



Martha J. Spencer

NOV 14, 1958 - JAN 31, 2023



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Stubbs-Conner
FUNERAL HOME
& CREMATION SERVICES

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Martha J. Spencer

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SPENCER, Martha J., age 64, of Lebanon and formerly of Oregonia, passed away Tuesday, January 31, 2023, surrounded by her loved ones.

Looking at old photos in black and white, surrounded by nine older siblings, you can quickly find Martha. Black hair, chin tucked down, with a hint of a mischievous smile that reaches her eyes. Born to a migrant from the Kentucky hills and an Ohio orphan, she grew up in a small river valley village.

Living along the river before the Caesar's Creek Dam was built, their house would flood after heavy rains, and on one occasion, they had to be rescued from the flooded home by boat. On special days, the local trash man would stop by with a truckload of outdated snack cakes meant for his hogs and toss them out by the handfuls to the Marshall children. Ten mouths were a lot to feed, and the last to grab the serving spoon often went to bed hungry. Martha swore her children would never know the pain of hunger. Church was every Sunday, of course, and Martha and her siblings would sing along to the old hymns, adding harmonies and the jingle of the tambourine.

Martha was always a beauty, with black hair that she wore long in her youth and prominent cheekbones that sat atop an open, friendly smile. When she was 17, Martha met a boy, Paul W. Drake, from a neighboring small town, and they married and had two kids. Her first, a son, was named Paul after his father, but he was gifted with her outgoing, friendly nature. Her second child was a girl, Misty Dawn, named during the '70s when love, nature, and bellbottoms were topping the charts.

In the late 70s and early 80s, she was a young mother. They frequently moved during those earliest years, and Martha always quickly made friends with the neighbors. Paul unexpectedly passed away in December 1984, and Martha realized she was alone raising two young children. But boy, did she raise them.



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After trying out a couple of churches in town, Martha found a house to rent in the country, and they started attending the small church of her youth. They never had much money, so she made do with whatever old cars she could get her hands on and used them for their last few thousand miles to get the family around. She believed that country living was best, so she said that the hardships that came with it were worth it for the peace of mind of the best location she could provide for her children. Church was three times a week, and she kept the children involved in all the special events and youth trips offered there. Martha taught her children the value of prayer. She encouraged them to participate in sports, even though that meant frequent trips to town in her often unreliable vehicles and fees that she struggled to afford. Winters were cold in the small, poorly insulated house, so Martha chopped wood to keep the heat stove going. Dinner was ready every day after school, with special notice given to their favorite foods.

She has been the iron giant standing in the corner for all of her children's life battles and joys, big and small. They didn't have much money, and Martha was determined to make sure that the family had what they needed and what would nurture their self-esteem. Hence, she sacrificed her own needs and wants to buy them clothes from the latest fashions, from custom-tailored dress suits to popular brand tennis shoes. On long summers, she would take them on bike rides and 3-mile walks to the little village store, where that same storekeeper of her childhood knew their names and kept close watch while filling everyone in on the current village gossip. She taught them to love themselves and respect others. Disrespect or a lapse in manners was a serious offense in the household, so they learned at a young age that consideration of how they interact with others significantly affects the outcome of the interaction, with the added benefit of the good energy that comes from giving and receiving respect. At the same time, Martha also has always taught them what it means to be strong, even when it is difficult. She was a testament to strength.

In the early 90s, Martha married a kind, gentle man, Howard M. Spencer, who blessed all their lives. He gave her emotional and physical support and had a decent job, so money wasn't as tight. A few years later, the family moved to a house with electric heat. Transportation was reliable, with finances allowing for a suitable car with floorboard intact. Martha lived content with Howard for 13 years until he passed in 2004. Seven years later, her only son passed away unexpectedly the day before mother's day. Five months later, she was diagnosed with cancer. Then that year started a series of devastating health issues. Through her final years, Martha was fortunate to have Bucky, her partner of 17 years, for companionship. Bucky was always there for Martha and was a constant presence during her illness. He lived at Cleveland Clinic in a recliner



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for five weeks to ensure that she had the comfort of knowing she wasn't alone. When she woke up through the night hungry at home and unable to cook, it was common to see him in the kitchen, flipping some pancakes or baking her some fish at 3 AM. Martha was very blessed to have had people who loved her, and she loved to share her life with them.

