



## Ms. Joyce Lynnette Helm Francis

February 10, 1953 - March 11, 2019

Joyce Lynnette Francis, (66) of Peoria, Illinois was born on February 10, 1953 to Noble Helm, Jr. and Iona (Wright) Helm in Decatur, Illinois. She died Monday, March 11, 2019 at the University of Chicago Medicine, Chicago, Illinois.

Joyce loved the Lord Jesus Christ and dedicated her life and strength to His service. She was known as the modern day “Dorcas” for her sacrificial help to her family, friends, fellow educators and students.

She was a dedicated employee to the Peoria Public Schools District 150 for over three decades of service. Joyce taught at the Adult Education Center, Woodrow Wilson Primary School and the Sterling Middle School.

There was not an environment that Joyce was not teaching and sharing herself for help and information. She embodied lifetime learning and received several academic degrees. She nurtured hundreds of Administration, Faculty, Staff and Children’s lives with her love and sacrifice.

Joyce after 33 years of classroom teaching was found tutoring at Whittier Primary & Trewyn. Serving was her mission.

Joyce was a devoted member of her beloved, Bethel United Methodist Church, Peoria, IL. She was extremely involved in Bethel, serving as a choir member, Sunday school teacher, and a variety of ministry support activities.

Joyce was member and current vice-president of the Nu Pi Omega Chapter of her beloved Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. She was a member of the Illinois Education Association-NEA, and the National Association of University

Women (Peoria Branch). She served in many capacities in these organizations. Joyce was always moving and on the go. There will be a huge loss to every corner of the Peoria community.

Joyce leaves to mourn in her passing two brothers Rev. William (Anita) Helm, Woodbridge, VA and David (Bridget) Helm, Lexington Park, MD and one sister, Dora "Darlene" Helm, Kansas City, MO. She leaves behind a host of nieces and nephews. Joyce was preceded in death by her Mother and Father, her brother Timothy Helm and a nephew, Christopher. In her last weeks, there were dear friends and loved one at her bedside in which we will always appreciate.

In lieu of flowers, Joyce asked that donations be made to Bethel United Methodist Church, 210 North Richard Pryor Place, Peoria, IL 61605 and/or the National Association of University Women Scholarship Fund

Funeral services will be held at 10 am on Saturday, March 23, 2019 at First United Methodist Church with a visitation at 9 am. Pastor Tyson Parks, III will bring forth the eulogy, and retired Pastor Gary Wilson will officiate. Joyce will be laid to rest at Parkview Cemetery.

Simons Mortuary has been entrusted with arrangements. Online condolence may be made at [SimonsMortuary.com](http://SimonsMortuary.com).

# Cemetery Details

## Parkview Cemetery

2001 N University St  
Peoria, IL 61604  
(309) 688-0733

# Previous Events

## Visitation

MAR 23. 9:00 AM - 10:00 AM (CT)

First United Methodist Church  
116 NE Perry Avenue  
Peoria, IL

## Funeral Service

MAR 23. 10:00 AM - 11:30 AM (CT)

First United Methodist Church  
116 NE Perry Avenue  
Peoria, IL

# Tribute Wall



“ *Simons Mortuary created a Tribute Video in memory of Ms. Joyce Lynnette Helm Francis*



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**Simons Mortuary** - March 22, 2019 at 04:19 PM



“ *Ms. Joyce Lynnette Helm Francis*

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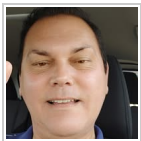
January 29, 2023 at 06:10 AM



“ *Ms. Joyce Lynnette Helm Francis*

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January 29, 2023 at 03:12 AM



“ *I just read that Joyce passed away. I had the honor of working as an educational consultant with Joyce in the Peoria Public Schools in the early 2000s in her role as a Reading Specialist. She had a true dedication to her work along with a kind heart . I will treasure the memories of time spent with her.*

*Rick Hangge*

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**Rick Hangge** - February 10, 2021 at 05:59 AM

GB

“ On behalf of the North Shore IL Branch of National Association of University Women, I would like to extend our condolences to the family of Joyce Francis and to the Peoria Branch. Over the years, we grew to know Joyce as a caring, energetic and diligently involved NAUW Sister. She had a smile and demeanor that always made us feel welcome and comfortable in her presence. Yes, indeed, our NAUW Sister Joyce will be missed by all of us and may she rest in peace with our Lord and Savior.

