



Elouise (Culbreth) Klages, the daughter of Charlie Henry and Odessa (Nall) Culbreth, was born on March 22, 1939, at her rural home in Columbia, AL. She accepted Jesus as her Savior during a revival when she was 11 years old, was baptized, and became a believer and member of the Ebenezer Baptist Church in Columbia. When Elouise was 16, she dedicated her life to full-time Christian service. God definitely had a plan for her.

Elouise received her education at Houston County High School in Columbia, where she graduated in 1957. She was one of the students who started “Noonday Meditations” in the school when she was in ninth grade. It was open to all students, meeting twice a week, during the lunch hour for about 20 minutes. Upon recommendation of the Houston County High School faculty, Elouise received a “Certificate of Award” for outstanding accomplishment in Christian activity. She was very humbled and honored to receive this award. She gave God the glory. Elouise was active in FHA (Future Homemakers of America), a member of the high school choir and the girl singing group, “The Sophisticates”, and the Beta Club (honor society).

Elouise was raised on an 80-acre farm and would fondly say she was one of the “cotton pickers” before machines. Her life consisted of church and Southern Gospel music every day as her dad was a pianist and composer of Convention and Christian songs. She attended sings at least twice a week with her family, singing with a quartet as a teenager, and attending singing schools in the summer that were taught by her dad. Elouise learned to play piano at a young age and played at her home and for church services. She also composed a few songs herself. Music was her love and she loved to share her talent at the care centers in the Ortonville and Appleton areas. She did music therapy at the Appleton Care Center from 1998 to 2002.

In November of 1955, Elouise met the love of her life, David Eugene Klages, from Ortonville, MN, at a church social that was being held at a church member’s home. David was a guest in the home as he was helping his brother move to Alabama. He attended church at Ebenezer the next day, morning and evening services. When the service had come to an end, David asked for Elouise’s address. That started a correspondence by mail that ended in 57 years of marriage. David and Elouise’s marriage was performed on June 28, 1957. After marriage and working in the Dothan, AL, area, the couple moved back to Minnesota in March of 1958.



They started farming on David’s home farm where they lived, raised all seven of their children, and were a part of the community. Elouise loved her children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. She loved to make pecan pies, southern fried chicken, butter nut cake, peanut butter Rice Krispies bars with chocolate frosting, and her “awesome brownies”, as one great-grandchild said. In 1971, the Klages family started attending the Methodist Church in Ortonville, joining the church where all of Elouise’s children were confirmed. Elouise became a helper in the Nursery Sunday School that lasted for decades. She was active in the Women’s Group and participated in many activities. She directed the Children’s Choir and composed a song, “Rejoicing and Celebrating”, for the choir to perform for the church’s Centennial Celebration in 1985.

Elouise had many opportunities in the work field. She considered being a mom and teaching and raising her family as the most important job she ever had. As a family, she and David raised a “large” garden, freezing and preserving the vegetables, and raised and butchered their own chickens. Oh, the stories and memories that the family shares about the “Good Old Days”. Elouise started working part-time at ASCS (FSA) in 1969 and later started working full-time. In 1987, she became a Mary Kay consultant, and in 2000, she became a sales director of her own unit, encouraging and motivating her unit members to build their own business as they so desired. She was a part of the Mary Kay world for 39 years, meeting many new friends along the way, receiving blessings from her Mary Kay family, and blessing their lives.

Elouise is survived by her children: Jeff (Mary) Klages, Joni Quam, Jacklin (Larry) Thielen, Jeanne Zeigler (Todd Borns), James Klages (Kate Schmidt), and Jerald (Kristen) Klages; 13 grandchildren: Jennifer (James) Tedesco, Regina Lighthall, Justin (Kara) Zeigler, Tabitha Klages, Trevor (Chevelle) Zeigler, Claressa (Mike) Kent, Cassandra (Cody) Speh, Tristan Hoyer, Dylan Klages, Gavin Klages, Colton Klages, James Klages, Jr., and Jeric Klages; 14 great-grandchildren: Elysium, Luca, and Sage Reimann; Dominic Tedesco, Lincoln and Zoey Zeigler; Atticus and Scarlet Zeigler; Mason, Colstan, and Maelin Kent; Ezra and Titus Speh; and Taytem Klages; brother, Harry (Anna) Culbreth; sister-in-law, Joyce Culbreth; along with many nieces, nephews, and cousins.

She was preceded in death by her husband, David, in 2015; her daughter, Julie Ann, in 2017; her parents: Charlie and Odessa Culbreth; three brothers: Virgil, H.M., and Cecil Culbreth; sister, Harriet, in infancy; son-in-law, Todd Zeigler; father and mother-in-law, Herbert and Clara Klages; brother-in-law, Robert Klages; and sisters-in-law: Dorothy Loeb, Dorothy Culbreth, and Marguerite Klages.

This obituary was carefully considered and composed by Elouise, herself.

IN LOVING MEMORY OF

Elouise C. Klages

WHO WAS BORN

March 22, 1939
Columbia, Alabama

AND CALLED TO HER ETERNAL HOME

April 23, 2026
Ortonville, Minnesota

FUNERAL SERVICE

Tuesday, April 28, 2026 - 10:30 a.m.
Ortonville First Methodist Church
Ortonville, Minnesota

OFFICIANT

Pastor Sandra Marquardt

MUSICIANS

Gavin Klages, Accompanist
Julie French, Vocalist

CASKET BEARERS

All of Elouise's Grandsons:
Justin Zeigler | Trevor Zeigler | Tristan Hoyer | Dylan Klages
Gavin Klages | Colton Klages | James Klages, Jr. | Jeric Klages

HONORARY BEARERS

All of Elouise's Granddaughters:
Jennifer Tedesco | Regina Lighthall
Tabitha Klages | Claressa Kent | Cassandra Speh

INTERMENT

Mound Cemetery
Ortonville, Minnesota

APPRECIATION

Elouise's family is grateful for your attendance at this service.
Your expressions of kindness and love are deeply appreciated.

Following the service, please join the family for a
time of fellowship and refreshments in the church dining room.

Mundwiler & Larson Funeral Home - Ortonville, Minnesota

Please use this QR Code to view

Elouise's online obituary, tribute video, and guestbook.



How Great Thou Art!

*When Christ shall come
with shout of acclamation*

*And take me home,
what joy shall fill my heart!*

Then I shall bow in humble adoration

And there proclaim:

"My God, how great Thou art!"

Then sings my soul,

my Savior God, to thee,

How great Thou art!

How great Thou art!