

OBITUARIES

Mary Warren Mann

GREENVILLE - Mary Warren Mann, known to everyone simply as "Mary Warren," passed away on Friday, January 2, 2026. She was 90.

Mary Warren was born March 11, 1935, in Newport News, Virginia to the late William H. and Mary C. Collier. She carried a bright spirit—marked by a welcoming smile, an easy laugh, and the kind of warmth that made people feel they belonged. If you walked into a room and saw Mary Warren, you didn't stay a stranger for long. And if life got complicated (as it often does), she had a steady, matter-of-fact way of naming the truth with her familiar refrain: "Nothing is simple."

She built a life rooted in community, friendship, and faith. She began her working life as an elementary school teacher and later became a Welcome Wagon hostess—a role that fit her perfectly. Mary Warren had a gift for making connections. She didn't just greet newcomers; she made them feel at home. Her friendly nature wasn't performative—it was simply who she was.

Her faith was steady and lived out, especially through St. Paul's Episcopal Church, where she was deeply involved for many years. She was a longtime volunteer on the altar guild, offering quiet, faithful service that helped hold the church community together in ways many people never see—but always feel.

Mary Warren also had a true eye for beauty. She was a gifted flower arranger, loved gardening, and took joy in growing flowers to share—bringing color and care to gatherings, celebrations, and the everyday moments in between. Her community involvement reflected those loves through the Dignity Delve Garden Club, and she treasured the laughter and friendship found with her friends in the Chicora Book Club.

Mary Warren married her handsome Roger on June 16, 1956, the great love of her life. They loved music and dancing and enjoyed time with friends in the German Club and other social circles that brought people together around joy and companionship. Sadly, Roger passed away on March 19, 1989.

Mary Warren also delighted in simple pleasures, like binge watching old movies, and was genuinely thrilled when cable television made it easier to enjoy the classics whenever she wanted.

One of her favorite stories—told with the sparkle of someone who never stopped being a little starstruck—was meeting Frank Sinatra.

Family stories mattered to her, too—the kind that get told again and again because they carry a whole childhood inside them. Her brother, Skip, remembers their running "competition" for the prized dinner table seat—the one with a drawer underneath, perfect for hiding the vegetables children were convinced they simply could not or would not eat. That story fits Mary Warren well: spirited, playful, and full of life.

Above all, Mary Warren's greatest joy was her family. She and Roger were devoted supporters of the Children's Home Society of North Carolina, the organization that brought them their brightest stars—their children, Beth Mann of Raleigh, North Carolina, and Jack Mann of Birmingham, Alabama. Beth and Jack were Mary Warren and Roger's pride and purpose and being their mother was her greatest calling. Found very recently was a simple written note: "Dear God, Thank you for the three answers to my prayers - Roger, Beth and Jack."

Mary Warren is survived by her children Beth Mann and Jack (Claire) Mann; grandchildren Ellis Mann and Charlotte Mann; her brother William H. "Skip" (Karen) Collier III of Greenville, North Carolina and sister-in-law Karen Mann of Vienna, Virginia. She is preceded in death by her beloved husband, Roger L. Mann, Jr.

The family—and Mary Warren herself—offer sincere thanks for the wonderful care and compassion shown by the nursing staff at Cypress Glen Retirement Community, and for the kind, selfless, caring support provided by Gentiva Hospice. Your presence and tenderness meant more than words can express.

And if you knew her well, you know she carried humor and hope right alongside faith. She once said she didn't feel she had a great singing voice—nor the long legs for dancing the way she imagined—so in heaven she simply wanted to be a "musical giraffe." It was classic Mary Warren: funny, tender, and full of bright-eyed wonder.

A church service will be held on Thursday, January 8, 2026, at 11:00am at St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Greenville, with The Reverend Josiah Daniels officiating, with a reception immediately after the service. Burial will follow in Greenwood Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, the family asks that donations be made to the Children's Home Society of North Carolina (CHS) in Greensboro, NC, an organization Mary Warren held especially dear. CHS provides meaningful adoption services and support for individuals and families across North Carolina—work that Mary Warren and Roger supported faithfully and with grateful hearts.

And finally—because she would want it said with a smile—if you're reading this and struggling with a device, a password, or a printer that won't cooperate, you can almost hear her voice: "I don't do computers."

Arrangements by Smith Funeral Service & Crematory. Online condolences may be expressed at www.smithfcs.com.

OBITUARY POLICY

For information on submitting obituaries or death notices Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m., call 329-9505 or email obits@apgcnc.com and specify that you are interested in obituary information for The Daily Reflector. On weekends and holidays, email obits@apgcnc.com.

