



Earlene Matthews

January 11, 1939 - June 7, 2025

Earlene Mae Talbott Matthews died June 7, 2025, in Ocala, Florida, at the age of 86.

Born at home in Oxford, Florida, on January 11, 1939, Earlene Mae was the youngest of seven

children, five brothers and one sister. From her early days, her life was shaped by deep faith in

Christ, hard work, and the bonds of a large, loving family.

Earlene called Tampa, Florida, home for much of her adulthood. She worked primarily in food

service at The Old Swiss House while raising her children. At the age of 42, she enrolled in

college, earning an associate degree from Hillsborough Community College and a bachelor's

degree in education from the University of South Florida. Being the first in her family to earn a

college degree, she went on to enjoy a "second career" as a beloved elementary school

teacher, working in both Hillsborough and Marion Counties.

She and her late husband, Karl Heitzinger, Sr., spent many of their golden years in Weirsdale, Florida, hosting family and friends at their lake house they built among the orange trees.

Earlene rarely turned down a dinner guest, a card game, a good book, or a new pet. She was known for her immense hospitality, radiant smile, and natural talents for playing the piano and singing. Even in recent years during her journey through dementia, she could call to mind her favorite hymns. Music was her gift.

After Karl's passing in 2011, she remarried Richard "Dick" Matthews, Sr. of Riverview. As Dick was a retired professor, they shared an avid love of reading and history, as well as their faith in Christ. She was widowed again in 2025 but has lived in long-term care since 2023 as she dealt with vascular dementia. Even during her time in care, Earlene was well-loved, especially by her caregivers. She had many friends and pastors who visited her regularly, and the family is deeply grateful for such love expressed toward her.

Earlene is survived by her five children - Terri (Paul), Bruce (Mary), Bob (Cindy), Alicia (Tim), and Karli (Angie); her 12 grandchildren - Amanda, Ashley, Lee, Alexis, Alyce, Josh, Carrie, Michaela, Greta, Peter, Emma, and Gabe; and her 12 great-grandchildren -

Gavin, Austin, Cora,
Reid, Milo, Grace, Karly, Jonas, Jolene, Corrine, Rosy, and Beau. She is
preceded in death by
her husband of 43 years, Karl, Sr.; her parents, William Earl and Iva Mae; her
cherished siblings
- Juddie, Charlie, Bob, Glenn, Katherine, and Paul; and her husband of the
last 12 years,
Richard "Dick", Sr.

A private funeral and graveside service will be held to honor Earlene's life and
legacy. During
this tender time, the family's wish is for this to be an intimate gathering of
close friends and
relatives. They deeply appreciate the love, prayers, and support from all who
knew Earlene and
invite you to celebrate her memory with a song, an act of kindness, or a belly
laugh.

Roberts Funeral Home Downtown Chapel in Ocala will be handling the
services for Earlene and
her family. All services are private, for family and close friends, please.
Monday, June 16th at 10am - Visitation, 11am Funeral Service
Pastor Tim Gilligan will officiate. Following the service, Earlene will be laid to
rest in a family-only burial service at the Nichols Family Cemetery in Oxford.

In lieu of flowers, charitable donations can be made to Samaritan's Purse in
Earlene's honor.

Tribute Wall

LW

“ Arlene was a very nice and kind woman I remember I cut my hand when time when I was very small and I told her what I did and she had me in her house wrapping it up for me before my dad could find out and be mad about it may she rest in peace Leon Allen Wester

Leon Wester - December 08, 2025 at 10:45 PM

YR

“ Your light will always shines in our hearts
momma ❤️



Yari Roque - June 13, 2025 at 09:14 PM

TT

I Will never forget the good laughs and your beautiful smile as well.
That was from your Teddy bear 🌹😊

Theodore Thevenot - June 15, 2025 at 08:51 PM

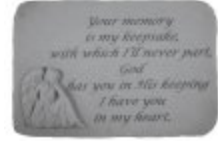
AG

Thank you, Yari and Teddy...you both were absolute angels to Momma during her long term care. You made difficult days bearable, you brought joy and love into her life. God bless you!

Alicia Gilligan - November 13, 2025 at 11:57 PM

BG

“ *Bob, Marsha, Ivetta and girls. purchased the Garden Accent Stone - "Your memory is..." for the family of Earlene Matthews.*



Bob, Marsha, Ivetta and girls. - June 12, 2025 at 02:14 PM



“ *Your Light Shines was purchased for the family of Earlene Matthews.*



June 11, 2025 at 12:25 PM

PH

“ *Paul And Malinda Howes lit a candle in memory of Earlene Matthews*



Paul and Malinda Howes - June 11, 2025 at 11:48 AM

HE

“ *Heather lit a candle in memory of Earlene Matthews*



Heather - June 11, 2025 at 09:39 AM