



## Mary A. Steward

August 30, 1919 - June 4, 2019

Isaiah 43:1 "...I have called thee by thy name; thou art Mine."

Although Mary A. Steward was called by many different names, "M.A.", "Honey", "Auntie", "Sister Steward", "Steward", "Mama", "Grandma", and "Miss Mary", everyone had only one emotion for her: love.

"M.A." Steward was born almost 100 years ago on August 30, 1919, in Midway, Alabama, to Lawrence Fortson and Rebecca Tarver Fortson, a family of hard-working sharecropping farmers. M.A. was the fourth of six children. It was in school, that M.A. picked out the name, "Mary Ann" to go along with those initials. At home, her family called her "Honey".

And it's only fitting that a "Honey" find a "Hon". She married Nathaniel "Hon" Steward in 1939 in Alabama. In 1947, they moved north for economic opportunity to East Chicago, Indiana and then to Gary in April of 1948, where Hon took a factory job and Honey was a homemaker. Her gifts included sewing, quilting, and being an outstanding cook. She loved family and particularly enjoyed family gatherings and reunions.

"Auntie" was also one of her favorite names and roles. She was blessed with many nieces and nephews to love. And love them she did! Whenever her sisters or brothers had a need, she was there to care for and love her nieces and nephews no matter how near or far. Family meant everything!

"Sister Steward" gave her life to Christ at an early age in Alabama. Upon moving to Gary, she joined Van Buren Missionary Baptist Church in 1949 under the pastorate of the late Rev. J. J. Overstreet and served faithfully. While at Van Buren she was a Sunday School teacher for many years, a Scout den mother, a dedicated cook with the kitchen ministry, mission circle leader, an active member of the Mothers Board, and the Choir. She attended church faithfully until her health and distance prevented it.

And "Steward" was the best friend a friend could have. Many of her closest friends were members of the lovely Stitch and Charity Club. Those ladies loved to quilt, sew, participate

in charity events, and travel, even desegregating a Las Vegas hotel.

She became “Mama” when her daughter, Lora Ann, came along. She was “Miss Steward” to her beloved son-in-law and “Grandma” to her sweet grandbabies. Though her education was cut short due to lack of opportunity and demands of farm life, she and her husband made education a priority for Lora, in turn, leaving a legacy of education for their grandchildren and beyond.

After ailing health, Mary A. Steward joined her daughter and family in 2015 in Georgia which allowed them to spend more precious time together. In her final years, as “Miss Mary” to the staff and her friends at Grace Healthcare of Tucker, she brought joy to everyone through her smiles and kind words. She peacefully departed this life on June 4, 2019, at the age of 99, holding her daughter’s hand. Throughout her entire life, she was loving and well-loved by all! She will be missed and never forgotten.

The love for Mary A. Steward still lives on in: her daughter, Lora Steward Ingram and son-in-law, Frank Ingram IV; grandchildren: Frank Nathaniel and Jewel Loran; sister-in-law: Mary Steward; nephews, Fortson (Barbara) Spratling , Obie Lee (Deatra) Spratling, Eddie Chars Pitts, and Joe Lewis Pitts; nieces: Lula Mae Spratling Price-Brown, Jo Ann (James, Jr.) Kendrick, Wilma (Freddie) Allums, Eva Nell Pitts, Windella (Richard) Williford, Marion Bryant, Juanita (Joseph) Jenkins; great nephews: Obie A.M. (Artri) Spratling, Rufus “Al” (Cecelia) Spratling, Derwin Spratling, Brian Price, Zachary (Elizabeth) Spratling, and Jason Spratling; great nieces: Karen (Robert) Scott, Janet Smith, Rebecca Smith, Karen Brown Watkins, Iris Spratling, Alicia (Kenny) Chisholm, and Sonia Golburne; and a host of family, neighbors, her Van Buren Church family, and friends, including the staff and friends at Grace Healthcare.

Proceeding Mary A. Steward in death are her parents Lawrence and Rebecca Fortson, her brothers: Lawrence Fortson, Jr., Lawrence “Fella” Lee Fortson and Alto Dixon; her sisters: Fannie Spratling, Rebecca Smith, and Lawrence Mae Pitts; nephews: Ozie Smith, Jr., Freddie Lee Smith, York Spratling, Jr., James Spratling, and Frank Dixon; and nieces: Lillie Ree Spratling, Walter Mae Smith, Eddie Mae Herrington, and dear, dear niece, Ozie Mae Smith.

Mary A. Steward loved working with children, recognized the importance of education, and if higher education had been an option, she may have been a teacher. Therefore, the family asks that memorial donations in her memory be made to St. Timothy School, 5365 Memorial Dr., Stone Mountain, GA 30083, where her daughter is the director and her grandchildren attended.



# Cemetery

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## Evergreen Memorial Park Cemetery

3815 West 39th Avenue

Hobart, IN, 46342

# Events

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**JUN** **Visitation** 01:00PM - 02:00PM

**15**

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Van Buren Missionary Baptist Church  
2585 Van Buren, Gary, IN, US, 46407

**JUN** **Celebration of Life** 02:00PM

**15**

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