



Emma B. Sullivan

November 11, 1937 - January 15, 2025

To view the service via Youtube click the link below:

<https://www.youtube.com/live/SjdNgTdFEm8>

To view the service via Facebook click the link below:

<https://www.facebook.com/ZandersFuneralLIVE/>

Emma B. Sullivan, the epitome of a “Southern Belle”: beautiful, elegant, intelligent, kind, loving, graceful, proper, and utterly captivating, was born on November 11, 1937, the year Zora Neale Hurston published *Their Eyes Were Watching God* and Franklin D. Roosevelt began his second term as President of the United States.

Raised on a small farm in Webster, Florida, alongside her brothers Albert and Thomas, Emma was guided by the wisdom and strength of her mother, Tearessa Blue, following her father's death when she was only two years old. Tearessa later married Emma's stepfather, Pinkey Howard, and instilled in Emma the values of Godly wisdom, resilience, and service. She also nurtured Emma's remarkable cooking skills and her passion for helping others at a young age.

Emma excelled both academically and athletically, earning a basketball scholarship and graduating from Mills High School in Sumter County, Florida.

She pursued her dream of becoming an educator at Florida A&M University (FAMU) in Tallahassee, where she majored in elementary education and joined the Zeta Phi Beta sorority.

It was in Tallahassee that she met the love of her life, Rufus Sullivan Jr. Though she admitted to playing “hard to get” during their courtship, Rufus’s persistence won her heart. The two were married on March 10, 1958. Their union was blessed with three sons: Reginald Gregory Sullivan, Ronald Craig Sullivan Sr., and Roderick Waring Sullivan.

Emma graduated from FAMU in 1960 and later obtained her Master of Science in Education with a concentration in Reading and Literacy from the University of Central Florida (UCF) in 1975. Despite facing discrimination early in her career, she remained undeterred, volunteering to train teachers and address reading deficiencies in Lake County schools, earning the title of Clermont Elementary School’s Outstanding Educator of the Year in 1986.

Emma and Rufus were also active participants in the civil rights movement, registering Black voters in Lake and Sumter Counties. They were also lifelong time members of the NAACP. The couple eventually settled in Clermont, Florida, where Emma dedicated herself to her family, community, and faith in Christ.

In retirement, Emma continued her life of service, contributing to countless organizations including the Lend a Hand Club, the Lake County Senior Citizens Club as well as serving as a director of the youth ministry, a deaconess and Mother of the Church at Greater Harmony Missionary Baptist Church, a congregation she and Rufus were lifetime members. She has received a monumental number of accolades throughout her 87 years of life for her dedicated service to her community, her church as well as her family and friends. She lived a life of unconditional love and service to everyone who

knew her, until she went on to be with the Lord.

Emma will be remembered for her kind and warm heart, unwavering faith, and the countless ways she touched the lives of those around her. She was a source of wisdom and comfort, whose heart knew no bounds, and whose love was unconditional with no limits. Whether it was through her sweet voice, warm hugs, her delicious cooking, or her words of encouragement, she had a way of making everyone feel connected to her in a special way. She celebrated your successes, was proud of your accomplishments, and encouraged you through your difficult times. We know the mold was shattered when God gave her to us, and in some way, we have all tried to shape our lives to fit the pieces of what this incredible woman's character has left behind! The extent of her grasp to show love and compassion was immeasurable, and she left an indelible mark on everyone whose life she touched. Emma was such an extraordinary woman, and the world is a better place from her having been in it. The door to her home was open as wide as her heart to show love to everyone and make them feel welcomed! She poured herself out to fill up the lives of others. She was a woman of prayer interceding daily on behalf of her loved ones. She was a faithful servant to her Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, encompassing the heart of service to Christ and those around her, and exemplified resilience and grace in every aspect of her life.

If you were hungry, she fed you, if you were thirsty, she gave you something to drink, if you were a stranger she took you in, if you needed clothes, she clothed you, if you were sick, she looked after you and if you were in prison she visited you. (Matthew 25:35-36).

