



## Kathleen "Kathy" Cunningham

June 6, 1945 - June 27, 2019

Graveside services for Kathleen Kurtz Cunningham, who passed away June 27, 2019, will be held at 11:00 AM on Tuesday, July 2, 2019, in the Harlem Memorial Cemetery with the Father Stephen J. Lyness officiating.

Kathleen was a teacher to us all about life, loyalty, kindness and love. Her unconditional love and acceptance of others was exceptional, and she put it to work in her roles of mother, wife, nana, daughter, sister and educator. Kathleen was born in California on June 6, 1945 to George and Mickey Kurtz (both deceased), but raised in Bordentown, New Jersey with her four siblings: George Kurtz, Mary Kurtz (deceased), Peggy (John) Gontkof and Phillip (Jane) Kurtz. She taught school in New Jersey for three years before marrying Major BJ Cunningham in 1972 and moving to Pumpkin Center in Harlem, Ga. Here they began raising their three children: Leslie Cunningham (Emporia, KS), James Cunningham (deceased) and Ben (Starr) Cunningham (Armuchee, GA). During this time, she showed she could also learn and became a phenomenal southern cook. In 1978, she and BJ moved to the south edge of Harlem and together, they restored a 100-year-old Antebellum style home from the studs up! She had beautiful flower beds and enjoyed feeding and watching song birds. She and BJ were married for 44 years before he died in 2017. He was the love of her life.

Kathleen was a teacher for Columbia County for 31 years, retiring in 2005. She was known for her organization of field trips, most notably to the Okefenokee Swamp, where she instilled a love of nature and the responsibilities of conservation. Mom was green before green was a thing! She is in the National Teacher Hall of Fame. Kathleen did not teach just so a student would learn, but so they would develop a love of learning. She also taught Sunday School and was a long-time member of the St. Teresa Catholic Church in Martinez. Later, she began attending Queen of Angels Catholic Church in Thomson, Ga donating her time, money and talent as a gardener by designing, planting and seeing to the upkeep of the church ground flower beds. Her quiet, steadfast faith was an example to all as she taught others the power of love and forgiveness.

Her happiest role was that of Nana. Kathleen was blessed with three grandchildren: Matthew Grandon (Garland, TX.) Andrew Grandon (Garland, TX) and Addison Cunningham (Armuchee, Ga.) She loved sharing with them her love of nature, going

fishing, planting flowers, and doing arts and crafts projects. She always had a listening ear, solid advice and unconditional love. She will be greatly missed by them.

In Lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to Multiple Myeloma, Research Foundation  
P.O. Box 414238, Boston, MA 02241-4238

STARLING FUNERAL HOME, HARLEM, GEORGIA 706-556-6524

# Cemetery

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## Harlem Memorial Cemetery

South Bell Street

Harlem, GA, 30814

# Events

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**JUL** **Graveside Service** 11:00AM

**2**

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Harlem Memorial Cemetery

South Bell Street, Harlem, GA, US, 30814

# Comments

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“ A tribute video has been added.



**Starling Funeral Home** - July 01, 2019 at 05:41 PM



“ Beautiful

**Betty Campbell** - August 02, 2019 at 04:09 AM



“ I considered Kathleen a very good friend. We met when she was a teacher in the gifted program at North Harlem Elementary School and I had been chosen as the coordinator of the gifted program for Columbia County. She was a very positive, friendly, supportive, dedicated, sophisticated, and caring lady. I know she will be sorely missed by family and friends alike. My prayers are with all of them.  
Roger Williams

**Roger Williams** - July 05, 2019 at 02:51 PM



“ What do I say about Mrs Kathleen, she was a wonderful women. I meet her back in 2016 when she reached out looking for someone to help her around the house after beating cancer! I was so fortunate to be that person. I could and did talk to her about anything, she was such a smart and intelligent women. I loved working and visiting both BJ and Kathleen. Ben I am so sorry for your families loss and lift y'all up in my prayers.  
Karen Tankersley

**Karen Tankersley** - June 30, 2019 at 06:41 PM



“ Don, Mae, Ginger, Shirley and Becky purchased the Pink Tribute Spray for the family of Kathleen " Kathy" Cunningham.





“ Ben, I offer my sincere condolences in the loss of your mother. I can only imagine the greeting she got from BJ at the gates of heaven when she entered. Just like my wife and Tony, your mother not only loved--but worshipped-- her "little Ben". You and your entire family are in our prayers.

Sonny and Julie Gay  
Gainesville, Ga.

Sonny Gay - June 30, 2019 at 11:01 AM

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“ Crystal Cross Bouquet was purchased for the family of Kathleen " Kathy" Cunningham.



June 30, 2019 at 10:22 AM

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“ Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Kathleen " Kathy" Cunningham.



June 29, 2019 at 02:25 PM

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“ My deepest sympathy to Kathleen's family. She taught one of my sons and was a Member of our TOPS group before her illness. I visited her and B.J. several times after she was unable to attend the TOPS meetings. No matter how bad things were with her, she always had a smile. A sweet, beautiful lady!

Mary Reeves

Mary Reeves - June 29, 2019 at 11:18 AM