



Mary Ruth "Bootsie" Banks

May 9, 1926 - December 29, 2019

Mary Ruth "Bootsie" Banks, originally of Knoxville, Tennessee, passed away peacefully on December 29, 2019, at age 93. She is preceded in death by her beloved husband, Charles Raleigh Banks, and is survived by her son, Michael (Lyle) Banks; daughter, Nancy (Corby) Tew; grandchildren Jill (Billy) Nikopoulos, Christy (Ryan) Seals, Katie (Mikel) Phillips, and Kimberley Banks; and great grandchildren George and Andreas Nikopoulos. Mary was born May 9, 1926, as Mary Ruth Overton in East Tennessee and was quickly nicknamed Bootsie by those who loved her.

She grew up with a head of dark hair and a sweet temperament that drew everyone to her. She was a knockout, we were told, but we've also been told that she only had eyes for one man: Charles Banks, who became her husband. They made their home in Knoxville, Tennessee.

While Charles was fighting in World War II, she worked at the Y-12 plant in Oak Ridge on the Manhattan Project, the secret program that developed the atomic bomb. She was never told exactly what she was doing. She only knew that she had a specific task, security was tight, and even birthday cakes were cut up and inspected before you could eat them. Afterward, she was a switchboard operator at the University of Tennessee and retired from there.

Mary loved her two children, Mike and Nancy, dearly. One memorable day, she had to chase Mike down when he decided to drive a car around the neighborhood at 10 years old ("How long has Mike been driving?" a relative blithely asked after seeing him pass a few times out the window.) She threw herself in front of the car to stop him, which exemplifies much she loved her children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren. She'd do anything for them.

When Jill, Christy, Katie, and Kimberley were born, she was a fixture in their lives. She delighted in going to Ocean Isle Beach, North Carolina, to visit Nancy; her son-in-law, Corby; and Jill, and later in life resided just down the street from them in Shallotte. She also loved when everyone came to Knoxville and gathered at her house for the holidays. She made a heck of a banana pudding. And mashed potatoes. And chocolate pie. And anything, really. During these gatherings, family would eat those famous dishes while the children played with her pewter sets and dolls, and examined the pink and white

ornaments on her Christmas tree.

(We should also mention she had a white couch. It was immaculate.)

Mary was so happy to welcome her great grandchildren, George and Andreas. George, showing that same sweetness she has, wanted to bring her flowers one day before a visit and found some beautiful ones to pick just outside.

She was devoted in her hobbies. She could knit, crochet, and quilt. She could also line dance. She loved going to estate sales with friends and celebrating the best deal with breakfast out. She also was a lifelong member of Emerald Avenue Methodist Church in Knoxville, where she often made that famous banana pudding for church functions. In August 2019, she received her 50-year pin for the Acacia Eastern Star.

But the most important thing about Mary, or Bootsie, was who she was. She'd do anything for the people she loved. She was completely unselfish and giving of herself, always worried about others even when they wanted to worry about her. She never wanted to put anyone out. She always saw the best in all of us. She was exactly the type of person we should all try to be.

So that's what we can do now: go forward trying to be the person Bootsie was and the person she saw us as. Maybe that's not always easy in this world, but being loved by her gave us all a good start. Family will receive friends from 11:00 am to 12:00 pm Saturday, January 4, 2020 at Rose Mortuary Broadway Chapel. Funeral services will follow at 12:00 pm with Nancy Tew and Michael Banks with other family members officiating. Interment will follow in Lynnhurst Cemetery. In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to Shriners Hospitals for Children-Greenville, 950 West Faris Road, Greenville, SC, 29605. Online condolences may be extended at www.rosemortuary.com.

Events

JAN **Visitation** 11:00AM - 12:00PM

4

Rose Mortuary Broadway Chapel
1421 N. Broadway, Knoxville, TN, US

JAN **Funeral Service** 12:00PM

4

Rose Mortuary Broadway Chapel
1421 N. Broadway, Knoxville, TN, US

JAN **Interment to follow**

4

Lynnhurst Cemetery
2300 West Adair Drive, Knoxville, TN, US

Comments



“ Thinking of the family at this time.

OES

Pam Kirthlink - January 06 at 10:53 AM



“ Prayers for comfort. From Lonella O. Williams, Charles Overton, Judy O. McDonald and families.

Lonella Williams - January 04 at 03:58 PM



“ Ann Lane lit a candle in memory of Mary Ruth "Bootsie" Banks



Ann Lane - January 03 at 09:37 PM



“ A beautiful lady inside and out.
I will always treasure having known “Bootsie”.

Minnie - January 03 at 09:39 PM



“ A donation has been made to Greenville Shriner’s Hospital for Children in memory of Mary Ruth Banks From Eddie & Sandra Lehto &Family.

Sandra - January 06 at 04:03 PM



“ Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Mary Ruth "Bootsie" Banks.



January 02 at 10:28 PM



“ Divine Peace Bouquet was purchased for the family of Mary Ruth "Bootsie" Banks.



January 02 at 10:03 PM