

# Mary Richmond Smith – December 20, 2025



Mary Richmond Smith, born in Maryville, MO, to parents R L (Bill) Rainey and H Maxine Rainey on April 29, 1934. Mary passed into the arms of her Lord and Savior on December 20, 2025.

Mary was the 1<sup>st</sup> born of Bill and Maxine Rainey. Shortly after her birth, the new family moved to a family farm near McFall, MO. Mary was later joined by 3 more sisters. Bill was a farmer and traded in livestock. Subsequently, the family moved near Lewis, IA. There, Mary finished her primary education (grades 1-8).

Tragedy struck the family when Mary was only 9 years old. Her mother Maxine passed away following a fall in the family home. Mary said that she became the surrogate mother to her 3 sisters, chief cook, nose wiper, housekeeper and dairymaid. Fortunately for all of them grandparents, aunts, uncles, and friends surrounded them.

Approximately 2 years went by, and Bill brought into the family a delightful and kind stepmother, Virginia Johnson. She brought with her a son, Frans, who was ironically only 2 days younger than Mary. This union worked and this family of 7 lasted until Bill and Virginia's passing many years later.

Bill moved the family to Fort Collins, CO in 1947, when he had an opportunity to become part of a Livestock Commission Company, of which he later became sole owner. Mary attended Fort Collins High School and graduated in 1951. Mary was an excellent academic and also was a member of the HS Band, Choir and several clubs. One of Mary's jobs in the summer was picking cherries in orchards around Fort Collins. She also worked as a hotel maid at The Elkhorn Lodge in Estes Park, CO.

Mary enrolled in the fall of 1951 at Colorado A&M College in Fort Collins, into the pre-med curriculum. That is how she later met future husband, Vern Smith, however that took some convincing on Vern's part. Mary accepted a scholarship to Denver University School of Nursing, fall semester 1952. It was an up and down year however, but many weekends would find Mary and Vern together in Fort Collins.

Vern and Mary were married on December 19, 1953, at First Presbyterian Church in Fort Collins, CO. The church was a natural place to be for them, as they both had been attending services and singing in the choir. The rest is history! As of Mary's passing, they had been married for 72 years and one day.

Daughter Kim was born in Fort Collins in the summer of 1955. Vern was off playing soldier at Fort Sam Houston, TX. Following Vern's graduation from Vet School in June 1957 they moved

to Southern CA for a job and Vern's Army Reserve duties. They did not like California and returned to Colorado in October of 1958. Son Doug had been born in Arcadia, CA in January 1958.

Vern worked in a mixed veterinary practice in Pueblo, CO from October 1958 through May 1959. During that time, they were building Vern's new animal hospital in Colorado Springs. The Bijou Animal Hospital opened June 6, 1959. Mary became an integral part of the new practice. Mary was sometimes a receptionist, veterinary technician, laboratory, x-ray, and surgical assistant...but she drew the line on doing kennel work. We shuffled childcare there also. A family joke is the kids were raised in the back of the animal hospital, only some of the time in cages. As Vern's practice grew and employees were hired, Mary's duties shifted to being a Mom and Homemaker. By the time Sydney was born in July of 1961, Mary was mostly at home but still bookkeeper, accountant, seamstress, and laundress. The practice grew and Mary fully retired from all of her veterinary duties in 1984.

During all of these years 1959 to 1989, Mary became more & more active in the community. They joined the First Presbyterian Church in 1959, and Mary spent lots of time serving John Stevens and Skipper Larson's ministerial staff. She worked feeding countless Get Set kids, worked occasionally in the nursery, and baked thousands of cookies for various occasions. Mary was also involved with ECM, Bible Studies, knitting groups and Pathfinder Sunday School. She eventually lead Bible Study Groups into her 80's.

In the community, Mary was involved with Newcomers Group, Rotary Ann, Dale Carnegie, Red Cross (on the board for 16 years) and several money makers (not) like, Melaleuca, Shakley and Mary Kay. She was active with the girls in the Girl Scouts and Doug in the Boy Scouts.

Mary became an active bowler, pinocle, and bridge player. She belonged to several groups of ladies and also, mixed with Vern. Mary was active with Vern in his various community, business, and professional organizations. She thoroughly enjoyed many card and board games and was an avid reader.

Mary from the beginning embraced all of Vern's activities so that included backpacking, jeep camping, and RVing. Also hunting trips, skiing trips and trips "all over" while attending conventions etc. She even tried spelunking several times....

One of her dreams came true in 1968 when we moved to horse property in Colorado Springs. She finally had her own horse! Mary was an accomplished rider and for the next 50 years that was one of her greater enjoyments. Mary passed that all down to her children and grandchildren as well. When Mary and Vern became "empty nesters" they became frequent horse packers and went on numerous wilderness adventures. Mary was a master at creating tasteful meals over an open fire, of course that required Vern providing plenty of firewood. Mary was also the co-pilot for nearly 20 years of RVing.

Mary was a gardener, growing prestigious amounts of garden products which were happily shared with friends and family. She loved her flowers and had them growing everywhere. Her houseplants were legendary as well as her rock garden.

Mary had a full, active, and love-filled life until Alzheimer's took over. It has been downhill since April of 2019. Her family and her faith were of the utmost importance to her. Her love was evident to the end. She was wonderfully supportive towards her husband, her children (arts, gymkhana's, scouts, music, church groups, and sports) and all family members. Without realizing it she had fostered many kids who considered her their 2<sup>nd</sup> Mom. She was loved and always will be loved by many.

Mary is survived by husband Vern R Smith, children K Kim Costello (widow), Douglas R Smith (Debbie) and Sydney L Smith. Her grandchildren are Beau D Smith (Ashlynn), Samantha L Wolf (Rick), Mark A Smith (Jessica), Kaitlyn Sullivan Clark (Darrol), and Kara Seibert (Cody). Her great grandchildren are Ava (18), Lena, Brynna, Kimberli, Patricia Ann, Faith, Emma, Teresa, Blake, Rainey and Hadley (1). Also, sister Nancy Breeze of Chandler, AZ, several cousins and numerous nieces and nephews.

Mary was predeceased by her parents, sisters Jo Byler (Roy), Susie Thornberg (Reggie), stepbrother Frans Johnson, all of her aunts and uncles and niece Stacey and nephew Craig. The family is thankful for Colorado Hospice, their staff, nurses and volunteers that made these last several years livable. We are especially thankful for the love and devotion from nurses Jasmin, Jamie, and Beth, and volunteers Connie and Jan. There were many others. Thank you all!

Mary's Memorial Service will be January 17, 2026, at the First Presbyterian Church in Colorado Springs at 10:00 AM, 219 E Bijou St, 80903. Cremation and private inurnment has occurred at the Shrine of Remembrance in Colorado Springs, CO. In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to: American Red Cross, Silver Key, PPRR Foundation at Latigo, or the "Deacons Fund" at First Presbyterian Church.