

OBITUARIES

Rita Gray



Rita Dorothy Gray was born Dorothy Cunningham on May 12th, 1940. According to family legend, she was re-named Rita (Ri-Ri) by her younger brother Phil when he couldn't pronounce Dorothy. She was the fifth of seven children born to Richard T. and Esther L. Cunningham.

She is preceded in death by her parents, her brothers Dickie, Joe, Johnny, and Phil and her beloved sister and lifelong best friend, Joan. Rita was born and grew up in the Dorchester neighborhood of Boston, MA. She left school early for work to help support the family, spent her youth around the city with her brothers in various "clubs" (not gangs), and regularly attended the earliest rock n' roll concerts with her sister. She married first husband Eddie Gray, her "pen-pal" while he served in the military. The two moved to California, became motorcycle enthusiasts, and had two children together-Bonnie and Glenn. She married a second time, gave birth to son Dennis, and ultimately chose to remain single.

Rita was tough. She relocated back to the Boston area and raised her three kids alone during a time that was hard on single mothers. She returned to school as an adult and earned her Registered Nursing degree. She worked in hospitals, nursing homes, home health, and retired from her last and favorite job as Head Administrative Nurse at Dominguez State Jail in Texas. She loved "telling 2000 men what to do every day" and enjoyed welcoming them to her "gated community." She was well loved by prisoners and colleagues alike.

Rita was a legendary character. She laughed easily, broke into song frequently, and loved to call and sing "Happy Birthday" to loved ones in her Boston accent. She was a hit for her family lore and humor at every Cunningham reunion, to which she famously wore her "Ask Me About My Dysfunctional Family" T-shirt. She dressed in fun for every holiday and loved silly hats and tiaras. A collector by nature, she adored witches, dancing stuffed animals, tigers, anything in the color orange, and so many other little things.

Beverly Palmer



Mrs. Beverly Ann Palmer of Bloomington, Illinois, formerly of The Villages, Florida died in her loving husband's arms, with her daughter at her side at 9:37 am on Friday March 12, 2021, after a long battle with Parkinson's Disease.

She was born December 5, 1938 in Galesburg, Illinois the daughter of Gale and Ruth (Baker) Foster.

Beverly graduated from Abingdon High School, Abingdon, Illinois in 1956. She married R. Duane Palmer, August 11, 1957. She is survived by her loving husband, Duane, two of her three children, a son, Stephen Palmer of Colorado Springs, Colorado, a daughter, Kay Palmer of Bloomington, seven

She deeply loved her pets, and cared for many over the years.

Her travels brought her all over the United States, Mexico, and Ireland.

She settled for a long while outside of San Antonio, TX, with sister Joan and brother-in-law Bob Reilly, near her nephews Skip (wife Sharon) and Scott (wife Brandi). She loved the Texas bluebonnets and springtime wildflowers. She later retired to The Villages, FL, near her brother Bob, sister-in-law Nancy, and niece Lisa Cunningham and family.

She is survived by her brother and dear sister-in-law Robert (Bob) and Nancy Cunningham of The Villages, her children: daughter Bonnie Gray of East Bridgewater, MA., son Glenn and wife Margaret Gray of Oakham, MA., and son Dennis and wife Jennifer Gray of San Antonio, TX., and many grand and great grandchildren. If one were to measure her success by her children alone, she raised them into hard-working, moral, and responsible adults.

She asked that her first grandchildren, Courtney, Erin, and Alexis, call her "Grandmama." Years later, with her last grandchild, Cullen, she became "Nana." Erin (husband Noel) Leger gave her great grandchildren Steven Strachan, Thomas Leger, and Olivia Leger. She was thrilled for Courtney's one-on-the-way (with Jed Trenholm) and bragged about knowing the name and gender, a secret to all else. No matter the name she was called, her love was the same, and she took every kid, grandkid, and great grandkid to Disney World at some time or another.

Rita passed in her sleep, peacefully at home, being taken care of by her children, after a fight with cancer, on March 13, 2021.

Daughter, Sister, Mother, "Mum," Mother-in-law, Sister-in-law, Grandmama, Nana, Aunt, Cousin, Friend; Provider, Protector, Encourager, Entertainer, Historian? Rita D. Gray wore all of these titles and more, like her tiaras, with honor. She will be truly missed.

A Mass in her honor is planned for Tuesday, March 23rd at 8:30 AM at St. Timothy Catholic Church, 1351 Paige Place, The Villages, FL. In lieu of flowers, the family asks that you support your favorite animal charity.

