



Mrs. Clarice M. Stewart

July 9, 1921 - October 7, 2019

Clarice M. Stewart, 98, of Plant City, Florida, born on July 9, 1921, in Stonega, Virginia, to Joseph and Aileen Matz. Clarice was the “middle child” of “The Dirty Dozen” (the Matz’s 12 children). In her youth, Clarice sang in various churches in the area. She was adventurous exploring and hiking the mountains in southwest Virginia. Her dream was to be an aviator like her heroine, Amelia Earhart. She attended East Stone Gap High School in Virginia. In March, 1940, she married William Edward (Ed) Stewart. As a team, they managed the D. Cury store in St. Paul, VA. World War II dramatically changed their life, when Ed was drafted into the Army. Their first child, Janice Aileen Stewart, was born while Ed was overseas. Ed was discharged in 1945, and Charlene Jo Stewart was born in 1946, and in 1948, their first son, William (Bill) Edward Stewart, Jr, was born. By the age of 27, Clarice was the mother of three, she and Ed had begun entrepreneurial endeavors in Big Stone Gap, VA, with the Stewart’s Men’s Shop, the Matz Department Store, and the Stewart Apartments. Clarice was active in the Eastern Star; she was in the Ladies Auxiliary of the John Fox Jr. Post No. 5715 Big Stone Gap, Virginia, Veterans of Foreign Wars. She and Ed also organized a couple’s group at the Methodist Church. The family grew again in 1953, with the birth of James Frederick Stewart, more growth was in the wings. Clarice’s dream of flying came to reality, when they bought a Stinson Voyager the first of many planes owned. Ed would learn to fly, giving Clarice the wings, she had dreamed of as a girl.

In 1957, a change in the economy and a desire for warmer climate, resulted in the family moving to Plant City, Florida. In August of '57, their first Florida store named Stewart's. It was Plant City's first self-service store featuring clothing and shoes for every member of the family. As their business expanded, they would sell only shoes in the 13 stores located throughout Florida. In 1958, they purchased the Plant City Shopping Center on Alexander Street (near the Planteen). In 1959, the family grew again with the birth of Cynthia Lynn Stewart. At the age of 38, Clarice's life was soaring high, while not a pilot, she was flying regularly with her husband on buying trips, and with the larger family came a larger twin-engine plane. Clarice managed the Stewart's Stores until closing them in 1969, and eventually they sold the shopping center. She continued, to help manage Ed's pulpwood business, and to serve as Secretary and Treasurer for W. Edward Stewart, Inc.

At 48, Clarice was enjoying an early retirement and was active taking road trips, playing golf, hiking, going to Disney, talking on the CB radio as "Lady Calvert," and taking clogging lessons. Clarice was a family historian enjoying time with her siblings, children, and grandchildren. Since family was very important to Clarice, she and Ed began the Matz Family Reunion and the Stewart Family Reunion. Ed passed in 1982, and Clarice (60 years old at the time) felt lost, but still found ways to stay active and involved in the community. She was active in the Young at Heart of the Methodist Church, and a regular volunteer at the Florida Strawberry Festival. She attended an exercise class at the United Methodist Church in Plant City. By age 63, Clarice was instructing exercise classes 3 times a week, that would continue for 30 plus years. Clarice's Exercise Class was often invited to entertain with their line dancing and clogging at community events and at local nursing homes. A true patriot, Clarice and her class consistently made appearances wearing their red and white attire for Memorial Day, 4th of July, and Veteran's Day celebrations. She clogged at the Senior Olympics in Tampa and received a Gold Medal. She clogged numerous times on stage at the Strawberry Festival.

In 2017, at the age of 95 she gave her last public performance at the Festival, on stage when Dennis Lee, when he invited her to clog to the Orange Blossom Special in front of hundreds of people.

Clarice had good health and celebrated milestone birthdays. She was featured in numerous articles and on local television stations. At her 90th celebration, a Proclamation was made naming July 9, 2011, Clarice Stewart Day in Plant City, Florida. The room at the Winter Visitor's Center in Plant City was named in her honor. Her last celebration was July 2019, with a family gathering for her 98th birthday. While the past several years brought changes in her health, Clarice was able to have visits with family, friends, trips to her beloved mountains, and numerous family gatherings.

