



Mary Spell

October 27, 1938 - May 5, 2022

Mary Louise Spell of Cape Girardeau, who devoted her life to her family, her faith and her community, passed away peacefully Thursday afternoon, May 5, 2022, at Saint Francis Medical Center surrounded by her children and other family members.

Mary was born Oct. 27, 1938, in Cape Girardeau to Donald and Edna Zimmerman Welch. She met Dale Spell at Cape Central High School in 1955 shortly after he and his family moved to Cape Girardeau. Upon seeing him for the first time, she reportedly told a classmate "Keep your hands off of him, he's mine!"

Mary and Dale were married Aug. 16, 1958, at Maple Avenue United Methodist Church in Cape Girardeau. They both attended Southeast Missouri State College where Dale studied civil engineering and Mary worked toward an elementary education teaching degree. Mary also attended Henderson State College in Arkadelphia, Arkansas, and spent 12 years teaching at schools in Missouri and Arkansas. Meanwhile, Dale worked as a heavy equipment diesel mechanic for R.B. Potashnick Co. and later Delta Asphalt at construction sites throughout the Midwest.

During those years, the Spell family grew to include four daughters - Stacy, Chris, Beth and Jennifer. The family moved often because of Dale's job, and in each community they lived Mary made three initial stops - the public library to obtain library cards for her children, the church to establish family membership, and the local schools where she often volunteered and served

as a substitute teacher.

The Spells returned to Cape Girardeau in 1974 when Dale became affiliated with the D.L. Harrison Co. Mary joined the Southeast Missourian where she worked as a proofreader and reporter before becoming editor of the newspaper's religion and family living sections. For several years she penned a weekly column titled "My Little Corner of the World" in which she shared her perspectives on family, faith, and life in Cape Girardeau.

In 1985 Mary was named director of the public relations department at Saint Francis Medical Center. Over the next 20 years she oversaw the department's transition into a multimedia marketing operation that has been instrumental in the hospital's growth to become one of the largest healthcare providers in a five-state region. She left the marketing office in the late 1990s and became a development officer with the Saint Francis Foundation. She retired from the medical center in 2005 but continued serving the organization as a member and president of the Saint Francis Auxiliary.

Not one to rest in her retirement, Mary served as an "unofficial" ambassador for Cape Girardeau when she became "Grandma Mary the Cookie Lady" at the local Holiday Inn Express. For more than a decade, Mary greeted hotel guests with a smile and fresh-baked cookies. "It was a joy for her to meet people from all over the world and introduce them to the community she loved so much," according to family members.

Mary was a lifelong member of Maple Avenue United Methodist Church where she was a founder of the J.O.Y. Sunday School class and served in various capacities over the years including the church's administrative board and ministries council. In addition, she was a member of the Diabetes Association, the Cape Central Junior High School Parent Teacher Association and the Cape Girardeau Professional Women's Organization which named her Woman of the Year in 1984, recognizing her work toward the advancement of women in business.

Mary received numerous accolades over the years including the Silver Medal Award from the local chapter of the American Advertising Federation in

recognition of her marketing achievements and several recognitions from the Otahki Girl Scout Council for her contributions to Girl Scouting. In 2009 she was named an honorary lifetime member of the Friends of Saint Francis. In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by her husband in 2021, their youngest daughter, Jennifer Spell Dowdy, in 2005, and a younger sister, Donna Sue May, in 1994.

Mary's loving survivors include daughters Stacy (Jim) Jansen of Brentwood, Missouri, Chris (David) Hulseley of Eureka, Missouri, and Beth (Scott) Friedrich of Perkins, Missouri; three nieces, Sara (Matt) Sprouse, the Rev. Alecia Fischer and Carrie (Allen) Pack; and a nephew, Keith (Jill) Fischer.

She is also survived by 10 grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren. Her grandchildren are Nick (Katie) Jansen, Carly Jansen, Jon (Mila) Blank, Adam Hulseley, Ellen Hulseley, Hanna Hulseley (Jay) Nettesheim, Paige (Thomas) Hulseley, Will (Claudia) Friedrich, Kyle Friedrich and Stephen (Noah) Dowdy.

The great-grandchildren are Alleyson and Loralie Hulseley, Logan Blank, Brooklyn and Asher Nettesheim, Ryker Friedrich and Freya Jansen.

Visitation will be 9:30 am to 12:00 pm on Monday, May 9, 2022 at Ford & Sons Mt. Auburn Chapel in Cape Girardeau.

Funeral Service will be at 12:00 pm Monday, May 9, 2022 at Ford & Sons Mt. Auburn Chapel in Cape Girardeau with the reverends Alecia Fischer, Jim Cooper, Jeff Estes and Jim Dace officiating.

The family requests that in lieu of flowers, memorial contributions be made to Maple United Methodist Church.

