



## Mrs. Emma Lee Gillespie

August 18, 1928 - July 3, 2025

Emma Lee Brooks Gillespie was welcomed into her heavenly home July 3, 2025, at the glorious age of 96. She spent her final days on Earth just as she wished - in her home surrounded by family.

Emma Lee was born August 18, 1928, to Thomas and Ethel Lee Brooks in Starkville, Mississippi. During her childhood she resided for a short time with a relative in St. Louis, Missouri but returned to Starkville as a teenager. After returning to Starkville, she graduated from Oktibbeha County Training School.

She accepted Christ early in life and became a member of Rockhill United Methodist Church. After marrying Henry Lee Gillespie, Sr., she joined Sand Creek Chapel Missionary Baptist Church. She served faithfully at Sand Creek in several roles, including as an usher and a nurse's aide. She also helped with the hospitality ministry and wherever she could use her skills and talents. In her later years, she regularly attend Sunday services and support the church's various ministries. She was proud and honored to be the eldest member of her church – and enjoyed the special treatment that came along with the title!

Emma was always looking for ways to gain knowledge to help her family and community. In September of 1975, she was recognized by the Mississippi State Extension Service for her participation and contributions to the

Expanded Food Nutrition Education Program. She worked in domestic roles for many years before joining the Custodial Services at MSU.

After retiring from MSU, Emma had more time to get involved in activities that brought her joy. She joined the Clover Leaf Garden Club and enjoyed the monthly meetings that included good food and fellowship at the homes of the members. She also attended weekly activities for seniors at the Starkville Sportsplex where she looked forward to crafts, games and time with friends. She loved having family and friends in her home for holiday gatherings, birthday celebrations, and other special occasions. Emma loved playing cards at those events and rarely turned down an invitation for a game of spades.

Her legacy though will be her love and extraordinary capacity to care for others. She was, by nature, a caregiver. She raised her four children and helped with the upbringing of the generations to follow, right down to her great grandchildren. As her own children were growing up, she was a domestic worker for Morris and Ann Thompson. Their sons, Kevin and Jim, were blessed to be on the receiving end of Emma's love and nurturing. They have remained in contact with her throughout the years. If one of Emma's family members was ill – one of her children, a grandchild, a sibling, a niece or nephew – she would step in to help in the healing process. She became caregiver to her sisters and brother when they were hospitalized or homebound. She cooked meals, sat bedside, and talked about God's goodness. In the late 1980's when her mother-in-law, Beatrice Gillespie, had grown older and needed help at home, Emma did what her heart instructed. She moved her from Egypt, Mississippi to her home in Starkville. "Mother Beatrice," as she lovingly called her, lived her final years under the tender loving care of Emma. And those are just family testimonies. When she worked on the custodial staff at Mississippi State, several college students who were far from family benefited from her kindness. Whether it was a meal, a visit to her home in Rockhill, or just a listening ear, Emma extended compassion,

kindness, and care. She spent many afternoons - even into her 90s visiting sick and shut-ins from her church and spreading joy at nursing homes. Caring for others was her lifelong mission and ministry.

Emma didn't mince words. She was truthful. Candid yet compassionate. Sweet with a side of sass. Every conversation included a testimony about God's goodness. She encouraged her children, grandchildren, and many others she mentored to "always keep God first" and "listen to the Holy Spirit."

Preceding her in death were her husband, Henry Lee, an infant daughter, Doris, a son Henry, Jr., a great-grandson, Jarrius Gillespie, a brother John Henry Brooks, and three sisters, Dorothy Brooks Thompson, Ella Mae Brooks Hill, and Mary Catherine Brooks Williams.

Left to carry on her legacy of love are her children: Don Gillespie, Vera Self, Lesia (Sean) Mabry; her grandchildren Teresa (Chris) Harris, Aundrea (David) Nichols, Ricco Vance, Corliss Gillespie, D. Quentin Gillespie, Jarrod (Tarhonda) Gillespie, and Ryan Gillespie; nine great grandchildren, one great-great grandchild; two bonus grandchildren, Ken Oliver and Angel Oliver, and many nieces, nephews, extended family and friends. Emma also had a devoted and lifelong friend who was more like a sister, Claretha Hogan Johnson. They were each other's prayer partner, confidant and sounding board. Emma is godmother to Claretha's son, Rogerie Hogan.

# Cemetery Details

## Memorial Gardens Park

9036 Oktoc Road  
Starkville, MS

# Previous Events

## Public Viewing

JUL 10. 1:00 PM - 5:00 PM (CT)

Hairston & Hairston Funeral Homes - Starkville  
112 Earnest H Jones Jr Dr  
Starkville, MS 39759  
(662) 323-5854

## Celebration of Life

JUL 11. 11:00 AM (CT)

Sand Creek Chapel M.B. Church  
3818 Rock Hill Road  
Starkville, MS 39759  
(662) 323-3268

*Rev. Abdural Lee , officiating*

# Tribute Wall

CW

“ *Charlene Walker lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Emma Lee Gillespie*



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**Charlene Walker** - August 17, 2025 at 06:23 PM

ST

“ *Santina Tate lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Emma Lee Gillespie*



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**Santina Tate** - July 14, 2025 at 07:23 PM

HG

“ *Helen Glenn lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Emma Lee Gillespie*



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**Helen Glenn** - July 11, 2025 at 07:23 PM

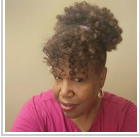
LO

“ *LENETRA Outlaw lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Emma Lee Gillespie*



