. Mary Lawrence led each meeting with a themed bible verse with a key phrase or thought. We sang an appropriate hymn and then began a brief exercise in turning the message of the devotional into a drawing. She provided colored pencils/sharpiers to help with our expressions. Lastly, we went around the room and shared what our pictures meant relative to the devotional theme. Like every good teacher she offered suggestions to get our minds working in a pictorial venue. I so enjoyed this time with Mary Lawrence and those in attendance. I've kept all my "much to be desired" art work....but more importantly I've kept Mary Lawrence's spirit in my treasured memory bank. She gave so much. On one occasion late last year she offered a collection of bible verses which a friend of hers had given to her over the years. These were carefully scripted/written out by her friend and pressed on card stock. My verse was 2 Peter 1:3....His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and goodness. I thank Mary Lawrence for her teaching and expanding my knowledge of Him. Patsy Dougherty, Member of Second Presbyterian Church.

February 2 at 12:59 PM



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MP

**Memorial Park** posted:

Sweet Tenderness was purchased for the family of Mary Lawrence Allen.

February 2 at 7:18 AM

SB

**Sarah Bynum** posted:

It was just about five months ago that we honored an incredible volunteer, Mary Lawrence Allen. As a 50-year Society volunteer and a 7-time cancer survivor, she faced each challenge with perseverance, patience and resolve. Mary Lawrence used her cancer experiences to shape her life's work and we will forever be inspired by her warmth, grace and strength.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1e15-EYWOES>Sincerely, Your American Cancer Society staff and volunteers

February 2 at 7:17 AM

ES

**Ellen Smith** posted:

Oh, Mary Lawrence, what a memory we had when you decided you wanted to take your granddaughters to the American Girl Doll Museum in Chicago. How gracious you were to invite me as well as Debbie and Caitlyn. For we 3 our journey started in Knoxville, to Nashville and then to Chicago where we were to meet up with you, your daughters-in-law and the little girls. What a nightmare you had with Amtrak from standing on the platform in Memphis to delay after delay along the way. You had a wonderful itinerary which the 3 of us got to implement going to the miniatures exhibit at the Museum of Art but the rest of you did not.. We all remember the story-your arriving just in time for tea but just about an hour or so later Amtrak insisted you must return to train and did not offer any remuneration. I would have been fit to be tied, but you remained your usual "cool" self with that beautiful smile for your little girls. Those grandchildren have so many memories of your sweet nature. You will be missed by many but your legacy is obvious.

February 1 at 8:53 AM

JF

**Jeff's Servicenow Family** posted:

Jeff's ServiceNow family purchased the Basket Full of Wishes for the family of Mary Lawrence Allen.

January 31 at 6:49 PM



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MP

**Memorial Park** posted:

Sentiments of Serenity Spray was purchased for the family of Mary Lawrence Allen.

January 31 at 4:36 PM

LM

**Linda Mesirow** posted:

My favorite thing about Aunt Mary Lawrence was her constant smile!!

January 31 at 3:24 PM

JM

**Janie Miller** posted:

I am so sorry to hear of the passing of Mary Lawrence. I was first diagnosed with breast cancer in 1993 and joined the American Cancer Society Reach to Recovery volunteer program and that is where I met a most delightful lady named Mary Lawrence. So sweet, so dedicated to the cause and always with a smile. My thoughts and prayers go out to her family.

January 31 at 8:39 AM

MP

**Memorial Park** posted:

Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Mary Lawrence Allen.

January 30 at 3:35 PM



## **Memories only last if you share them**

Join us in honoring Mary by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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