



Mary Virginia Zollickoffer Clarke Slem

March 11, 1937 - October 3, 2022

Mary Virginia Zollickoffer Clarke Slem, 85, of Milton, WV, died on October 3, 2022, surrounded by her husband and children. She led a life filled with love, learning, and dedication to her family and broader society.

Mary was a woman of both words and heart. Born in Baltimore, Maryland on March 11, 1937 to Marjorie Rowland Clarke and Carl Dame Clarke, Sr., words were how she processed information, found renewal, and shared of herself. She read her first newspaper headline at age 3 and graduated from Goucher College as an English major at age 19. Her first job in the Library at Johns Hopkins University offered not only a place to bury oneself in books, but also proximity to (and likely a few hidden reunions with) her then fiancé, Dennett C. Slem. Their remarkable marriage continued for over 65 years.

As a parent, words were a way to say I love you, to worry aloud, or to foster development. She used them to imbue the strength of women to her two young daughters and, in her own subtle ways, to constructively disrupt the conventions of church and society – “God only knows and She’s not telling” she’d proffer on mysteries beyond our understanding. Behind it all, however, was always love and wit, concern and care.

Mary lived most of her adult life in Chesterfield County, Virginia focused on raising two daughters. She returned to school in her 50’s to complete her

master's degree in creative writing at Hollins College. She subsequently published the occasional magazine article and produced newsletters for various community and faith-based organizations.

Mary was a catalog librarian at heart, reading and collecting everything in case it might have a second or third use. This included most magazines ever received or purchased, typically filed in order. Thanks go to the Chesterfield Public Library who boldly accepted them all when Mary and Dennett moved to West Virginia to be closer to family in 2019.

Written words always carried for Mary the potential to learn, bolster, protect, and love. Most in her circle of family and friends received incredibly thoughtful, handwritten notes from her, filled with clippings, coupons, or articles she thought you might need sometime in the next 20 years. They always included, buried within the clutter, a word of wisdom, a practical gift, or a heartfelt wish.

Mary humbly shared words of faith and of spiritual development, as well, through family table graces or in her journey with the Society of the Companions of the Holy Cross. Virginia's Church Women United appropriately recognized her with their "Valiant Woman Award".

Mary is survived by her husband, the Rev. Dennett C. Slemp; brother, Carl D. Clarke, Jr; daughters, Dr. Cathy Slemp (Chris Branam) and Becky Villeda (Gary Helfin); her grandchildren – Ian Villeda, Nate Branam, and Emily Branam; her caregiver, Martha Albright; and many other beloved family and friends.

Whether Mary's words were written or spoken, of her own penwomanship or borrowed, they most always conveyed a message that was loud and clear – "I love you, I care about you, I want you to be who you are and all that you can be; and I want to play a role." For so many of us, she did just that, and we are

forever grateful.

A Celebration of Mary's Life, officiated by The Rev. Cheryl Winter, will be held on Saturday, November 5, 2022, 1:00 pm at St. Timothy's in the Valley Episcopal Church, 3434 Teays Valley Road, Hurricane, WV with a reception to follow.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations in her memory to: Episcopal Relief and Development, Society of the Companions of the Holy Cross, or SERRV.

Anyone wishing to leave an online memory or condolence may do so by visiting Mary's tribute page at: www.chapmanfuneralhomes.com.

Chapman Funeral Home, 3941 Teays Valley Road, Hurricane WV is honored to serve Mrs. Slemp's family.

Previous Events

Celebration of Life

NOV 5. 1:00 PM (ET)

St. Timothy's-In-The-Valley
3434 Teays Valley Road
Hurricane, WV 25526

Tribute Wall



“ *Chapman Funeral Home created a Tribute Video in memory of Mary Virginia Zollickoffer Clarke Slemp*



Chapman Funeral Homes - November 05, 2022 at 01:54 PM



“ *Mary Virginia Zollickoffer Clarke Slemp*

October 06, 2023 at 08:41 AM



“ *May your family find peace and comfort in your faith and the many memories you have of your mom.*

Sherry Pauley

SHERRY PAULEY - October 31, 2022 at 07:11 AM