God bless,  
Gwendolyn Beckwith  
President of North Shore IL Branch  
National Association of University Women

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**Gwen Beckwith** - March 26, 2019 at 12:29 AM

JG

“ I believe it is a God thing that I had been thinking about Joyce the last few days. I served with Joyce on the IEA Regional Council a number of years ago. I looked to her as an example of how to participate positively in a meeting. She was insightful and poised. I respected her greatly. Janet Geisz, Washington, IL

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**Jan Geisz** - March 23, 2019 at 09:43 AM

LC

“ Although it has been many years since I attended Certified Lay Speaker school with Joyce, I thought of her often. I attended a service pastored by Reverend Gary Williams at Bethel at her invitation. The Sunday service began somewhere around 11 am. When it was over, I thought it should be around noon. Imagine my surprise when I looked at my watch and it was 2 pm. Joyce was just a pure joy to be around and I treasured our 8 weeks at preaching instruction together. Our paths crossed briefly and then not again, but I still remember her bright, positive and helpful manner. The world will miss this talented and lovely lady. Larry Colbert

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**Larry Colbert** - March 23, 2019 at 02:58 AM

ML

“ To the family and friends of NAUW Sister Joyce Francis

*The National Association of University Women – St. Louis Branch would like to express our sincerest condolences on the passing of our NAUW Sister, Joyce Francis.*

*We are deeply saddened by the news of Joyce’s passing. Joyce was a valuable and highly respected member of Peoria NAUW Branch and the North Central Section. The effects of her passing are being felt already by those who had the honor and pleasure of knowing her. Remember, when we lose a loved one here on earth, we gain an angel in heaven that watches over you and us. We extend our most sincere condolences to you, and know that your sisters of NAUW - St. Louis Branch are praying for your comfort and peace.*

*God bless you,  
Myrtle Love, President &  
Members of NAUW-St. Louis Branch*

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**Myrtle Love** - March 21, 2019 at 10:26 PM

CA

“ *Central II. Agency On Aging lit a candle in memory of Ms. Joyce Lynnette Helm Francis*



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**Central II. Agency on Aging** - March 21, 2019 at 04:14 PM

JB

“ *I had the opportunity to meet and become acquainted with Joyce while doing our student teaching at Rolling Acres School in Peoria. She was an impressive individual with a heart for her students and their futures. After several decades, I was fortunate to be teaching in the Department of Education when Joyce started in the department. We enjoyed our visits and getting "caught up" with our years and careers in education. Joyce certainly touched and brought encouragement into the many lives she encountered.*

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**Jim Burdette** - March 21, 2019 at 03:39 PM

JC

“ *Joe Ann Cayson lit a candle in memory of Ms. Joyce Lynnette Helm Francis*



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**Joe Ann Cayson** - March 21, 2019 at 01:55 PM

BB

“ *Dear Family and Friends of Joyce Francis,  
In memory of Joyce, having enriched so many through her example, leadership and love, I send my deepest sympathy.  
†Bishop Frank J. Beard*

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**Bishop Frank J. Beard** - March 21, 2019 at 10:44 AM

TO

“ *Ms. Francis will always be remembered as my First Grade mentor. Being a first year 1st grade teacher I had no clue on what my kiddos needed as far as supplies, classroom decorations, curriculum, etc. Ms. Francis guided me through my first year as a 1st grade teacher. Her support, friendship, and years of service to education helped me become the educator I am today.*

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**Tonya** - March 20, 2019 at 12:19 PM

TO

“ *Our condolences go out to the family of Joyce Lynnette Francis. Joyce will be extremely missed by the Peoria Branch of National Association of University Women. Joyce was extremely dedicated to NAUW. She served as a local president and as a member of the sectional and national board of NAUW. Joyce always went above and beyond on all and any activity that she was apart of. Her contagious smile and laughter will be greatly missed.*

*The Peoria Branch of National Association of University Woman*

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**Tonya** - March 20, 2019 at 12:13 PM

JB

“ *To the Family of Joyce Francis*

*Please accept our most heartfelt condolences on the recent passing of Joyce. Joyce was a woman that was passionate about all that was important to her which included, but was not limited to, her family, church family, community organizations/affiliations, sorority and the National Association of University Women (NAUW). She dedicated herself to any assignment she accepted. We the women of the Chicago Branch of NAUW will miss her smile, gentle spirit and willingness to help our Branch in any way she could. May she rest in peace!!*

*With Sisterly Blessings.....  
Joyce E. Butts, President  
NAUW Chicago Branch*

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**Joyce Butts** - March 19, 2019 at 09:28 PM