She was a loving and caring mother to her five children: Janice A. Stewart, Charlene J. Mixa (Richard), William (Bill) Edward Stewart, Jr. (Suzanne), James (Jim) F. Stewart (Donna) and Cynthia Krosky. She enjoyed visits with her Grandchildren William (Eddie/Ed) Stewart III (Emillee), Josh Lukasik, Jason Lukasik (Melissa), Brook Lyons (Eddy), and Justin Stewart. Great grandchildren Sydney Farmer, Ava and Jaxson Stewart, Aaron & Madilyn Lukasik, Keaton & Kaia Lyons. Clarice is survived by her sisters Ruth Morris, Marguerite Bolden, Mary Ellen Outen, and brother John Matz (Ann). She is predeceased by her husband William Edward (Ed) Stewart, siblings: Josephine Wells, Dorothy Larsen, Gay Lynch, Dan Matz, Regina Cury, Joe Matz, Barbara Decker, and son-in-law Ed Krosky. She passed away peacefully in her sleep on October 7th surrounded by her family.

The Celebration of Life Service will be Sunday October 13th at 301 North Dort St, Plant City, Florida, 33563. Doors open at 2 PM and the service begins at 2:30 PM. Wear your red, white, and blue.

In lieu of flowers, please make memorial contributions may be made to

Methodist Children's Home at <https://www.funch.org/>, Shriners Children's Hospital at <https://www.shrinershospitalsforchildren.org/tampa>, or St. Jude's Hospital at <https://www.stjude.org/donate> Expressions of condolence at HopewellFuneral.com

Tribute Wall

PR

“ *Charlene, We are sending you and your whole family our condolences and love on the loss of your Mom. She surely had the best care from you when she needed it most.*

Phil & Phyllis Remolador

Phil & Phyllis Remolador - October 17, 2019 at 04:27 PM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Mrs. Clarice M. Stewart.*



October 15, 2019 at 02:29 PM

JC

“ *I am so sorry that I will be unable to attend the services Sunday. Clarice's soul is so special that she deserves the best of celebrations. What a lady! She knew how to live life, didn't she? And she did it with such grace and a little spunk. Alas, my own family situation is holding me here but I'll make sure to do something in her honor. Much love to you Cindy & to the whole family. Love, Janet and the Capak Family*



Janet Capak - October 12, 2019 at 09:14 PM

JH

“ I am so sorry that I will miss your mother's service on Sunday. I'll be at a swimming meet in Orlando. I knew she was an amazing woman but really didn't know how incredibly amazing and talented, until reading your obituary/tribute to her. We were lucky to have her in the Plant City community. She gave so much of her time and energy to make it a better place. Love to all of you.

Julie Holbrook

Julianna Holbrook - October 12, 2019 at 01:15 PM

MS

“ Clarice was one of the most gracious women I've ever known. I met her through dance class, but we also often shared memories of those mountains she grew up in and where I also had spent several summers with a relative. She was the only other person I knew who loved the old song "I Wandered Today Through the Hills, Maggie." She was everything folks from "her mountains" tend to be-- courageous, strong, unassuming, and wise. A beautiful spirit and soul I am proud to have known. My condolences to the family.

Meg Scott - October 12, 2019 at 09:55 AM

JM

“ Jason Mattair lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Clarice M. Stewart



Jason Mattair - October 11, 2019 at 11:57 PM



“ Clarice Stewart was a woman among women. I admired her and loved her so much and was the baby sitter for the first 3 children. I was blessed to have the opportunity and pleasure to visit with her and 3 of her children when she came "back home" a few years ago. We corresponded often and kept up with family news. God will welcome her with open arms. I will miss you, Clarice.

Jan Redwine Paveglio - October 11, 2019 at 06:06 PM



“ The Folino Family sends their prayers, thoughts, and love to the Stewart Family; especially to Jim, Donna, Justin, and Janice. We will see you Sunday at the Planteen.
Debbie and Tonio Folino
DaleAnn Dominick

Debbie Folino - October 11, 2019 at 02:55 PM



“ Ann Baker and William McLendon purchased the Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum for the family of Mrs. Clarice M. Stewart.



Ann Baker and William McLendon - October 11, 2019 at 10:55 AM



“ I loved Aunt Clarice , she was good and kind to all. Loved her beautiful smile . She will be remembered as a beautiful, kind lady who loved life and her family.



Sally Smith - October 10, 2019 at 01:38 AM

CK

“ 69 files added to the album Clarice collection of photos



Cynthia K. - October 09, 2019 at 10:04 PM