Online condolences may be left at www.beyersfuneralhome.com Arrangements entrusted to Beyers Funeral Home and Crematory, Lady Lake, FL.



grandchildren, and five great grandchildren. She was preceded in death by her parents, a daughter, Jean Ann Palmer, and a grandson, Matthew Duane Palmer.

Beverly went to work in the banking industry immediately after high school and was later an assistant County Clerk in both Knox and White counties while she raised her family and supported her husband in his career in the supermarket industry. She and Duane owned and operated Mercer Market in Aledo, Illinois for nearly 20 years, retiring in 2005. Beverly was active in many civic activities in the Mercer County area, including serving on the YMCA board and being a founding organizer of Country Bank. Beverly was a loving and caring wife and mother and a faithful friend who never forgot a birthday or anniversary. You would always get a card or a call from her and you knew she truly cared. She will be greatly missed by all who knew her.

Cremation will be accorded with burial in Abingdon Cemetery at a later date. In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to the Shriners Hospital for Children, St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, or the American Parkinson's Association. Hinchliff-Pearson-West Funeral Directors and Cremation Service Galesburg Chapel is assisting the family with arrangements. Online condolences may be made at www.h-p-w.com.

Bette McConkey

Bette Ann McConkey, age 75, of The Villages, Florida, passed away peacefully on March 13, 2021. Bette was born and raised in Milwaukee, Wisconsin to Chester Casper Link and Rita Louise Mirgler. Bette graduated Brookfield Central High School class of 1963. Soon after she met Gene McConkey and they were married on June 3, 1967. They spent their early years living in Milwaukee and southeastern Wisconsin where they had two children Michael and Kelley and developed many life-long friendships. Life was hard, but they had fun with family and friends, weekends at the Dells, and traveling when they could. Bette successfully achieved her associate's degree in accounting in night school while balancing work and a family. Bette worked for C&H Distributing in Milwaukee for 20 years and her retirement years were spent in The Villages, Florida where she and Gene continued to enjoy their friendships and foster new ones. She took up new hobbies such as golf and quilting, both of which she enjoyed very much, particularly the quilting retreats. They also enjoyed their cross-country trips, Corvette Club outings, and nights at the theater. She is survived by her loving husband of 53 years Gene, her two children Michael (Shawn) and Kelley and their families, her brother Robert (Shirley) Link and his family, sister Connie (Keith) Darmody and her family, a niece Stephanie (Dan), five grandchildren (Eleanor, Avery, Ryan, Kristen, and Zachary), a great-grandchild on the way and so many friends that loved her.

A memorial service will be held on Friday, March 19th at Open Bible Lutheran Church, 4671 Bellwether Lane, Oxford, FL 34484 beginning at 11:00am.



1939-2021

Yaphet Kotto of 'Live And Let Die,' 'Alien,' Dead at 81

NEW YORK

Yaphet Kotto, the commanding actor who brought tough magnetism and stately gravitas to films including the James Bond movie "Live and Let Die" and "Alien," has died. He was 81.

Kotto's wife, Tessie Sinahon, announced his death Monday in a Facebook post. She said he died Monday in the Philippines. Kotto's agent, Ryan Goldhar, confirmed Kotto's death.

"You played a villain on some of your movies but for me you're a real hero and to a lot of people," wrote Sinahon.

Standing 6-foot-3-inches, Yaphet Frederick Kotto was a regular and compelling presence across films, television and Broadway beginning with the films "Nothing But a Man" (1964) and "The Thomas Crown Affair" (1968). He made his stage debut in a Boston production of "Othello." In 1969, he replaced James Earl Jones in the Pulitzer-winning "The Great White Hope" on Broadway. His big-screen breakthrough came as Lieutenant Pope in 1972's "Across 110th Street."

- The Associated Press

local news



THE VILLAGES BIG BOOK OF FACTS



4%

The percentage of Villages residents who are from Ohio.



The Villages has the nation's largest veteran population in a community without a military base, according to U.S. Census data.

3,000

The Villages Charter School, established in 2000, has more than 3,000 students ranging from prekindergarten through 12th grade.



One of The Villages' busiest venues is The Villages Polo Club, which has played host to COVID-19 testing, fundraisers and a hot-air balloon show — along with polo.

3,491

Most Populous Village: With 3,491 residents, the Village of Country Club Hills was the most populous Village as of 2020.



Three Villages — Orange Blossom Gardens, Silver Lake and Country Club Hills — are on the east side of U.S. Highway 27/441.

TALKING WITH ...

Interviews with Local Newsmakers

LUBNA RASHID



The doctor with The Villages Health spoke with the Daily Sun about chronic kidney disease for National Kidney Month, which is March.