LB

“ *The Tri-County Urban League expresses our deepest sympathy to the Francis family. Joyce was a kind, genuine person that always looked out for others. She was a strong woman and excellent mentor to her students. She as a fierce advocate for education. She will be truly missed.*

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**Laraine Bryson** - March 18, 2019 at 11:36 PM

TH

“ *Ms. Francis was such a kind and sweet person. She was a wonderful teacher. Our family loved her and appreciated all she did to help us... especially loving us.*

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**Tammy Hill** - March 17, 2019 at 07:43 PM

LB

“ I will always remember Joyce from our days at Stephen Decatur High School. I thought of Joyce as a friend. I wish I had known her better in school. I also wish I had known she moved to Peoria near where I live now. I am impressed with her life and how she lived it.

Leonard Bobbitt - March 15, 2019 at 07:09 PM

RF

“ My deepest sympathy to the family. We grew up as family in Decatur. What an incredible bond our parents formed for us which lasted a lifetime. I realized at an early age Joyce was destined to do wonderful things in her lifetime. I was right. I'll miss her and continue praying for everyone.

Ron Fluker

Ron Fluker - March 15, 2019 at 03:31 PM

KS

“ Ms. Francis didn't play with us in school she would tape yo mouth shut if she had too lol Rip she was the true meaning of discipline we need more like her today

Kendall Scott - March 15, 2019 at 12:58 AM

JB

“ Joanie Brown sent a virtual gift in memory of Ms. Joyce Lynnette Helm Francis



Joanie Brown - March 14, 2019 at 10:50 PM

FC

“Joyce was such a wonderful friend to my mother. Not a week went by when she either had just left Joyce, was riding to Decatur with her the next day or was waiting for her to come by in just a few minutes. Mom will remember her always. I am so grateful for the love and care she showed to my mother and know my mom's heart is greatly saddened by her loss.

*Francine Wade Coleman*

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**Francine Coleman** - March 14, 2019 at 05:02 PM

MR

“Joyce was loved and respected by so many IEA members, leaders and staff! Her caring, no nonsense voice resonated throughout the Association. I so looked forward to working with her. She was diligent to the work at hand, devoted to what was best, filled with common sense, guided by a huge heart! I loved when I had the opportunities to see and talk with her, which were too infrequent over the past few years. I will so miss her warmth and guidance.

*Mitchell Roth  
Illinois Education Association*

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**Mitchell Roth** - March 14, 2019 at 10:55 AM

RS

“My prayers are with Mrs. Francis's family. Joyce was a very wonderful person and a definite blessing for the children she taught in the Peoria School District. She will be missed.

*Rosiland A. Seavers-Swain fellow educator and friend.*

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**Rosiland Seavers-Swain** - March 14, 2019 at 09:46 AM

VT

*She was an Angel on Earth and now she is an Angel in Heaven. Joyce was kind, compassionate and generously gave her heart and time to so many in our community. As a fellow teacher colleague, I know she made a huge impact on many students during her career. She took it upon her self to always be available to our community seniors and really just people in general. Joyce Francis will be greatly missed. May she Rest In Peace. Our prayers are with the family.*

*Valerie Timmes*

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**Valerie Timmes** - March 16, 2019 at 10:22 PM

LJ

“ *I am so sorry to learn that Joyce passed away. She was a dynamic woman that I got to know through her advocacy for teachers and students through the Illinois Education Association. We were both young teachers learning the skills we used to become leaders in our professional lives. Joyce was kind, funny, and direct, what a combination!!*

*May her family and friends keep her alive in their hearts.*

*Lou Ann Jacobs  
Normal, Illinois*

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**Lou Ann Jacobs** - March 14, 2019 at 08:13 AM

CS

“ *Curtis Shumate lit a candle in memory of Ms. Joyce Lynnette Helm Francis*



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**Curtis Shumate** - March 14, 2019 at 12:54 AM

SW

“ On behalf of the Greater Cleveland Branch, our hearts are saddened by the loss of Joyce Francis and our thoughts and prayers are with you. The Greater Cleveland Branch drove up and attended the Sectional Conference hosted by the Peoria Branch, Joyce was a most gracious, hardworking, and kind host.. She will not be forgotten and will be missed. May God be with you during this difficult time.