Martha worked at The Donut Shop in Lebanon for several years. She was a member of the Oregonia Church of God and, more recently, a member of the Community Church in Lebanon. She collected church figurines that she had on display at her house. She was a strong, loving, and incredibly giving lady with an extroverted personality and she made friends everywhere she went. Her pride and joy was her family, and she created many traditions with them over the years. She always enjoyed traveling and camping, where she could soak up the nature surrounding her. When her family got together, they always enjoyed playing a challenging game of Spades and 500 Rummy. Holidays were always a big deal with Martha. She looked forward to visiting with family and all the entertainment and cooking that came with the holiday season. She was well known for her banana pudding and 7-layer salad. She would rest and recover from her medical treatments and then be on the go again. She made it a ritual to attend garage sales every summer, plan a cookout, have family picnics at Sharon Woods, and watch the 4th of July fireworks from the park in Lebanon. She was always a practical woman. She met the hard times head-on and did what she needed to do to get back to her life, family, and friends.

At first glance, Martha may have appeared small and frail, but she was an entire army. She was an iron giant with an oversized heart. She was an un-deliberate teacher, a mentor, an extrovert, and a heartwarming story of the core of a family, all just by being who she is. She has always inspired many people, especially when having hard times, to stand up and move forward because such is life. You can stand up or lie down, and Martha taught everyone that while it's okay to lay down and rest when you need to, you must embrace life and stand to meet the day.

She was preceded in death by her husbands, Paul W. Drake and Howard M. Spencer; one son, Paul B. Drake; two grandchildren, River Minor, and Crystal Drake; her parents, Frank and Mary Marshall; and her sister, Jeannette Maggard (Vernon). She is survived by her daughter, Misty (Keith) Horton; four grandchildren, Elly Drake, Cianna Drake, Skye Drake, and Zahara Horton; one great-granddaughter, Charlotte Rose; two brothers, Frank and David Marshall; six sisters, Linda (Ronnie) Blackburn, Judy Sexton, Mary Louise Caldwell, Jeanne (Harry) Dillow, Jackie (Randy) King, and Sara Frazee; significant other, Bucky Hardin; close nephew, Jason Eversole (Beth); and many beloved nieces and nephews.



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Funeral services will be held at 2 PM Saturday, February 4, at Stubbs-Conner Funeral Home in Waynesville. Burial will be in Miami Cemetery, Corwin. Michael Robinson will be officiating the services. The family will receive friends 6 PM - 8 PM Friday at the funeral home.

Condolences at www.stubbsconner.com

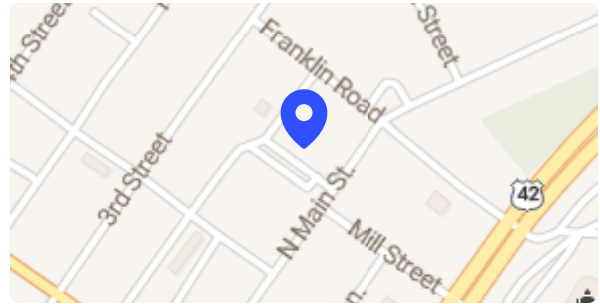


Events

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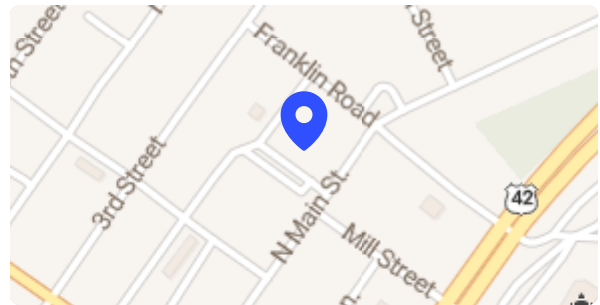
The Family Will Receive Friends

- Friday**, February 3, 2023
- 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM ET
- Stubbs - Conner Funeral Home**
185 North Main Street, Waynesville OH 45068



Funeral Service

- Saturday**, February 4, 2023
- 2:00 PM ET
- Stubbs-Conner Funeral Home**
185 N Main Street, Waynesville OH 45068





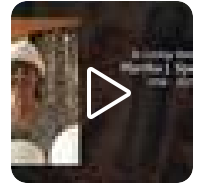
Tribute Wall

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Stubbs-Conner Funeral Home shared a **Video**.