By MACKENZIE RAETZ Daily Sun Specialty Editor

How common is chronic kidney disease in the U.S.? Thirty-seven million American adults have CKD (about 11% of the total U.S. population).

What are signs that someone may have kidney disease?

Most people may not have any severe symptoms until kidney disease is very advanced. Signs include fatigue (decreased energy); difficulty concentrating; poor appetite; increasing swelling of feet or legs; muscle cramps at night; puffiness around eyes, especially in the morning; and increased frequency of urination.

What are common treatments for the disease?

The most common treatment is dialysis, which replaces some of these functions of the kidney. Two different forms of dialysis exist — hemodialysis and peritoneal dialysis. Hemodialysis usually involves going into a center where they connect a patient to a machine. Peritoneal dialysis is usually done at home, where the patient instills fluid inside their abdomen through a catheter where it dwells for a time and acts to absorb toxins, fluids and extra electrolytes from the body before it is finally drained.

Transplant is another option, but this may take longer as the availability of kidney organs is small. Some transplant networks have a wait time of up to five years. This process is accelerated to six months if a donor is available.

What can people do to keep their kidneys healthy?

There are many risk factors for developing kidney disease. Diabetes, high blood pressure and family history are some of the most common risk factors. If you have these issues, you may wish to have your doctor test you for kidney disease through simple blood and urine tests. Make sure you have these conditions strictly controlled. It is important to stay hydrated and attempt to eat more plant protein and less animal protein. Also, avoid long-term or excessive use of drugs such as ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin, etc.) or naproxen (Aleve).

Is there anything else you wish to add?

If you have risk factors such as diabetes, hypertension, kidney stones or family history of kidney disease, it is important to discuss checking with your primary care physician about getting tested for kidney disease.

LOCAL NEWS

DWC Hosting Leadership Foundation Speaker

The Democratic Women's Club of The Villages is welcoming Katina A. Stephens, the South Atlantic Regional director for the National Southern Christian Leadership Foundation, to speak at the club's Saturday meeting. The National Southern Christian Leadership Foundation was created by Harry Belafonte and Sidney Poitier in 1966. The Zoom meeting is 10 a.m. Saturday. Anyone who wants to join should email shellyandjoel18@gmail.com for the Zoom link.

Leah Schwarting Daily Sun

PUBLIC SAFETY

Law Enforcement News

THE VILLAGES TUNNEL WARNING

The Villages Community Development District issued a reminder to exercise caution as work continues on several multimodal path tunnels beneath Buena Vista Boulevard and El Camino Real.

The following tunnels are being painted with a new reflective coating to improve visibility for tunnel users: B9, at 5284 County Road 466 (under CR 466 W. at Belvedere Boulevard); M1, at 1508 El Camino Real (El Camino and Buenos Aires); M2, at 1230 Morse Blvd. (Morse Boulevard and Hacienda Postal); and M4, 8204 E. CR 466 (CR 466 at Morse Boulevard).

Work is scheduled between 9 p.m. and 5 a.m., and the tunnels will be closed periodically and users must take an alternate route. The project continues through March 26.

- Staff report

TALLAHASSEE STIMULUS CAUTION

Florida Attorney General Ashley Moody is urging people to be smart and be aware of scams now that federal stimulus checks are showing up.

"With many Americans set to receive direct payments from the federal government, we expect scammers will devise schemes to exploit the massive spending to trick recipients into parting with personal or financial information," Moody said. "Be smart. Seek out trusted sources of information about when your payment will be received and never respond to solicitations asking you to provide personal information or payment to receive a stimulus check."

Floridians who expect stimulus payments should understand that the IRS will never call you, nor send unsolicited emails, texts or social media messages; recipients are not required to buy something to receive a stimulus check.

- Staff report

DESIGNED FOR THE "GARDENIA, BEGONIA & CAMELIA" DEN

Queen Panel Bed & Mattress • Closet/Storage Cabinet • Desk & Upper Cabinets with Under Cabinet Lighting • Bed Lights • Crown Molding



Wall Beds Plus

352-259-8444

• WALL BEDS • HOME OFFICE • STORAGE CABINETS • MULTI-PURPOSE ROOMS

4095 CR 106, Oxford FL

Next to Bargains & Treasures, located near the intersection of CR 466W & 301. (Look for the Latte Building)

Locally Owned & Manufactured in The Villages® Community • Serving Villagers for over 25 years wallbedsplus.thevillages.com • Open M-F 10-4, Sat 10-2, Sun Closed