Emma will live on in the hearts of all who knew her, as her lessons of unconditional love, resilience, and generosity continue to inspire us. We find comfort in knowing she is at peace, resting in Heaven in the loving arms of her

Savior.

Emma Jean Blue Sullivan, you will be deeply missed, but your legacy will forever remind us to love as you loved and give as you gave.

It is with peaceful hearts and reverent spirits, we celebrate the life and legacy of our beloved Emma Jean Blue Sullivan, at the age of 87. She was a devoted wife, mother, daughter, sister, grandmother, great-grandmother, and a cherished friend to many.

Emma was preceded in death by her mother, Tearessa Blue Howard; father, Thomas Blue; stepfather, Pinkey Howard; brother, Albert Stacy Blue; granddaughter, Sabrina Gwynn; best friend, Mary Mobly; and her devoted husband, Rufus Sullivan Jr., with whom she shared a lifetime of love and memories.

She leaves behind to honor her memory and carry on her legacy her three loving sons and their wives: Reginald and Ileana, Ronald and LaDonna, and Roderick and Evelyn Sullivan. She is also survived by her older brother, Thomas Alexander Blue; dear sister, Estella Howard; and her adored grandchildren: Mark, Ron Jr., Princess, Rashad, Ryan, Ramona, Randall, Rebecca, Rachel, Rufus, Raquel, Rod Jr., Riana, Tasia, Travis, Jason, Jessica; and 34 great-grandchildren, 3 great-great grandchildren, and 7 god-children who brought her immense pride and joy. Emma's legacy also lives on in a host of nieces, nephews, cousins, extended family members, friends, and the countless generations of students she mentored and taught during her 30-year career as an educator at Clermont Elementary School.

Cemetery Details

Oak Hill Cemetery

801 East Avenue
Clermont, FL 34711

Previous Events

Visitation

JAN **24**. 5:00 PM - 7:00 PM (ET)

Greater Harmony Missionary Baptist Church
1129 Parkwood Avenue
Groveland, FL 34736

Service

JAN **25**. 11:00 AM (ET)

Greater Harmony Missionary Baptist Church
1129 Parkwood Avenue
Groveland, FL 34736

Tribute Wall

PS

“ Happy Mother’s Day Grandma! I miss you more than words can describe. ❤️



Princess Snyder - May 11, 2025 at 11:15 AM

MS

“ MONICA DENISE SCOTT lit a candle in memory of Emma B. Sullivan



MONICA DENISE SCOTT - January 25, 2025 at 03:00 PM

BF

“ We don't understand how and why things happen the way they do, but we will understand it better by and by. May God grant you that promised peace that surpasses all understanding.

Know that we care about you, and when this day is ended and you feel a little lonely, you can count on us being there for you in love and in prayer. We recommend that the family look up and rejoice, for the Lord doeth all things well. Our prayers continue for you in this, your time of great loss.

With deepest sympathy,

Bishop Dr. Daryl Forehand

Bishop Daryl Forehand and Lady Kathy For - January 25, 2025 at 06:35 AM

NS

“ Natalie Smith purchased the Full Of Love Bouquet for the family of Emma B. Sullivan.



Natalie Smith - January 24, 2025 at 06:39 PM

NS

“ Natalie Smith planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Emma B. Sullivan.

Natalie Smith - January 24, 2025 at 06:39 PM

BB

“ Mrs. Emma's smile and the twinkle in her eyes steals your heart when you meet her. I have been blessed to have met your mother, your grandmother, your great grandmother and to witness how she loved her family. A true woman of God that touched many lives. Mrs. Emma will be truly missed. Say good day, good night for now. Continue to trust in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, one day we will see her again by and by.