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**LENETRA Outlaw** - July 11, 2025 at 06:34 PM



“ *Sending our love and deepest condolences. Aunt Emma Lee was sweet and sassy, kind and loved God and her family. She will definitely be missed but we will forever cherish her memory.*



*Catrina & Mary Jennings*

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**Catrina Jennings** - July 11, 2025 at 12:27 AM



“ *Lorene Osby lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Emma Lee Gillespie*



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**Lorene Osby** - July 10, 2025 at 11:59 PM



“ *Anne Osby-Skinner sent a virtual gift in memory of Mrs. Emma Lee Gillespie*



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**Anne Osby-Skinner** - July 10, 2025 at 11:40 PM



“ *Doris C Garmon &family sent a virtual gift in memory of Mrs. Emma Lee Gillespie*



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**Doris C Garmon &family** - July 10, 2025 at 11:35 PM

SJ

“ *To: The Family of Mrs. Emma Lee Gillespie  
From: Sharon (Nicks) James*

*Sending prayers and condolences for the passing of Mother Emma Lee.*

*I know she will be missed by many. I cherish the fond memories of her and the couple of sleepovers with Vera at her house when I was a child. She had the "most fluffy", the "most bouncy", and "most snuggly" bed that I had ever seen. I felt right at home. She and my mom were classmates. I remember her beautiful smile.*

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**Sharon James** - July 10, 2025 at 10:13 PM

VR

“ *Veronica Riles lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Emma Lee Gillespie*



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**Veronica Riles** - July 10, 2025 at 07:55 PM

CD

“ *Our deepest condolences to the family of Mrs.Emma Brooks- Gillespie our heart are sad, we are praying to give strength to the family.*



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**Clara Dancer** - July 10, 2025 at 04:55 PM

GF

“ Gerald Collier (Robert Collier) Family planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Mrs. Emma Lee Gillespie.

Gerald Collier (Robert Collier) Family - July 10, 2025 at 11:29 AM

GF

“ Gerald Collier (Robert Collier) Family purchased the Lavender Reflections Spray for the family of Mrs. Emma Lee Gillespie.



Gerald Collier (Robert Collier) Family - July 10, 2025 at 11:29 AM

CJ

“ Expressing our love and gratitude to the life of Mrs. Emma Gillespie. She was truly a blessing to our family and we thank God for her special and anointed gift of caregiving for our precious loved ones. ❤️

Cecilia Jenkins - July 10, 2025 at 09:33 AM

PW

“ My deepest sympathy and condolences to the family. May the Lord strengthen you all and comfort you. She is in the arms of our Savior. God bless.



Patricia Wynn - July 09, 2025 at 06:33 PM

SF

“ Family, May you find comfort in all the memories of your dear mom, and grandmother. I am so appreciative of the wisdom that I was able to learn and to use that Mrs. Emma shared with me. May get to a place where you can smile when you think of her . Sending love your way ❤️ (Shirley, Beverly, Stephanie, & Alvin Franklin)

Shirley Franklin - July 09, 2025 at 03:42 PM



“ Emerald Garden Basket was purchased for the family of Mrs. Emma Lee Gillespie.



July 09, 2025 at 02:58 PM

BF

“ Bessie Ferguson lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Emma Lee Gillespie



Bessie Ferguson - July 08, 2025 at 11:37 PM

BH

“ BARBARA WILLIAMS HILL sent a virtual gift in memory of Mrs. Emma Lee Gillespie



BARBARA WILLIAMS HILL - July 08, 2025 at 11:32 PM

VS

“ *Vermell Sharp lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Emma Lee Gillespie*



Vermell Sharp - July 08, 2025 at 08:59 PM

CM

“ *You will truly be missed Sweet Lady*



Candra Mobley - July 08, 2025 at 07:03 PM

KW

“ *Karen Williams lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Emma Lee Gillespie*



Karen Williams - July 08, 2025 at 03:33 PM

SW

“ *Susie Wynn lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Emma Lee Gillespie*



Susie Wynn - July 08, 2025 at 12:27 PM

ST

“ *Santina Tate lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Emma Lee Gillespie*



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**Santina Tate** - July 08, 2025 at 12:16 PM

AN

“ *Annie Norman sent a virtual gift in memory of Mrs. Emma Lee Gillespie*



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**Annie Norman** - July 08, 2025 at 12:08 PM

DF

“ *May the God of Love, Compassion & Comfort provide Joy, Strength & Peace to this family. Love & Blessings.*

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**Darlene M. Brooks & Family** - July 08, 2025 at 11:53 AM

AB

“ *Ann Bishop-Harris sent a virtual gift in memory of Mrs. Emma Lee Gillespie*



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**Ann Bishop-Harris** - July 08, 2025 at 10:49 AM

EM

“ *Emma Mays lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Emma Lee Gillespie*



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**Emma Mays** - July 08, 2025 at 09:58 AM

WE

“ *Willene Edwards sent a virtual gift in memory of Mrs. Emma Lee Gillespie*



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**Willene Edwards** - July 08, 2025 at 08:52 AM

GR

“ *Glenda Roberts sent a virtual gift in memory of Mrs. Emma Lee Gillespie*



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**Glenda roberts** - July 08, 2025 at 07:40 AM

CF

“ *Callie Bibbs & Family's lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Emma Lee Gillespie*



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**Callie Bibbs & Family's** - July 08, 2025 at 01:04 AM

CR

“ *Cynthia Robinson lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Emma Lee Gillespie*



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**Cynthia Robinson** - July 07, 2025 at 10:50 PM