Food is Medicine helps seniors understand nutrition

Dear Readers: From time to time, faculty and staff from ECU partner to bring programs to the Pitt County Senior Center. They always get accolades from those who attend. I wanted to share information about a recent effort. Perhaps it will inspire others to participate as well.

Before I turn this column over to Harshini Matada, let me make an additional plea. There are always seniors on the waiting list to receive Meals on Wheels. If you are able, make a donation to the Pitt County Council on Aging, 4551 County Home Road, Greenville, NC 27858. It could make a real difference. And a huge thank-you to all the volunteers who regularly take their time to deliver those meals to seniors in need.

Matada is a second-year Brody medical student and she prepared this report.

At the Brody School of Medicine, a dynamic student-run club called Food is Medicine is turning up the heat on health education. Led by second-year medical students Hunter Martin, Clay Langfeldt and Harshini Matada, the club hosts weekly cooking classes for 20 local senior citizens at the Pitt County Council on Aging. Each session blends hands-on culinary demos with



KATHY KOLASA

Thanks to a partnership with the Food Bank of Central and Eastern North Carolina, participants also receive meal kits to recreate the recipes at home, making healthy eating both accessible and delicious. It's a flavorful fusion of medicine, leadership and community impact.

Over the past year, the Food is Medicine program has explored how the meals we prepare each day can shape our health. Each weekly session combines a nutrition lesson with a recipe that reinforces the topic, making the science practical and delicious.

For example, when discussing hypertension, they whipped up a hearty lentil chili prepared with low-sodium ingredients to show how flavor can come from spices rather than salt. During a session on different diet types, they made a colorful orzo salad, highlighting how Mediterranean-style eating emphasizes whole grains,

vegetables and healthy fats. And when the focus was on diabetes, they blended a refreshing green smoothie to demonstrate how fiber and balanced ingredients can help regulate blood sugar. Even avocado berry muffins became a teaching tool, showing how nutrient-dense swaps can make familiar treats healthier.

Seniors in the community have been eager participants, asking thoughtful questions, sharing their own cooking tips and engaging in activities like Guess the Spice, which turns learning into a fun game.

The organization arose to create positive change in the eastern North Carolina community by addressing the deep food disparities that shape health outcomes in the region. In many rural counties in the area, residents face limited access to fresh produce, high rates of food insecurity and an over-reliance on processed, low-nutrient options from convenience stores. These challenges contribute to disproportionate burdens of hypertension, diabetes and obesity among residents. By bringing nutrition education, cooking demonstrations and affordable recipes directly into community spaces, the program seeks to bridge gaps in access to healthy, nutritious meals.

The name Food is Medicine captures a simple but transformative truth: While medication can treat illness, food has the power to prevent it. Medications may heal, but lasting health is built day by day through the choices people make at their own tables. For the students leading this effort, the goal is not only to teach recipes but to also inspire confidence, showing that health begins at home. At its core, the program is about trust by bridging the gap between medicine and community by stepping beyond clinic walls into kitchens and shared spaces. By cooking together, learning together and tasting together, Food is Medicine demonstrates that true health is more than treatment; it is prevention, empowerment and collective responsibility.

Community members can find out when the next spring series begins by emailing Cyndi Shimer at cshimer@pittco.com to be added to the Pitt County Council on Aging newsletter. The newsletter highlights all the wonderful programs the center provides.

Professor emerita Kathy Kolasa, a registered dietitian nutritionist and Ph.D., is an affiliate professor in the Brody School of Medicine at ECU. Contact her at kolaskak@ecu.edu.

Calendar/ from A1

Both of Pitt County Schools' early college high schools begin their school years in early August to align with the academic calendars of East Carolina University and PCC. Previous attempts to get a waiver from the state that would

allow the district to begin traditional schools earlier have been denied.

The 2026-27 PCS calendar begins classes on Aug. 24, 2026, and ends the school year on June 8, 2027, in keeping with the law. The calendar designates parent conference days in the fall (Oct. 12) and spring (Feb.

15) semesters and includes four early-release days. It includes a two-week break in December (Dec. 21, 2026-Jan. 1, 2027) and a one-week break in the spring (March 29-April 2, 2027).

Easter in 2027 falls on March 28. March 26, Good Friday, is a holiday. PCC also is closed March 29-April 2, 2027.

Director of School Innovation and Transformation Thomas Feller told the board that nearly a quarter of survey participants addressed spring break in their comments, with most of those asking schools to schedule days off around Easter.