February 3 at 6:28 PM



Stubbs-Conner Funeral Home shared a **Webcast Video**.

February 4 at 8:42 AM



Misty posted:

How surreal it is to see your name listed in the obituaries. It hit me right after I spoke at your service that I mostly spoke of the people in your life, everyone else. I don't think I talked about who you really were. I didn't say how funny you were, how giving. I don't know if I said how much you loved your kids and how that love taught us that we should also love ourselves. I still catch myself wanting to call you right away any time something happens or I hear big news. You were my teacher, my mentor, and my best friend. My mother. I will never forget you, and I know I will see you again. You are with your son and with Jesus. Though my heart aches, as you used to say of Paul, if you could come back now, you wouldn't. For everything you did for me, mom, I am thankful. For the sacrifices you made for me, I am thankful. For everything you gave to me, I am thankful. For your unconditional love and support, I am so thankful. Until we meet again, beloved mother

May 7 at 7:24 PM



Tribute Wall

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Debb I E Combs posted:

Such a sad day when this great warrior left this world. She was one of the sweetest ladies I've ever known. She loved with a fierce passion. I was always so glad to talk to her. I'll always remember how her and my brother Paul would smile and smile some more when together. He always lived her. They were like 2 hippies. I'll never forget when she found out dad was dying of cancer. She came to see him and brought him donuts and coffee. They were sitting at the table in the dining room just talking like they'd just seen each other. I showed up while she was still there. I was thrilled to see them. Dad was really happy. That's the kind of person she was. She wanted him to know she still cared. Ppl all never stopped loving Martha. Misty you've suffered so much loss in your young life. I love you dearly.

February 4 at 11:15 AM



Misty May 7 at 6:33 PM

I love you Debbie. Thank you for this♥



Anonymous sent a Beautiful in Blue to the Spencer family.



February 4 at 6:47 AM



Jackie And Randy sent an Emerald Garden Basket to the Spencer family.



February 3 at 9:10 AM



Glenna Harris posted:

Martha was a very special lady who inspired me through her faith in God. She always had kind words to say and a smile to brighten the day. I will miss her!

February 3 at 7:53 AM



Misty May 7 at 6:33 PM





Tribute Wall

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Anonymous sent a Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum to the Spencer family.

February 3 at 6:37 AM



Anonymous sent a Beautiful in Blue to the Spencer family.

February 2 at 7:00 PM



Kelli Lake sent an Arrive in Style to the Spencer family.

February 2 at 6:41 PM



Anonymous sent a Peaceful White Lilies Basket to the Spencer family.

February 2 at 5:08 PM



Anonymous sent a Peaceful White Lilies Basket to the Spencer family.

February 2 at 2:14 PM



Anonymous sent a Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum to the Spencer family.

February 2 at 1:23 PM





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Becky White posted:

Martha was always such an inspiration to all of us. I remember all our talks and laughs when I would come to visit. We talked about the feast she would cook on holidays and of course it would make me hungry and we would laugh. She will be so missed. I know she is in no pain and with loved ones rejoicing and watching over her loved ones especially her daughter grandchildren and son n law. Love you Misty (niece) prayers for also

February 2 at 1:13 PM



Misty May 7 at 6:35 PM



Jacqueline Marshall Ling February 2 at 5:54 PM

Martha,. I loved you always and in will greatly miss you. Tell Jeannette, Benji, Paul and howard howdy and to save a space for the rest of of us.. I will miss our talks and can't wait to see you again. This isn't goodbye just see ya later. Fly with the angels!



Anonymous sent a Beautiful Heart Bouquet to the Spencer family.



February 2 at 12:35 PM



Media

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Stubbs-Conner Funeral Home shared a **Video**.

February 3 at 6:28 PM



Stubbs-Conner Funeral Home shared a **Webcast Video**.

February 4 at 8:42 AM





Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Martha by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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