



Sharon Baker Burress

August 8, 1942 - February 11, 2024

Sharon Baker Burress

Lakeland – Sharon Baker Burress, 81, passed away February 11, 2024.

Sharon was born in Fairmont, West Virginia on August 8, 1942, to the late Noah and Mary (Stewart) Baker. She completed nursing school in Pulaski, Virginia prior to moving to Florida in 1965 from Bluefield, Virginia. Sharon founded Le Leche League of Lakeland. She graduated from USF, Summa Cum Laude in 1987, and began a successful career teaching at Kathleen High School where she was voted “Teacher of the Year.” Her hobbies included genealogy research, calligraphy and numerous activities at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.

Sharon is survived by her husband of 63 years, Donald R. Burress; children, Donald L. (Kim) Burress, Michael R. Burress, John A. Burress, Laura S. (Lawrence) Peay, Joseph B. Burress, Stewart G. (Kiley) Burress and Mary (Mark) Cuneo; sister, Susan Baker (Gene) Bowes; 18 grandchildren and 8 great-grandchildren.

Visitation will be Thursday, February 15th from 6-8 pm at Gentry Morrison Southside Chapel, 1727 Bartow Road, Lakeland, FL 33801. Funeral services will be conducted Friday, February 16th at 10 am at the funeral home chapel. Interment will follow at Oak Hill Burial Park.

Cemetery Details

Oak Hill Burial Park

4620 US Highway 98 S
Lakeland, FL 33812

Previous Events

Visitation

FEB **15**. 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM (ET)

Gentry-Morrison Funeral Homes - Southside Chapel
1727 Bartow Road
Lakeland, FL 33801
(863) 688-7679
t.hall@gentry-morrison.com
<https://www.gentry-morrison.com/>

Funeral Service

FEB **16**. 10:00 AM (ET)

Gentry-Morrison Funeral Homes - Southside Chapel
1727 Bartow Road
Lakeland, FL 33801
(863) 688-7679
t.hall@gentry-morrison.com
<https://www.gentry-morrison.com/>

Tribute Wall



“ Gentry-Morrison Funeral Homes created a Webcast in memory of Sharon Baker Burress



Gentry-Morrison Funeral Homes - February 14, 2024 at 03:11 PM

SS

“ Condolences to the family of my cousin Sharon from my wife Roxy and I. I am six years older than Sharon but have many fond memories of Sharon in our growing up years and later in life while visiting her parents and my Uncle Bake and Aunt Mary Belle in Lakeland. Sam Stewart

Sam Stewart - March 01, 2024 at 10:36 AM

DC

I'm so sorry to hear of your loss. My mother, Mary Lou Stewart Swager, thought the world of Mary Belle and her family. I was impressed by the extensive research that Sharon did in identifying the Stewart genealogy. This is a beautiful tribute to Sharon. May your fond memories comfort you all. God bless you during this time of grief. With Love & Prayers, Donna Conley, Bridgeport WV

Donna Conley - March 01, 2024 at 08:40 PM

CB

“ Sharon was a great influence in my life and in the lives of many others. I have a lot of great memories with her during my childhood. She was always loving and accepting of others. Such a great person

Christopher Bowes - February 16, 2024 at 11:38 AM

EB

“ Sharon was such a wonderful woman. I have so many great memories of her from my childhood and throughout my life. Always looked forward to spending time her on her visits to Virginia. She will be greatly missed. Sending love and prayers to Don, all my cousins, and my mother.

Ed Bowes - February 16, 2024 at 08:30 AM



“ Emerald Garden Basket was purchased for the family of Sharon Baker Burress.



February 14, 2024 at 09:49 PM

MP

“ Muggs, Beta and Pat planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Sharon Baker Burress.

