



Mary Beth Blackburn

January 1, 1951 - October 7, 2024

Mary Beth Blackburn, a woman whose life was marked by boundless generosity and a deep commitment to her community, passed away on October 7, 2024, at the age of 73 in Kingsport, Tennessee. Born in 1951 in Independence, Missouri, to the late George and Gladys Clayton, Mary embodied the spirit of giving from an early age. Her passion for helping others and making the world a better place became her life's work, touching the lives of countless individuals in her hometown and beyond.

Mary graduated with a master's degree in nursing from Central Michigan University and worked at the Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C. as a Labor and Delivery Nurse for 19 years. Her life was dedicated to both her patients and her country. After retirement from the Army as a Lieutenant Colonel, Mary's service went beyond her military career. A devoted wife, mother, and friend, Mary was best known for her volunteer work and community service. She started the Leadership of Hickman program along with Bill McDonald, she launched Downtown Revitalization in Centerville, Tennessee, volunteering, and mentoring young people. Mary had a special way of bringing people together, and her leadership within Centerville and surrounding communities was admirable.

Her love for people naturally overflowed into the work and the love she had for her plants. Her shamrocks were famous among friends and family-lush,

vibrant and always thriving. To Mary, these delicate plants symbolized the love she had for those around her.

Mary Beth is survived by her husband of 38 years, John Blackburn of Centerville, Tennessee, her daughters, Kaitlin Blackburn (Kyle Bell) of Woodland, Washington, and Corey Blackburn of Columbia, Tennessee, sisters, Kathy (Mike) Thayer of Las Cruces, New Mexico, Jan Privett of Independence, Missouri, and Sandy (Ron) Pinare of Mt. Vernon, Washington, nephews Greg Thayer of Albuquerque, New Mexico, Chris Thayer of Truth or Consequences, New Mexico, Andy Pinare, of Potomac, Maryland, Niece's Jessica Jasper of Sedro-Wolley, Washington and Rachel Nordgren. Brother-in-law Dean Smyth of Derby, Kansas, Stacia Martin of Independence, Missouri, and Emily Smyth of Topeka. Alongside her family, Mary leaves behind two dear friends, Natalie Bruce and Linda Hickerson, of Centerville, Tennessee. They both held a special place in Mary's heart.

In addition to her parents, Mary Beth is preceded in death by her sister Becky Smyth and Nephew Allen Pinare. Her humility was matched only by the impact she had—she made a lasting difference not only in the lives of those she helped but also in the hearts of everyone who knew her.

In lieu of flowers the family requests that all donations be made in Mary's name to the
Heritage Scholarship Fund at the Centerville United Methodist Church.
Centerville United Methodist Church
103 College Ave
Centerville, TN. 37033

The family of Mary Beth will honor her wishes for cremation and a celebration of life will be held at the Shipps Bend United Methodist Church on Saturday, October 12, 2024, at 11:00 A.M. Visitation with the family will be from

9:00A.M. until service time at 11:00A.M.

McDonald Funeral Home in Centerville is honored to be serving the Blackburn Family during this difficult time.

Cemetery Details

Middle Tennessee Veterans Cemetery

7931 McCrory Ln
Nashville, TN 37221

Previous Events

Visitation

OCT **12**. 9:00 AM - 11:00 AM (CT)

Shipp's Bend United Methodist Church
Centerville, TN 37033

Celebration of Life

OCT **12**. 11:00 AM (CT)

Shipp's Bend United Methodist Church
Centerville, TN 37033

Tribute Wall

NB

“ *Natalie Bruce lit a candle in memory of Mary Beth Blackburn*



Natalie Bruce - November 03, 2024 at 08:36 PM

CM

“ *Cheeva McClearen sent a virtual gift in memory of Mary Blackburn*



Cheeva McClearen - October 18, 2024 at 06:57 PM



“ *Sandi Westover lit a candle in memory of Mary Blackburn*



Sandi Westover - October 11, 2024 at 02:09 PM

MW

“ *MALCOM & LYNN WHITT lit a candle in memory of Mary Blackburn*



MALCOM & LYNN WHITT - October 10, 2024 at 04:09 PM

KT

“ *Mary had unconditional love for everyone - her family, her dogs, her friends, her church, and the people of Centerville. She loved to talk to everyone. About a year ago, we were at Walmart, and she waved and talked to many people, especially children. Another time, we were at a restaurant, and she saw a man with a veteran's hat on. She went to his table and thanked him for his service. We can honor Mary's life by being kind to others. Love to all of the people who knew her. Kathy Thayer, Mary's sister.*

Kathryn Thayer - October 10, 2024 at 11:28 AM

LD

“ *Prayers for her family!* 🙏🙏🙏



Laura DeLong - October 10, 2024 at 01:37 AM

 Jane Gilbert

“ *Prayers for you John. We are thinking about you.*



Jane Gilbert - October 09, 2024 at 10:36 PM



“ Betty Love lit a candle in memory of Mary Blackburn



Betty Love - October 09, 2024 at 08:55 PM



“ Cheeva McClearen lit a candle in memory of Mary Blackburn



Cheeva McClearen - October 09, 2024 at 06:26 PM



“ Joanie Holtsford sent a virtual gift in memory of Mary Blackburn



Joanie Holtsford - October 09, 2024 at 03:57 PM



“ Marilyn Gilliam sent a virtual gift in memory of Mary Blackburn



Marilyn Gilliam - October 09, 2024 at 01:08 PM

G"

“ *She and my parents coached soccer together for many years. She impacted so many of those around her. My thoughts and prayers are with her family. 🙏*



Ginni "Waggoner" - October 09, 2024 at 12:33 PM

BM

“ *Mary was a very special lady- always helping others.*



Bobby/Sandy McFarlin - October 09, 2024 at 12:17 PM

RG

“ *Ronald Gammons lit a candle in memory of Mary Beth Blackburn*



Ronald Gammons - October 09, 2024 at 08:53 AM

CS

“ *Charlotte Staggs sent a virtual gift in memory of Mary Beth Blackburn*



Charlotte Staggs - October 09, 2024 at 12:11 AM

CM

“ Carolyn Moss sent a virtual gift in memory of Mary Beth Blackburn



Carolyn Moss - October 09, 2024 at 12:08 AM

DQ

“ Prayers for her family and friends.
Mary was a special lady. Always so kind. 🙏



Donna Qualls - October 08, 2024 at 09:02 PM

MB

“ MICHAEL BATES sent a virtual gift in memory of Mary Beth Blackburn



MICHAEL BATES - October 08, 2024 at 08:11 PM

PM

“ John, I'm so sorry about Mary. Prayers are with you and your family

pam Morgan - October 08, 2024 at 06:09 PM

RM

“ Roy & Sharon McCoy lit a candle in memory of Mary Beth Blackburn



Roy & Sharon McCoy - October 08, 2024 at 04:53 PM



“ John, I'm so sorry to hear about your sweet Mary.

Becky Palmer - October 08, 2024 at 02:30 PM

RH

“ We are thinking of u.

Ruby & Rex Horner - October 08, 2024 at 01:29 PM

RS

“ We are both are thinking of u.

Regina & Martha Shelton - October 08, 2024 at 01:29 PM