



Mrs. Martha Ann Riley Skelton

August 2, 1939 - May 30, 2023

Martha Ann Riley Skelton passed away on Tuesday, May 30, at Hospice Home Care of Little Rock. She was born on August 2, 1939, in Pine Bluff, AR. She was the oldest child of Harvey C. and Hazel Riley, and the granddaughter of Dr. Harvey C. Riley, Sr., and Elizabeth Windom Riley; Fautine and Viola Miller; Jake and Dovie Young. Martha Ann grew up on her family's farm in Bayou Meto and helped out with the family grocery store (Young & Riley General Merchandise). She attended elementary school in Bayou Meto's two-room schoolhouse and graduated from DeWitt High School. She earned a bachelor's degree in journalism from the University of Arkansas and started her career as a journalist with the Arkansas Democrat. She later worked for the State of Arkansas and retired as a Grants Coordinator for the state's drug prevention program.

Martha Ann was a lifelong member of Bayou Meto United Methodist Church and served for many years as their devoted pianist. She loved to play piano, having been taught by her aunt, Lucile Bass of Gillett. She shared her musical gift as a community volunteer, playing piano for the residents of Presbyterian Village in Little Rock.

Martha Ann loved her family. She especially delighted in being a mother. She treasured every trip, holiday and milestone with her daughter, Laura. She was a loving and generous mother, and was very proud of her daughter. She was

also very close with her mother, with whom she traveled on bus trips organized by the First National Bank of DeWitt. After Martha Ann's retirement, she spent nearly every weekend with her mother until Hazel's death in 2017. Martha Ann also greatly enjoyed being an older sister, as well as an aunt to her niece and nephew. Her youngest sister, who was 17 years her junior, called her "Sissy." Now two subsequent generations know her as Aunt Sissy.

Keeping in touch with close friends was important to Martha Ann. When she made friends, she made them for life. She remained lifelong friends with her childhood chum, Freda Nunez. She picked up other good friends along the way, including beloved coworkers and neighbors. She was generous to those closest to her, often quietly giving money to those she knew were struggling financially.

She knew how to enjoy the simple pleasures in life. She enjoyed reading the newspaper cover to cover; doing daily crossword puzzles; attending plays and art exhibits; and doing water aerobics. And, she really loved good food. Nobody liked to try a new restaurant more than Martha Ann did! When her daughter came to visit, Martha Ann would be ready with a list of new places to try.

Martha Ann was preceded in death by her beloved parents, Harvey and Hazel Young Riley. She is survived by her husband, Walter Skelton; her daughter, Laura Skelton (Thomas Buford); sisters, Barbara Riley and Phyllis Orlicek (Steve); niece, Nicole Creason (Michael, and their children Elle and James); nephew, Jake Orlicek (Alyssa); and step-children, Catherine Nash, Andrea Holt, and John Skelton.

She was loved by many, and will be greatly missed.

Her funeral will be on Monday, June 5, at 11 AM at Bayou Meto United

Methodist Church. Memorials may be made to: the Arkansas Food Bank (arkansasfoodbank.org); Arkansas Country Doctor Museum (P.O. Box 1004, Lincoln, AR 72744); Bayou Meto Community Women of Faith (c/o Rhonda Hampton, 709 Highway 276, Stuttgart, AR 72160); or a charity of your choice.

Previous Events

Visitation

JUN 4. 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM (CT)

Essex Funeral Home
1405 South Grandview
DeWitt, AR 72042
(870) 946-3104
<https://www.essexfuneralhome.com>

Service

JUN 5. 11:00 AM (CT)

Bayou Meto Methodist Church
Stuttgart, AR 72160

Tribute Wall

KW

“ I’m sorry to hear of Ms. Martha Ann’s passing. I spoke with her prior to my Aunt Freda’s death. They were very special to each other and I am very touched to see Freda’s name mentioned in her obituary.

Karyn Bueker Wisener - June 10, 2023 at 09:20 PM



“ A grove of 10 [Memorial Trees](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Mrs. Martha Ann Riley Skelton.

June 04, 2023 at 09:57 PM

TW

“ Toukie Williams lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Martha Ann Riley Skelton



toukie williams - June 01, 2023 at 11:10 PM

EH

“ rl took care of Hazel Riley on several occasions at the DeWitt Hospital!! I remember Martha visiting Hazel. Prayers for the family!!



Ester Poston Hageman - June 01, 2023 at 07:53 PM

DC

“ *DEVONNA VANDERBURG CULPEPPER purchased the Country Basket Blooms for the family of Mrs. Martha Ann Riley Skelton.*



DEVONNA VANDERBURG CULPEPPER - June 01, 2023 at 01:53 PM

JM

“ *Jason Malone lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Martha Ann Riley Skelton*



Jason Malone - June 01, 2023 at 10:38 AM

CW

“ *Laura and Aunt Barbara it was my ABSOLUTE JOY serving as your Chaplain at the Comfort Care Center. Praying for you 🕊️ .Chaplain Beverly ❤️*



Chaplain Beverly White - May 31, 2023 at 05:28 PM