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July 6, 1935 - Nov. 17, 2026

A faithful servant of God, a teacher who devoted her professional career to helping young people, and a loving supporter of her family and friends, Mary E. Shearin Rockett has died.

Mary left this world on Tuesday, Nov. 17, 2026, at Frye Regional Medical Center in Hickory following a sudden illness. As was appropriate, she was surrounded at the time of her passing by those who loved her.

At the time of her death she was 91 years old – 91 years filled with service, with meaningful work, with devotion to her family, and with no small bit of joy.

Mary was born July 6, 1935, in Nash County, N.C., a daughter of the late Clarence Tomlinson Shearin and Mary Ruth Frazier Shearin.

In addition to her parents, she was predeceased by her husband, Oliver “Rocky” Rockett, and by her siblings, Kathryn Greene, Rudolph Shearin, and Judith May.

Mary received her bachelor’s degree and her teaching certificate from what was then Appalachian State Teachers College (now Appalachian State University) in Boone.

She went on to teach mathematics for more than 30 years in the Burke County Public School system, beginning at Salem and ending at Freedom High School. She also

School system, beginning at Salem and ending at Freedom High School. She also taught in Western Piedmont Community College's Continuing Education Program.

At the time of her death, Mary was a member of the First Baptist Church of Morganton and had previously been a member of the First Baptist Church of Drexel.

Mary was a longtime and very active member of the Morganton Woman's Club in which she was very proud to help give scholarships to local high school students. She was also a member of the Burke County Retired School Personnel local chapter.

Mary loved to play bridge and she never lost her skills, playing two to three times a month with a group of her friends until just before her final illness. She also loved preparing home-cooked meals and cakes for her friends. She was truly gifted in the art of "Southern Comfort Food."

Mary's survivors include sister Marjorie Carter, sister-in-law Sue Shearin, and a number of nieces, nephews, and dear friends.

In lieu of flowers, Mary's family and friends suggest donating to a scholarship fund which they will be establishing in her name. Details of that scholarship and how to contribute will be provided in a later edition of The Paper.

The funeral for Mary E. Shearin Rockett will be held on Tuesday, Nov. 24, 2026 at 1 p.m. in the First Baptist Church of Morganton Chapel with the Dr. Thomas A. Bland, Jr. officiating.

Sossoman Funeral Home and Crematory Center is assisting the family with the arrangements.

Tribute Wall

No tributes added yet.