*Sandra J. Walker, Branch President  
Greater Cleveland Branch of National Association of University Women*

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**Sandra Walker** - March 13, 2019 at 09:35 PM

CT

“ I had the pleasure of working with Joyce during our involvement with the Illinois Education Association (IEA). We were part of the central section of IEA and worked together on several things in particular trainings for minority educators, state committee work, elections, IEA and NEA conventions, etc. Although we had work to do, we also had a lot of fun.

*Joyce was always professional and was a great role model and mentor to younger members. When the Illinois Federation of Teachers (IFT) took over the Peoria School District from the IEA, Joyce was devastated. However, she worked hard to maintain the remnants of the IEA and serve the members who were left. I will miss her smile and her devotion to the organization. God rest her soul!*

*Sincerely, Camille Taylor*

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**Camille Taylor** - March 13, 2019 at 09:28 PM

JK

“ I am Jeanette O. Keyes, the North Central Sectional Director of the National Association of University Women. Joyce Francis was the President of the Peoria branch, the sectional Corresponding Secretary and recently chaired a sectional conference in Peoria. Joyce was dedicated, committed, loving, always giving of herself and a woman of order. She was one that would never say no. She was a blessing in so many ways to others. She was truly an angel on this earth. She will definitely be missed but, we know God has a place for her in heaven. We are eternally grateful to God for allowing us to share in the joy, words of wisdom and knowledge that she imparted to each of us. We are better as a result of having Joyce in our lives!!

*Prayers to the family,*

*Jeanette O. Keyes  
North Central Sectional Director*

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**Jeanette O. Keyes** - March 13, 2019 at 05:26 PM

RS

“ I was Joyce’s pastor for 2 years and I must say she was a helper in all areas of church ministry. Joyce will be missed tremendously by all. I was one of her Chaplains at UnityPoint Methodist Hospital and through it all she wore a smile. Family, remember life is eternal, death is not the end. Joyce has passed through that door called death a door that leads to our eternal home. Rest on my friend...  
*Rev. Flo Scott*

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**Rev. Flo Scott** - March 13, 2019 at 03:55 PM

VK

“ To The Family of Ms. Joyce Lynette Francis - I'd like to express my sorrow and offer my prayers. A lovely & loving spirit has been called from this earth to claim her reward in Heaven. May our Father keep you in perfect peace and you contend with your loss.



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**Vickie King** - March 13, 2019 at 11:51 AM

LV

“ I student taught under Joyce. I was her first student teacher in 1984 at Sterling Middle School. She helped me get my first job with Peoria Public Schools. She was my friend. She was stern, and a strong teacher. We traveled to Door County one summer, and had the best of times. We kept in touch and I always valued her friendship. I will miss her, and know there will be a loss in this community. Rest now my beautiful friend, Lisa

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**lisa Voyles** - March 13, 2019 at 10:03 AM

AH

“ Our beautiful Joyce. You are with the LORD GOD ALMIGHTY. He loves you and you can be together for all eternity.

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**Anita Helm** - March 13, 2019 at 07:56 AM

RW

“Joyce served as vice chair of the Illinois Great Rivers Africa University (AU) Committee and was a voice not only for AU but also for the children of the Fairfield Orphanage. Joyce was passionate about telling the AU story and raising money to support the students of AU. Joyce leaves a huge hole in our ministry and a forever impression on our hearts.

*Rev. Dr. Beverly Wilkes-Null, AU Committee Chair*

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**Rev .Dr. Beverly Wilkes-Null** - March 13, 2019 at 07:25 AM



“Evelyn Tate-Clayton sent a virtual gift in memory of Ms. Joyce Lynnette Helm Francis



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**Evelyn Tate-Clayton** - March 12, 2019 at 08:23 PM

SC

“It is with deepest sympathy and heartfelt condolences that we pray for the family of the Late Ms. Joyce Lynnette Francis.  
*The Carter-Allen Family*



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**Sherry Carter-Allen** - March 12, 2019 at 07:06 PM

EW

*To the family of Joyce Francis, my condolences. She was one of the kindest, loving people I knew. She was so strong in her beliefs, no matter what task was at hand. I am the Associate Staff of the Peoria IEA Office and have been for 35 years and worked a lot with Joyce in the many offices she held and projects she worked on for her fellow teachers and students at Peoria District 150 and all of the members of the IEA in her Region. She was the voice of reason. She was someone who never gave up and was willing to continue to fight for the rights of her members and students through all the years I knew her. She will be missed. I would run in to her frequently out and about and always enjoyed the hugs and talks we had. God Bless you Joyce.*

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**Elizabeth Kay Wurmnest** - March 14, 2019 at 12:44 PM