



Laraine A. Banks

March 27, 1937 - May 11, 2026

Laraine Banks was born in Chester, PA on March 27, 1937, to the late Russell and Martha Jones McLain. She peacefully transitioned from this life on May 11, 2026. She was educated in the Chester Public School System.

As the fifth of six children, she learned at an early age her place in the family social standing. Her brothers' and sisters' ages spanned over a wide range of years. Her three older siblings (Maryetta, Ross and Jimmy) were adults when she and her two brothers Rochell and Clifford came along. It was a very strange and confusing feeling for her to have a sister and brothers that were old enough to be parents themselves. Being the last child to be born, she learned at an early age that she had special privileges, and she quickly took advantage of these privileges. Growing up in the McLain household, there was always plenty of love and special attention devoted to her.

Her family lived on Front Street very close to the Delaware River. It was only natural that she and her siblings spent a lot of time playing around and swimming in the river. In addition, it was always a special treat for her to ride the ferry back and forth to New Jersey.

Having brothers her age, whom she loved to follow around, got her labeled as a serious tomboy in addition to being called a nuisance for always being around. The enormous amount of time spent near, and in the river

unfortunately came to an end when a neighborhood boy drowned. That was the end of the McLain siblings' river fun.

Her special childhood memories are of the numerous times she spent with her older sister Maryetta, who was like a second mother to her. Maryetta always encouraged and reminded her to act like a young lady. On numerous occasions, they went to All Night Prayer Services at her sister's church, followed by shopping for clothes the following day. In addition, Maryetta would always quiz her on Bible scripture lessons. Her sister would take her to her apartment in Philadelphia for sleep-overs. Train rides to churches in Philadelphia and Washington, DC were always a very special and enjoyable time with her sister.

Her oldest brother Ross was like a second father to her. He treated her like his daughter and always made her feel very special. He bought and taught her how to ride her first bicycle. He always remembered her birthday and encouraged her to work hard in school. One very special memory was that her brother Ross gave her an allowance.

Her family attended Murphy Church on Engle Street in Chester. Growing up, she was involved in numerous church and school activities. She enjoyed being active in the choir, ushering, participating in Sunday School, and school sports. There was no such thing as idle time in her mother's house. If she had nothing to do, her mother would always find something to occupy her time. If Laraine stood in the same spot too long, her mother would always find some housework that needed to be done.

She was blessed to meet her husband James (Jimmy) Banks through his cousin Hazel Fisher Dorsey. Hazel lived in her neighborhood and also attended Murphy Church. Jimmy's family attended Fairview Baptist Church in Woodlyn PA. On a yearly basis, Fairview would fellowship with Murphy. In addition, sometimes Fairview would travel to Cambridge, Maryland with

Murphy Church. Jimmy's brother Clarence sang on the Fairview Youth Choir. Laraine became friends with his brother, which gave her the opportunity to meet her future husband. Her mother always said, if you want to meet a young man, look for one in church. Jimmy and Laraine later married and became the proud parents of four children, LaJane, James Jr, Laraine and Curtis. Their children blessed them with three grandchildren and seven great grandchildren that we absolutely love and adore.

She worked at Baker and Adams Chemical Company for numerous years before she moved on to a nursing aide position. In 1986, she and her husband started their own catering company before starting their second company Beau Jack, Inc. It was a challenging experience because she wasn't fully aware of all that was involved in running a company. However, they persevered and were very successful in managing a catering company that serviced the Civic Center, the Academy of Natural Science and President Bill Clinton's two inaugurations, and numerous affairs at Penn's Landing.

Her mother, Martha McLain, later in her life joined Shiloh Baptist church where she fellowshiped and remained an active member until she went home to be with Jesus. It was through her mother that Laraine started her fellowship with Shiloh. At Shiloh, she had the blessed opportunity to actively serve in many church organizations, including the Senior Choir, the Missionary Ministry, the Women's Ministry, the Senior Ministry, the Mortgage Committee and Kitchen Committee.

Her Favorite Scriptures are:

Psalm 34:1

"I will bless the Lord at all times: His praise will continually be in my mouth."

Jeremiah 29:11 &12

“For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give to you an expected end.

Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me and I will hearken unto you.”

Mom’s medical conditions later in life prevented her from her active involvement in her various ministries, as well as regular in person attendance at church. However, this did not prevent her from regularly hearing Sunday services and supporting various organizations. She faithfully viewed church service online to keep her spirit filled. Despite her medical challenges, she never faltered in her faith and continued to trust in God. In her latest conversation with her family, she spoke of being thankful that God was blessing her with another Mother’s Day. She shared that when she left this world that she did not want her family to be sad because “she was ready to see the FACE OF JESUS.” Mom STAYED POSITIVE throughout all her trials to the very end.

Leaving to cherish her memory, is her son James Banks, Jr. of Upper Chichester, her daughter Laraine Banks of Delaware, and her special niece LoVen Elam of Maryland (Nathaniel).

She also leaves behind her grandchildren Malek Lee, Ombré Robinson and Aisha Banks Jones (Orlando) to whom she was affectionately known as Mom-Mom. She was preceded in death by her beloved husband, James Banks, Sr., her daughter LaJane Banks Adams, her son Curtis A. Banks, her sister Maryetta Jones, her brothers Ross Jones, Rochell McLain, Sr., and Clifford McLain. She also leaves behind to cherish her memory, great grandchildren, a host of nieces, nephews, friends, church family (who knew her as “Mom Banks and Sister Banks”) and a community who will miss her dearly.

Cemetery Details

Chester Rural Cemetery

412 W. 15th Street
Chester, PA 19013

Previous Events

Visitation

MAY 29. 9:00 AM - 11:00 AM (ET)

Shiloh Baptist Church
703 Central Avenue
Chester, PA 19013

Service

MAY 29. 11:00 AM (ET)

Shiloh Baptist Church
703 Central Avenue
Chester, PA 19013

Tribute Wall

SH

“ still have them. Barbara Nicholas, Henry purchased the Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum for the family of Laraine A. Banks.



still have them. Barbara Nicholas, Henry - May 27 at 04:51 PM

LF

“ Lanier Family lit a candle in memory of Laraine A. Banks



Lanier Family - May 27 at 03:47 PM



“ Enchanted Cottage was purchased for the family of Laraine A. Banks.



May 27 at 02:09 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Laraine A. Banks.

May 27 at 02:09 PM

AM

“ *Sincerest condolences to the Banks and McClain families. I will remember Ms Laraine's infectious smile and also that side eye she could give :). May she rest in peace. Shiloh Baptist Church family will continue to hold her memory in our hearts.*



Angela Mitchell-Williams - May 24 at 10:04 AM