Online condolences may be made at www.fordandsonsfuneralhome.com.

Ford & Sons Funeral Home - Mt. Auburn is in charge of arrangements.

Previous Events

Visitation

MAY 9. 9:30 AM - 12:00 PM (CT)

Ford and Sons Mt. Auburn Chapel
1001 N. Mt. Auburn Rd.
Cape Girardeau, MO 63701

Funeral Service

MAY 9. 12:00 PM (CT)

Ford and Sons Mt. Auburn Chapel
1001 N. Mt. Auburn Rd.
Cape Girardeau, MO 63701

Tribute Wall

EB

“ I was saddened by this news. Thoughts and prayers to the family. I worked with Mary at Saint Francis and I will always remember her words of wisdom especially when I was having a rough day!

Eric Banda - September 28, 2022 at 11:42 AM

RK

“ So very sad to hear of Mary's passing. She was one special lady! I attended Maple Avenue Church as a young girl with Mary. She made an impression on me that I will never forget. Prayers for the family. Rest In Peace sweet Mary.

Robin Knutson Keim - May 13, 2022 at 04:52 PM

JY

“ I worked with May at the Southeast Missourian. Special lady. My sympathies to her family.

Jane Hodges Young - May 10, 2022 at 11:27 PM

JW

“ Mary was a wonderful lady. She will be sadly missed.

Julie Pierce Williams - May 10, 2022 at 03:54 PM

KM

“ Mary you were the Ambassador for St. Francis with your lively personality. I have always remembered your encouragement when I became a Volunteer and an Auxiliary Member. Thank you for your beautiful smile and caring thoughts when Dennis was ill. You will be missed.

Kathy Marchi

Kathy Marchi - May 09, 2022 at 01:07 PM

FB

“ There are many words to describe Mary Spell and all define an incredible, loving person. She was a remarkable person and a great role model for those in the media field. God be with her family and thank you all for sharing her with us and the Saint Francis Family.
Felecia Blanton

Felecia R. Blanton - May 09, 2022 at 12:14 PM

JC

“ John & I were saddened to hear of Mary's passing. Chris, Stacy & Beth your mother was a very special lady and loved by so many. I'm sorry we were unable to come to the visitation and service this morning Prayers for you, your families, and all who loved Mary. .

John & Debbie Clifton - May 09, 2022 at 12:10 PM

MP

“ I'm so sorry to hear of Mary's passing. Not only was she a dear family friend, but also the first non family member to trust me with her landscape design and Christmas decor, before I decided to get a masters in design. My love to Beth and all the family, I wish I could be there.

Michael Painton - May 08, 2022 at 07:17 PM

GF

“ So sorry, Mary and I were in Central High School together and saw each other at the big reunions we had, She was a special lady and will be missed by many. Gretchen Fee, Class of 1955. Prayers for her family.

Gretchen Fee - May 07, 2022 at 11:12 PM



“ *Medium Dish Garden was purchased for the family of Mary Spell.*



May 07, 2022 at 12:04 PM



“ *Spell family
I worked at St Francis for many years also. She had a smile for every. Prayers for all*

Cordelia Peters - May 07, 2022 at 11:15 AM



“ *I am so saddened to know of Mary's passing. I met Mary while she worked at Saint Francis Medical Center. We each had an office in the same hall so we were neighbors. Mary was a beautiful person inside and out and was so respected and loved by many - myself included. She will be missed by all who knew her. To her family I give my condolences to each and everyone of you. I now live in lower Alabama where Mary told me that she and Dale used to vacation in our area for years. I will see a beautiful sunset over the Gulf of Mexico and tell her I see her here again I'm sure as her spirit lives on. So many memories of you Mary. Sadly missed by Pamela McQuay-Grimes.*



Pamela McQuay-Grimes - May 07, 2022 at 10:21 AM

DT

“ Mary was my mentor. She guided me with love and amazing insight. She loved SFMC. Her compassion and acceptance had no end. She was a true woman of God. She is already missed.

dana thomas - May 07, 2022 at 10:08 AM

LP

“ Mary was one of the sweetest people I ever met, always a smile on her face. It took her forever to get through with her shopping at Schnucks because she knew everyone. It was a true blessing to have known her. So sorry for your loss.

Laurie Powers - May 07, 2022 at 04:55 AM

MN

“ I had the privilege to work with Mary on the Saint Francis Medical Center Auxiliary Board. She was a great lady and will certainly be missed by all who knew and loved her. My thoughts and prayers to her girls and family.

Mona Nenninger

Mona Nenninger - May 06, 2022 at 06:11 PM

JT

“ So blessed to love and be loved by Mary <3 My heart aches for you girls--and the rest of the family.

Janis Ticer - May 06, 2022 at 03:38 PM