



Mrs. Mattie Mae Huntley Croix

May 10, 1939 - March 7, 2026

Mattie Mae Huntley Croix (86), of Statesboro, GA, formally of Moultrie, GA, passed into eternal rest and returned into the arms of the Lord on March 7, 2026. She was beloved by many, a woman of extraordinary grace, intelligence, and quiet strength, and she left an indelible mark on every life she touched. She is preceded in death by her devoted husband of 30 years, William Croix, her first love, Willie Frank Sanders, her loving parents, Tom and Rosie Lee Weeks Huntley, and two wonderful brothers Willie (Bill) Huntley and Floyd Huntley.

The Celebration of Life will be held Saturday, March 21, 2026, at 11:00am at the Luke Strong Funeral Home Chapel. Ambassador Cornelius L. Ponder, III will be officiating. Burial will follow in the St. James Pallbearer Cemetery No. 2.

Mattie was born on May 10, 1939, in Funston, GA and was raised on a sprawling family farm in Moultrie, GA. Coming up in church she learned to love the Lord but was never fond of farm life. With determination, she set her sights on obtaining a professional degree after graduating from Moultrie High School in 1957. She would proudly become the first person in her family to earn a 4-year degree, opening doors for generations to follow. She started her post-secondary career at Morris Brown College and finished as an Albany State University Golden Ram. It was at Albany State where Mattie and Willie Frank Sanders, an all-around athlete, met, had a courtship, and eventually married. In 1960, they welcomed their bundle of joy, Patricia Ann, the first and

cherished grandchild of the Huntley clan. Though life led them down different paths, Mattie faced each transition with courage prioritizing the well-being of her young daughter. Mattie and her then toddler daughter joined the Great Migration alongside her parents and siblings during the 1960's. They settled in Newark, NJ, where she would become a devoted and deeply influential elementary school teacher in the Newark Public School System. Assigned to the Hawthorne Avenue School, she would eventually meet Richard Washington, an industrial arts teacher and former NFL player. The two married in 1973 and welcomed their bundle of joy, Tori Bonita, in 1975. While raising a young family and navigating life's challenges with quiet strength, the two made the difficult decision to part ways. Mattie continued fostering relationships and aspiring to make a meaningful impact through her educational endeavors. In 1979, her exceptional dedication was recognized by the Newark City Council who cited her for her work with children in the field of drama and as the author of resource books on black studies. She went on to earn master's degrees at Kean University (1980) and Liberty University (1990) as well her certification in School Counseling. While residing in Newark, Mattie and her family became long-time members of St. James A.M.E. Church.

Mattie was no stranger to the power of hard work thanks to her parents' example and instruction. While teaching, Mattie briefly worked part-time night shifts at the local post office. She also opened a small retail store with one of her closest friends – both of whom were known for their sophisticated style acumen. Through this friend she would be introduced to William "Bill" Croix who would become her trusted confidant and knight in shining armor. He affectionately nicknamed her "Tough" because she didn't tolerate disrespect from anyone, and was always firm, but fair. Their nuptials were held in 1986, and they remained deeply and tenderly devoted to one another until his passing in 2016. Following an illustrious career as an educator, business owner, and public service worker, she and Bill would then earn their real estate license and pursue real estate investment. The two retired to

Fayetteville, GA where she joined the Fayetteville Church of Christ and built new lifetime memories with many family and friends in the Atlanta area. Mattie was almost always surrounded by family and friends, and she truly enjoyed living life to the fullest. She was known for her infectious laugh that had a way of reverberating around the room and wrapping everyone in warmth and joy. Mattie was an active and involved member in her community and loved to entertain her friends. She had an open invitation policy and always made sure her home was stocked with delicious food and drink for the inevitable impromptu gathering. She was especially known for her memorable Super Bowl bashes. As a young professional, Mattie enjoyed playing team bowling and going biking with friends. She was also an avid traveler and football and tennis fanatic. She flew all over the world to watch the Williams sisters of tennis compete and win in London, Paris, Melbourne, New York, Indian Wells, and many other venues. She would laugh heartily when telling the story of how fellow spectators would often inquire how they were related to the Williams sisters. Mattie also held season tickets to the Atlanta Falcons for many years. One of her favorite sporting bucket list successes was attending Super Bowl XLI in 2007.

