



## Jane Mitchell

January 17, 1933 - August 29, 2025

Jane Haygood Gaines Mitchell, age 92, of Orlando, Florida, died on August 29, 2025. Jane was born in Thomasville, Georgia on January 17, 1933, daughter of Maude Edwina Miller and Rev. John Pendleton Gaines. With a radiant smile and heart, Jane fought in big and small ways, often unnoticed but always effective, for the hungry, the homeless, and the forgotten, while sustaining her four children and husband with unshakeable love.

The daughter of a Methodist minister, Jane was shaped by the kinship and resiliency of small towns across Florida during the Great Depression and World War II. Jane graduated as valedictorian in 1951 from Bushnell High School in Bushnell, Florida. At the University of Florida, she served as president of her sorority, Alpha Delta Pi, breaking ground on a new sorority house. Upon graduating from UF in 1955 with a B.A. in Education, Jane taught elementary school in Central Florida. In 1958 she wed William “Bill” Glenn Mitchell, a young attorney, at Knowles Chapel in Winter Park, Florida. She raised her four children in Orlando, where Bill practiced law with Giles, Hedrick, and Robinson PA.

Jane was integral to the success of many civic initiatives, including the Orlando Day Nursery and Childcare, Habitat for Humanity Orlando, and a church homeless shelter, which was the genesis of the Coalition for the Homeless of Central Florida.

In the early 80's, Rev. Jimmy Jones at First United Methodist Church of Orlando (FUMCO) asked Jane to join a task force to aid the homeless in downtown Orlando. The task force opened a shelter at FUMCO. Securing food donations, Jane created a kitchen operation that fed dinner and breakfast daily to 80 homeless guests. The effort won Florida Bar Association and Walt Disney World awards and evolved into the nationally recognized shelters of the Coalition.

In 1986, on the founding committee of what is now Habitat for Humanity of Greater Orlando and Osceola County, Jane was a key member of the family selection team for the first Habitat homes built in Orlando, enlisting her husband Bill to provide pro bono legal work for the nascent organization.

Jane volunteered tirelessly in Orange County public schools. She worked with Meals on Wheels, the Christian Service Center, and the Florida Methodist Children's Home. As an active member of FUMCO, Jane taught Sunday school classes. She was gifted in making everyone feel special and loved. In later years, she enjoyed the fellowship of the Rosalind Club of Orlando.

Though shy by nature, Jane always found her voice when others needed an advocate. She fought with Bill for civil rights and achieved wins, at first glance small yet critical, in their community. Her vote was as sacred to her as her country; she voted in every election until her last year, always supporting the Democratic Party.

Jane loved music, literature, and film, and cherished children. Gifted with a beautiful voice, she performed in a quartet in the early 50's. She loved to laugh and tell stories with family, and never met a story she couldn't make better. She would move heaven and earth for her children, and stood proudly alongside her husband for over 40 years.

Jane is predeceased by her husband, William Glenn Mitchell; brother, John Pendleton Gaines, Jr.; sister, Anne Gaines Rush; brother-in-law James Knox Rush; and her great-nephew William Tyler Rush. She is survived by her son, William Glenn Mitchell, Jr., Orlando, FLA; daughter, Melissa (John) L'Abate, Dunwoody, GA; daughter Mary Ann Mitchell, Winter Park, FLA; son, Charles (Deborah) Mitchell, Maitland, FLA; grandsons, Justin Mitchell, William Mitchell, and Ian L'Abate; sister-in-law, Stella Davis Gaines, Orlando, FLA; and a large extended family.

A memorial service will be held for Jane Gaines Mitchell on Saturday, September 27th at 2 p.m. in the sanctuary of the First United Methodist Church of Orlando, 142 East Jackson Street, Orlando, Florida, 32801. Cremation arrangements were handled by DeGusipe Funeral Home and Crematory, Maitland, Florida. Donations may be made in Jane's honor to Habitat for Humanity of Greater Orlando and Osceola County, First United Methodist Church of Orlando, or Coalition for the Homeless of Central Florida.

[www.habitatorlando.org](http://www.habitatorlando.org)

[www.firstchurchorlando.org](http://www.firstchurchorlando.org)

[www.centralfloridahomeless.org](http://www.centralfloridahomeless.org)

# Previous Events

## Memorial Service

SEP **27**. 2:00 PM (ET)

First United Methodist Church of Orlando  
142 E. Jackson Street  
Orlando, FL 32801

# Tribute Wall



“ Your girls, Karen, jeni, Kay and Renee purchased the Sweet Solace Spray for the family of Jane Mitchell.



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**Your girls, Karen, jeni, Kay and Renee** - September 22, 2025 at 01:06 PM



“ Basket of Memories was purchased for the family of Jane Mitchell.



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September 19, 2025 at 04:38 PM



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

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September 19, 2025 at 04:38 PM



“ 1 file added to the album Jane Mitchell



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**mitchellm10** - September 11, 2025 at 08:29 PM

MI

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



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**mitchellm10** - September 11, 2025 at 08:25 PM

ME

“ 2 files added to the album Jane Mitchell



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**Melissa** - September 11, 2025 at 08:01 PM

MM

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



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**Melissa Mitchell** - September 11, 2025 at 04:28 PM

MM

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



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**Melissa Mitchell** - September 11, 2025 at 04:25 PM

MM

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



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**Melissa Mitchell** - September 11, 2025 at 04:22 PM

MM

“ 1 file added to the album Jane Mitchell



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**Melissa Mitchell** - September 11, 2025 at 03:57 PM