Muggs, Beta and Pat - February 14, 2024 at 09:49 PM

BF

“ *Bartow Mosaic Family purchased the Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum for the family of Sharon Baker Burress.*



Bartow Mosaic Family - February 14, 2024 at 01:36 PM



“ *Pink Tribute Spray was purchased for the family of Sharon Baker Burress.*



February 13, 2024 at 10:36 PM

MF

“ *McKinney and Dickinson Families planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Sharon Baker Burress.*

McKinney and Dickinson Families - February 13, 2024 at 10:36 PM

MM

“ *Sharon radiated love. She adored the children she taught and showered them with kindness. Sharon was such a warm and caring friend. She would often send pick-me-up texts to keep me going when I was struggling through trials. What a beautiful woman inside and out.*

Michelle McLaws - February 13, 2024 at 10:19 PM

JS

“ I went to High school with Sharon, she was very smart and such a nice person. Recently we reconnected through face book and have enjoyed many conversations. I know she loved her family and I know they loved her, she will be missed by all of us.

Joyce Puckett Salgaado - February 13, 2024 at 09:58 PM

PC

“ Sharon and I went to school together in Bluefield and reconnected years later on Facebook. I'll miss my old friend. I'm sorry for your great loss of a wonderful wife, mother and friend.

Patricia "Took" Couto - February 13, 2024 at 07:40 PM



“ A Full Life was purchased for the family of Sharon Baker Burress.



February 13, 2024 at 05:19 PM



“ Small Garden Dish was purchased for the family of Sharon Baker Burress.



February 13, 2024 at 12:57 PM



“ *Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Sharon Baker Burress.*



February 13, 2024 at 10:55 AM



“ *Bob and Candice planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Sharon Baker Burress.*

Bob and Candice - February 13, 2024 at 10:55 AM



“ *Lavender Reflections Spray was purchased for the family of Sharon Baker Burress.*



February 13, 2024 at 08:59 AM



“ *Robbie Bryant purchased the Small Garden Dish for the family of Sharon Baker Burress.*



Robbie Bryant - February 13, 2024 at 08:35 AM

“Sharon Burress was a beautiful, intelligent force of nature. She had a mind that never stopped. She had determination. She was friendly and supportive but also insightful and direct. She was protective of those she loved, even when it meant honesty and candor when correcting what wasn't working. She was a lifelong teacher - in the school system and in church. She was creative, inspirational, uncompromising in her convictions, unashamed of who she was and what she believed, fearless, bold, courageous and also kind and generous.

When I joined the Church, she was a mother figure, though she was that same mother figure to many. She inspired me to serve a full-time mission and cheered me when I came home. When I got into teaching, she gave me the recommendation I needed to get my first teaching assignment. When social media became a platform for the open discussion of ideas, we joined debates, sometimes agreeing, sometimes taking opposing positions, but our discussions were always thoughtful and we never forgot the love and respect that far outweighed who was right or wrong on some topic.

She was a grand lady, one of the bright lights that made our ward a community. I was shocked when her health took a turn for the worse because she was among the healthiest people I know. When she took an interest in the topic of health and nutrition, she achieved great personal success, so much so that it was possible to think she had turned the clock back by decades. If the Lord hadn't called her home, she might have easily lived forever.

It will be hard to imagine church without Sharon. She had a big smile and a warm and friendly manner. She had great empathy and focused it on helping others. In her years of service as a Relief Society president, there wasn't an ache or a pain she didn't know about. She was on a never-ending mission to help those in need. In the counsels of the Church, her observations and advice were welcome, noted and often acted upon, because if Sharon thought it was important, it was.

Sharon was also a Gospel scholar of unparalleled distinction. Her classes were always filled with the Spirit and with spirited discussion. Employing her skills as a professional educator, she was always well-organized and well-prepared. It was impossible to attend one of her classes and not learn something new. She was an inspiration to all who attended her classes as well as to all who would follow in her footsteps.

I will miss her work and her influence in our ward, though I believe she will continue to be furiously active beyond the veil. Sharon was never one to let the grass grow beneath her feet. She was always a great example, not only of great faith but of action. May her memory live long in the minds and hearts of those she counseled, taught and served.

Bill Kilpatrick - February 12, 2024 at 11:06 PM