As life slowed down, as it does for us all, Mattie found comfort in relocating to Statesboro, GA to be closer to her daughter and her family. There she built even more wonderful memories with grandchildren and with the many friends who continued to visit. And when she needed a little more care, she continued to touch the hearts of the nurses who came to appreciate her gratitude, humor, and the light she carried within. Her legacy lives on in the laughter she shared, the wisdom she imparted, and the love she poured so generously into others. Mattie is survived by her two daughters, Patricia Ann (Alan, Sr.) Noel of South Orange, NJ, and Tori Bonita (Merritt) Kearns of Statesboro, GA; six grandchildren, Nichole Chardeé (Ike) Noel Inya-Agha, Adrienne Croix, Alan Milton Jarmon (Brittany) Noel, Jr., Journey Bonita Kearns, Mya Elise Kearns, and Heather Skye Kearns; and four great-grandchildren, Samuel Inya-Agha,

Serafina Inya-Agha, Kalani Noel, and Valantina Noel. She also leaves a host of cherished nieces and nephews who loved her dearly, numerous friends and extended family, and the wonderful staff of The Lodge at Bethany of Statesboro and Ogeechee Area Hospice.

Cemetery Details

St. James Pallbearers Cemetery #2

1214 11th Avenue NW
Moultrie, GA 31768
(229) 890-1717

Previous Events

Public Viewing

MAR 20. 3:00 PM - 6:00 PM (ET)

Luke Strong And Son Mortuary, Ltd.
20 First Street Northeast
Moultrie, GA 31768
(229) 890-1717

Chapel Service

MAR 21. 11:00 AM (ET)

Luke Strong And Son Mortuary Chapel
20 First Street Northeast
Moultrie, GA

Tribute Wall



“ From reading the obituary, Mattie lived an eventful life. Praying for the family. 🙏🙏🙏



Hattie Walker - March 23 at 03:01 PM



“ Rachel Greene sent a virtual gift in memory of Mrs. Mattie Mae Huntley Croix



Rachel Greene - March 21 at 11:55 AM



“ Andrea Clark lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Mattie Mae Huntley Croix



Andrea Clark - March 21 at 12:12 AM



“ Arrive in Style was purchased for the family of Mrs. Mattie Mae Huntley Croix.



March 19 at 09:30 PM

SA

“ Sheri, Chris and Ashlei purchased the Heavenly Grace Spray for the family of Mrs. Mattie Mae Huntley Croix.



Sheri, Chris and Ashlei - March 19 at 08:17 PM



“ Days of Sunshine Bouquet was purchased for the family of Mrs. Mattie Mae Huntley Croix.



March 18 at 05:18 PM

RS

“ Richard J. Washington Sr. purchased the Peaceful White Lilies Basket for the family of Mrs. Mattie Mae Huntley Croix.



Richard J. Washington Sr. - March 17 at 09:33 PM

RS

“ Richard J. Washington Sr. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Mrs. Mattie Mae Huntley Croix.

Richard J. Washington Sr. - March 17 at 09:33 PM



“ *Rose Almond lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Mattie Mae Huntley Croix*



Rose Almond - March 16 at 11:54 PM

CW

“ *She was a sassy soul, who I loved the moment I met her. She will be missed, but I take comfort in knowing that she and my dad are together again laughing and enjoying each other on the other side of the veil.*

Cheri Weeks - March 16 at 07:59 PM

BT

“ *Brenda Tatum lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Mattie Mae Huntley Croix*



Brenda Tatum - March 16 at 07:22 PM

RT

“ *Rosie Thornton lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Mattie Mae Huntley Croix*



Rosie Thornton - March 16 at 06:40 PM

SM

“ *Sheree Marshall lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Mattie Mae Huntley Croix*



Sheree Marshall - March 16 at 06:37 PM