



## Marita Kay Mendenhall

September 1, 1960 - January 15, 2026

Marita Kay Mendenhall was born on September 1, 1960, in St. Louis, Missouri. She was the daughter of Dolphie Mendenhall and Marcia (Liebler) Craft. She grew up in Salem and graduated in 1978 from Salem High School.

Marita was blessed with one daughter, Jonita, of whom she was immensely proud. After many years of being a dedicated mother to her daughter, Marita decided to continue her education, receiving her bachelor's degree in science and education. She graduated in 1995 and started her teaching career.

Marita was a devoted educator. She taught Social Studies at the Trenton and St. James School District before moving to special education at North Wood R-4 Middle School where she retired from. She was inspiring and caring, always thinking outside the box to reach her students, and drive them towards success.

Marita enjoyed doing arts and crafts, creating beautiful items, and giving them as gifts. She had a green thumb, loved to garden and tend to her plants. She had a passion for history. She loved reading and studying Native American History, their cultures, and ways of life. She enjoyed researching Dent County as well.

Marita always enjoyed helping others and for the last couple of years drove a

SMTS bus. She loved spending time at the river and going camping. She lived a life centered on love and connection, where her family and friends were her greatest treasures.

Marita passed away January 15, 2026, in Springfield, Missouri, at the age of sixty-five years. Those left behind to cherish her memory include her loving daughter: Jonita Drury and husband Justin of Salem, MO; mother: Marcia Craft and husband Bobby Gene of Salem, MO; father: Dolphie J. Mendenhall of Salem, MO; partner: Bob McConnell of Salem, MO; brother: Michael Mendenhall and Jeanette Lowrance of Corpus Christie, TX; as well as a host of nieces, nephews, cousins, other relatives, and dear friends.

Preceding her in death was her sister: Rebecca Craft Delaney.

Marita was beautiful inside and out. Her legacy will live on through the foundation she built in her life, one rooted in love, faith, and resilience. She will be forever missed by those who loved her most.

Memorial Contributions may be made in memory of Marita Mendenhall to Russell House and left with Wilson Mortuary. Memorial Envelopes will be available.

Leave the family a condolence on his tribute page at [www.wilsonmortuary.com](http://www.wilsonmortuary.com)

# Cemetery Details

**Dry Fork Cemetery**

# Previous Events

## **Memorial Gathering**

JAN **22**. 5:00 PM - 7:00 PM (CT)

Wilson Mortuary - Salem  
1000 West Scenic Rivers Blvd.  
Post Office Box 45  
Salem, MO 65560  
(573) 729-5555  
<https://www.wilsonmortuary.com/>

# Tribute Wall



“ 1 file added to the album *Memories Album*



---

**Wilson Mortuary** - January 23 at 12:36 PM

BC

*Precious memories of grandma, daughter, grandmother, mother, son, brother, father & daughter! Surrounded by Love!*

---

**Betty Carmack** - January 29 at 02:26 AM

AB

“ *Aaron and Krissy Bates purchased the Enchanted Cottage for the family of Marita Kay Mendenhall.*



---

**Aaron and Krissy Bates** - January 22 at 01:52 PM



“ 200 files added to the album *LifeTributes*



---

**Wilson Mortuary** - January 22 at 08:26 AM

TP

“ *Marita spent a considerable amount of time with my family while we were growing up; and through the years. Fond memories. She's a very sweet and kind soul. My most sincere and heartfelt condolences.*

*Tina (Gouldsmith-Boze) Purdin*

---

**Tina Purdin** - January 19 at 10:28 AM

JA

“ *I went to grade school and later high school with Marita. She was a sweet person that always showed joy. God Bless her family.*

*JACQUE ADKISON*

---

**Jacque** - January 17 at 12:55 PM

RM

“ I Have known Marita since I was small child, she always had a very caring, generous heart and helped our family out in times of need for years.

*Rhonda Mitchell*

*Rhonda Mitchell*

---

**Rhonda Mitchell** - January 16 at 07:39 PM

SH

“ Sophie & Hayden purchased the Full Of Love Bouquet for the family of Marita Kay Mendenhall.



---

**Sophie & Hayden** - January 16 at 03:28 PM

MN

“ I'm sorry to learn of Marita's passing. I worked with Marita at R4 when I was an aide to a student years ago. She helped me a lot in my job, mentoring me and teaching me how to be a better aide. Praying for Marcia and family.

---

**Marilyn Nash** - January 16 at 11:22 AM