Love,

Renee' Brown and family (SC)

Bernadette R Brown - January 24, 2025 at 06:29 PM

PH

“ My deepest condolences to Reggie, Ronnie and Rod. Praying for your comfort during this difficult time 🙏🙏🙏

Paula Hoisington - January 24, 2025 at 03:50 PM

DR

“ Mrs. Sullivan prepared her students for times like these. She knew we would need an Angel and now she has her wings.

Donna D. (Blanks) Richardson - January 24, 2025 at 01:31 AM

TF

“ The Blanks family. purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Emma B. Sullivan.



The Blanks family. - January 24, 2025 at 01:07 AM



“ *Full Heart was purchased for the family of Emma B. Sullivan.*



January 23, 2025 at 05:20 AM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Emma B. Sullivan.

January 23, 2025 at 05:20 AM



“ *Full Of Love Bouquet was purchased for the family of Emma B. Sullivan.*



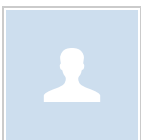
January 22, 2025 at 05:35 PM



“ *Tyler Blue purchased the Sentiments of Serenity Spray for the family of Emma B. Sullivan.*



Tyler Blue - January 22, 2025 at 04:34 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Emma B. Sullivan.

January 22, 2025 at 03:37 PM

LT

“ My memory of Emma Sullivan I remember the first time I met her she smiled at me and welcomed me with open arms and said I was a daughter she never had from that day on she was my mom she showed me love that I never knew she helped me through my bow with cancer and always told me to keep my faith and pray for me in my good times and my bad she called me her working girl and always told me how proud of me she was she was my mother my sister and my friend and she shall truly be missed I love you Mama



Lillian Tieken - January 20, 2025 at 12:45 PM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Emma B. Sullivan.



January 20, 2025 at 09:19 AM

EH

“ Estella Howard sent a virtual gift in memory of Emma B. Sullivan



Estella Howard - January 19, 2025 at 07:27 PM

EH

“ My "BIG SISTER" is what I called her, because I was the only little sister she had. We often talked we often prayed. We often laughed and also cried. I love my Big Sister with all my heart and soul to pieces. As she would say to me "I LOVE YOU MORE"! I'm not worried nor weary because rest assured my loving sister is surely at peace and GOD has rewarded her eternal life, because he is the one true living God that stands on his promises. I miss you dearly 🙏
💖 thy Good & Faithful servant in JESUS NAME.....AMEN

Estella Howard - January 19, 2025 at 07:24 PM

DW

“ Every time I saw her, she would always greet me with a smile and a hug. What an earthly angel she was to me and I take comfort knowing she is now with our Lord and Savior.

Darrick Williams - January 19, 2025 at 07:23 PM

TF

“ She was such a Sweet lady I enjoyed being in her presence in senior citizens meetings she was the light ✨ of the party you will be missed.



twanna Fedrick - January 19, 2025 at 01:30 PM

VS

“ Ms.Sullivan,such a Beautiful person, kind and loving just awesome to every degree.. I will miss you sitting in my chair talking about life with no chaser Lol, always making me laugh.you enlightened me on things and I was inspired by you.

You always would tell me I reminded you of yourself in your younger days

(a go getter) ...get your rest, Ms.Emma j.Sullivan 💔



Vera shepherd - January 18, 2025 at 08:48 AM

TB

“ To my favorite auntie, You were the rock of our family. Thank you for being so loving, kind and caring. You will be deeply missed and always in my heart.



Tyler B - January 18, 2025 at 07:03 AM

BT

“ My favorite fifth grade teacher, and most of all my mentor, and friend. Sleep well Mrs. Sullivan, until we meet again.



Bernita Taylor - January 17, 2025 at 04:35 PM

BW

“ *My condolences to the Sullivan family. I have great memories of Mrs. Sullivan. She was my 5th grade teacher during the segregated years at what was called Edgewood elementary school. She was a great teacher. Sullivan family our prayers to you as you travel through days of missing her. Keep your memories close, you will need them.*



Betty Williams-Collins - January 17, 2025 at 12:29 PM