This year's spring break, scheduled for March 16-20, aligns with the break at PCC. April 3 is the Good Friday holiday and Monday, April 6, is a teacher workday.

Earlier versions of proposed calendars for 2027 showed that PCC and PCS breaks were planned for different weeks. District 2 representative Amy Cole said last month that if the school district and community college spring breaks do not fall on the same week, high school students who are simultaneously enrolled at both would not have a week off from school in the spring.

Roach told the board that, following the December meeting, PCS and PCC staff agreed to align spring break week for 2027. She said the school district and community college have agreed to consult on future calendars as well.

The 2026-27 PCS calendar includes at least one day off for students every month, a feature that Roach said was well received in

survey responses.

"They liked that the calendar had monthly breaks for students and staff to reduce burnout," she said. "They appreciated that there was a day off each month; the breaks were evenly spaced throughout the calendar."

Among those responding to the two-week survey conducted in December, more than half were teachers or other district employees. Thirty-two percent were parents or guardians.

A 2026-27 calendar for PCS' two early college high schools has not yet been presented to the board for approval.

TOUR DATES

Pitt County Schools has announced dates for its second listening tour. Superintendent Steve Lassiter said three community locations have been selected for this year's sessions, which will begin at 6 p.m.:

■ North Pitt High School and J.H. Rose High School attendance areas will meet on Feb. 5 at the Community Center at Pitt County Office Park, 415 Government Circle.

■ Ayden-Grifton High School and D.H. Conley High School attendance areas will meet on March 24 at the Community Center at Alice Keene Park, 4561 County Home Road.

■ Farmville Central High School and South Central High School attendance areas will meet on April 9 at the PCC Eddie and Jo Allison Smith Center for Student Advancement, 1935 Warren Drive, Winterville.

Kim Grizzard can be contacted at 252-329-9578 and kgrizzard@apgcnc.com.

Irene McLawhorn Tripp

AYDEN - Mrs. Irene McLawhorn Tripp, 97, passed away peacefully on January 2, 2025. A funeral service will be held on Monday, January 5, 2025, at 11 AM at Rose Hill Free Will Baptist, 6236 County Home Rd., Winterville, NC 28590. Burial will follow the service at Ayden Cemetery. A visitation will be held on Sunday, January 4, 2025, from 5 PM to 7 PM at Wilkerson Funeral Home, 2100 E. 5th St., Greenville, NC 27858.

Mrs. Tripp was a Pitt County native and grew up in the Chicora area. She married Robert Lee Tripp & lived in Ayden for 75 years.

She was employed with Southern Bank in Ayden for more than 23 years, retiring in 1990. Mrs. Tripp was a devout Christian and was a member of Rose Hill Free Will Baptist, and was very involved. She taught Sunday School, was active in the Ladies Auxiliary, and was a faithful member for many years of Tuesdays Children at the church. After retirement, she enjoyed her grandchildren and spending time with family, whether it was going to cheerleading or basketball, she was a regular attendant of all of the grandchildren's activities. She is predeceased by her husband of 69 years, Robert Lee Tripp; her son; Robert Horace Tripp; her parents, Marvin Horace McLawhorn and wife Lela Stanley; sister, Mary Rose Buck; and a brother, Ralph McLawhorn. She is survived by her son, Steve Tripp, and wife, Susan; grandchildren, Amy Tripp, Rob Tripp, and wife Heather, Anna Smith and husband Chris and their child Asha; and a special caregiver Autumn Hoffman.

Memorials may be made to Rose Hill Free Will Baptist Church, 6236 County Home Road, Winterville, NC 28590.

Arrangements by Wilkerson Funeral Home & Crematory. Online condolences at www.wilkersonfuneralhome.com

Lorraine Boyd Hines

GREENVILLE - Mrs. Lorraine Boyd Hines, 92, passed away on Sunday, January 4, 2026. The funeral service will be held on Wednesday, January 7, 2026, at 2:30PM, in First Free Will Baptist Church. Burial will follow the service in Greenwood Cemetery. The family will receive friends prior to the service, from 1:00-2:15PM, at the church. Mrs. Hines, a native of Beaufort County, had lived in Greenville all of her life, and had been employed with Barroughs-Wellcome. Surviving are her daughter, Darlene Hines Edens and husband, Randy; son, Bradley Hines; six grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren; and brother, Steve Boyd, Sr. Memorial contributions may be made to Cragmont Assembly, 1233 North Fork Road, Black Mountain, North Carolina 28711; or First Free Will Baptist Church, 2426 Charles Blvd., Greenville, North Carolina 27858.

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