



Mable "Mae" Lister Phillips

March 30, 1938 - April 4, 2026

Charleston – Mable “Mae” Lister Phillips, 88, of Wellford and Charleston, passed away on April 4, 2026 – Holy Saturday – at her family’s home in Charleston, surrounded by her children, son-in-law, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren.

Born on March 30, 1938, Mae was the daughter of the late Gaston William Lister and Mary

Broome Lister. She was preceded in death by her husband John Hugh Phillips, her daughter,

Shanna Nicole Phillips, six siblings, and seven half-siblings.

She was born in Spartanburg County and spent her teenage years in Rock Hill, SC; on

September 6, 1960, she married John Hugh Phillips and settled with him in Wellford, SC. She

was a dedicated member of Little Mountain Baptist Church and later of First Baptist North

Spartanburg, where she was the indispensable secretary of her tight-knit and long-lived Sunday

School class.

“Nana,” as she was almost universally known for the past thirty years, loved flowers and

gardening, and indeed for several years made a business of that hobby. In

retirement, she enjoyed frequent trips with her husband, children, and grandchildren – especially to the beach, where “Nana” would fry up the fish her husband and son-in-law caught fresh from the surf.

Paired with her hand-cut, homemade french fries, it was a foretaste of the Divine.

No less heavenly were her famous “Sunday Dinners.” On each Sabbath, for at least twenty

years, she would rush home from the 8AM church service to prepare a feast of all the southern

comfort foods, from fried chicken to creamed corn to her legendary “Macaroni Pie” – and much,

much else in between. Around the groaning kitchen table her grandchildren giddily jostled for

seconds and thirds, before spending the afternoon lazily lounging around her cozy home and

floriferous yard.

After the death of her husband in January 2001, she began to travel more frequently to the

lowcountry, where her eldest daughter and three grandsons had relocated.

These solo

pilgrimages saw her careening alarmingly down Interstate 26, often getting lost along the way,

to be greeted at the door by loud hosannas – and softly whispered pleas to swiftly bake a

macaroni pie.

She did not possess even an ounce of selfishness, or indeed any real concern about herself at

all; rather her whole life and being was given over to the service of others – and most especially

her family. She was a steadfast support for her husband, she raised two daughters and suffered the death of a third, and later cared for her ailing mother-in-law and sister. But above all, she was devoted to her four grandsons, all of whom she helped raise, all of whom she fed, spoiled, adored, and supported, and who all owe her a debt that can never be repaid.

In her last years, she moved to Charleston, just across the street from her family there, where she could again join her grandchildren – and now, her great-grandchildren – for Sunday meals.

The last such feast she attended was less than a week before her death, to celebrate her

eighty-eighth birthday – after which she demanded, characteristically but unsuccessfully, to be allowed to wash the dishes.

*

Mae is survived by her daughters, Robin Gramling (Ben M. Gramling III) and Dawn Brooks; by her four grandsons, Ben Martin Gramling IV (Kelly), Phillip Hayes Gramling (Laura), Robertson Lane Gramling (Caitlyn), and Bryce Alexander Brooks; and by her three great-grandchildren, Gwendolyn Lila Gramling, Ben Martin Gramling V, and Evangeline Marie Gramling.

In addition to her husband, daughter, and parents, Mae is predeceased by her

siblings, Madge

King, Furman Lister, James Lister, Mary Bullard, Harold Lister, and Gladys Lister, and by her

half-siblings, Annie Corn, Lannie Pruitt, William Lister, Beauford Lister, Hiram Lister, and

Andrew Lister, and Eunice Lister.

*

The family will receive friends Friday, April 10, 2026 from 1:00-2:00 PM with the service

beginning at 2:00 PM at Gramling Methodist Church, 14941 Asheville Hwy, Gramling, SC

29348.

Interment will follow at Little Mountain Baptist Church, 1302 Little Mountain Road, Wellford, SC

29385.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Gramling Methodist Church, PO Box 58 Gramling SC 29348.

Previous Events

Receiving Friends

APR 10. 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM (ET)

Gramling United Methodist Church
14941 Asheville Hwy
Gramling, SC 29348

Celebration of Life

APR 10. 2:00 PM (ET)

Gramling United Methodist Church
14941 Asheville Hwy
Gramling, SC 29348

Interment

APR 10. 3:00 PM (ET)

Little Mountain Baptist Church Cemetery
1302 Little Mountain Road
Wellford, SC 29385

Tribute Wall

BN

“*Dear Family, we are so sorry to just learn of the passing of Mae. We attended Little Mtn Baptist Church with all of you all our lives. Daddy and Mama grew up with Mae, and visited with them long years after they each married. Please know that our prayers are with all of you during this time of grief, and in the months to come. Mae was indeed a previous person who loved the Lord. Betty Newman and Sondra Newman Smith*

Betty Newman - April 09 at 07:10 PM

“ I have so many memories with Aunt Mae, so please forgive me if I share too much. Change is not always easy for me, so when I took a position as a Consultant in Birmingham, AL Aunt Mae would call and check on me periodically. So I flipped things around and started calling her Thursday afternoons on my drive back to Atlanta. I split those 2.5 hours talking to her part of the time and my Dad the other part. Aunt Mae and I would talk about everything under the sun, politics to food and gardening to God.

It must have been one spring break while in high school, I would go over to her house and help her in the greenhouses. Most of that time it was just the two of us. Mrs. Phillips would come over and say Hi sometimes, but just for a few minutes because she was doing other things at her house. Aunt Mae, showed me how to mix the dirt, fill the trays, and then transplant the tiny newbies into the trays that she would take to different places to sale. At times the only thing you would hear were the big fans blowing in the greenhouse. There was no pressure to talk, it was a comfortable silence, except for the fans.

I remember two times spending the night at Aunt Mae's house, one time was after I broke my arm and I had to sleep with Dawn. The next morning Dawn said something about me having to sleep somewhere else or go home. Aunt Mae asked why, and Dawn said I kept hitting her in the head with my cast. Aunt Mae burst out with her signature laugh and said he was probably trying to get you to stop snoring. The other time was several years later and Travis said I spent the night at the house. It was after the house had been repaired from the tornado. Aunt Mae made a pallet of blankets on the floor in the den next to the fireplace. I was scared another storm would come in the night, so Aunt Mae slept with us on the floor that first night.

Most recently, when I visited Aunt Mae and the rest of the family at Lake Junaluska. I walked in the front door and noticed Aunt Mae sitting with her back to the windows. As I walked around the sofa, Aunt Mae burst out, "Well there's Darin." We sat and talked for several hours. Part of that time was showing her pictures of the Halloween and Christmas decorations at my house in Atlanta.

Thank you Robin and family for allowing me that time with Aunt Mae, I will cherish that time forever.

It all comes flooding back, all Christmas gatherings either at Aunt Madge's house or Aunt Mae's house, all the weekend trips to Gatlinburg, going to Caro-Mi for Dad's birthday (Mae was usually the last to arrive), and all the comfort foods that Mae would cook. Some of my favorites being her cream corn, chicken and dumplings, macaroni pie, and dressing.

To Aunt Mae, I Love You and will deeply miss you and will look forward to seeing you again in heaven.

Darin Lister - April 09 at 09:42 AM