

CELEBRATING

*the Life & Legacy*



*Mary Kay*  
MOORE VANCE

SUNRISE  
SEPTEMBER 19, 1938

SUNSET  
JANUARY 28, 2026

Homegoing Service  
February 7, 2026  
New Covenant Lutheran Church  
1424 Hayden Ave | East Cleveland, OH  
Reverend Scott Wylie, Officiant

*Order of Service*

Processional Hymn                      *Blessed Assurance*                      Congregation

**FINAL GLANCE**

Welcome and Greeting                      Reverend Scott Wylie

Prayer                      Joshua Nash

Thanksgiving for Baptism                      Reverend Scott Wylie

First Reading - *Psalm 23*                      Ashley Vance Rhodes

Second Reading - *Romans 8:31-35, 37-39*                      Deacon William Brown

Hymn                      *We've Come This Far By Faith.*                      Congregation

Gospel - *John 11:17-27*                      Melanie Woods

**SILENT READING OF OBITUARY**

The Young Christian Mother                      Reverend Robert Gahagen

The Professional at The Ohio Lottery                      Kimberly Banks

Nana, The Matriarch                      James B. Thomas IV & Jillian Kay Thomas

Resolutions                      Rodney C. Vance II

Musical Selection                      *Two Wings*                      New Covenant Men's Choir

Eulogy & Apostle's Creed                      Reverend Scott Wylie

Communion                      Deacon Marlon McPherson

Closing Prayer                      Reverend Scott Wylie

Recessional Hymn                      *Going Up Yonder*                      Congregation

Committal                      Lake View Cemetery

# Acknowledgements

The family of Mary Kay Moore Vance wishes to express our deepest gratitude for the overwhelming outpour of love, prayers, and support during this time. We extend a special thank you to New Covenant Lutheran Church for being her spiritual home for 60 years, and to the staff and volunteers at the Hunger Center/Cleveland Foodbank—a mission so close to her heart.

A heartfelt thank you to her dedicated hairstylist, Vanessa Jones. From monthly visits to the nursing home to her final care at Watson's funeral Home, your talent and kindness kept Mary Kay's "signature look" beautiful until the very end.

A special thank you to Jordan Wright, who made sure Mary Kay was present at family gatherings, birthdays, and holidays and who always kept her laughing.

We thank Ann Hughes for over sixty years of friendship filled with visits, meals, memories, and a love that never wavered. Your steady presence and time spent reminiscing brought comfort, joy, and laughter.

Our deepest gratitude to Arnette Williams, an outstanding Home Health Aide who became a cherished member of our family. We also thank the Staff of Mt. St. Joseph, especially Betty, Zoie, Alyssa, Tyrone and Nakeia, for their loving care.

To our Cousins Kathy, Connie, Maurice, Rogers (Butch) and Joshua, thank you for your constant love and devotion.

Finally, we are grateful to Pastor Scott Wylie for his faithfulness, Deacon William Brown for his dedication and to Deacon Marlon McPherson for sharing love and communion weekly.

May God bless each of you for your kindness.



# *Obituary of Mary Kay Vance*

**Mary Kay Moore Vance**, a woman of unyielding courage, impeccable style, and a heart as vast as the Georgia sky she was born under, departed this life at the age of 87 in Cleveland, Ohio. Born Mary Kate Moore on September 19, 1938, in Milledgeville, Georgia, she was the first-born daughter of Freddie Moore and Annie Moore (née Odom). From her earliest days, Mary Kay walked with a sense of purpose and a spark of joy that would define her entire life.

## **A Trailblazer from the Start**

A woman of deep conviction, Mary Kate, was a trailblazer from the start. Whether it was refusing to sit in the back of the bus in the 1940s, sneaking to drink water from the “whites only” fountain because it “tasted better”. She even slipped off to witness a Martin Luther King Jr. march in Atlanta. She was a little rebellious but always respectful and insisted on standing on the right side of history.

## **The Evolution of a Trendsetter**

Mary Kate’s flair only grew with age. A graduate of Carver High School and a charter member of its first Marching Band as a clarinet player, she became a legend for her "signature look." She famously layered three to four can-can slips under her dresses to ensure she moved with maximum volume and flair.

Upon arrival to Cleveland in 1956, she decided "Mary Kate" was far too "country" for the city, and thus, Mary Kay was born. To her sister Argeon, she was "May Kay"; to her cousins in Cleveland, she was "Cup," a nickname earned because she was sweet as a cupcake.

By the 1960s, Mary Kay was the family’s resident visionary, coordinating her sister’s wedding by outfitting the Moore women in short dresses and the bride in a daring mini-skirt—a revolutionary fashion statement for the era.

## **A Career of Pride and Purpose**

After earning an Executive Secretarial Certificate from Dyke College, Mary Kay became a cornerstone at Sears and Roebuck. She took immense pride in her success, relishing the "luxury" of shopping at Sears rather than the neighborhood discount store, Giant Tiger. It was during these years she met her first love, Wilburn Carl Vance. They married on October 25, 1957, and welcomed their two children, Rodney Carl and Cheryl Kay. As a dedicated single mother, she became an unstoppable force, serving in fund raisers to ensure her children, Rodney and Cheryl, experienced a world of opportunity and travel.

## **"Mother Teresa" and the Political Stage**

Known as “Mother Teresa” at the Ohio Lottery Commission for her generosity toward families in need, and as a mentor. Mary Kay was also a fervent advocate for equality. She retired in 2000. Her generosity knew no bounds; she once lent her brand new Green Hornet to a young cousin to drive for his prom and later gifted a sixteen-year-old cousin a tennis racket in the early 1970s to encourage her dreams. That cousin went on to play tennis while attending college in Spain and continues to play to this day.

Mary Kay was a proud Democrat. She campaigned for Congressman Louis Stokes and other local politicians. Her political passion culminated in attending President Bill Clinton's inauguration in 1993. She was excited to wear ball gowns and meet national politicians.

### **Firm Convictions and Fairness**

An early ally for LGBTQ+ rights as far back as the 1960s, Mary Kay was a woman of deep principle. A "straight shooter" who believed fervently in equality, she never wavered in her convictions or her commitment to fairness for all.

### **The Joy of the Journey**

Whether dining at the elegant Giovanni's or enjoying a meal at Joe's Cafe, Mary Kay was a true connoisseur who appreciated excellence in every form. For many years, she left on Christmas afternoon for two week excursions after spending Christmas Eve at New Covenant Church for church service and then on to a big celebration of food and fun with her family. She made sure to visit her grandchildren before her departure. They had breakfast together as she shared in their excitement early on Christmas morning.

### **A Legacy of Service and "Flowers While Living"**

For over 60 years, New Covenant Lutheran Church (Formally St. James) was her spiritual home. She served on the Church Council and was a charter member of the Leisure Group, but her crowning achievement was the Hunger Center/Cleveland Foodbank where she served for 30 years. She spent her retirement feeding hundreds, providing transportation, and paying for children to attend summer camp. Shortly before her passing, she was moved to learn a church ministry, Mary Kay Vance Bread of Life and a Sunday School classroom would be memorialized in her honor. "Well done, good and faithful servant."

In her final years at Mt. St. Joseph, she remained a mother figure to all, including her caregivers, offering advice and prayers. Nothing brought her more joy than time spent with her family. Their visits filled her days with laughter, stories, and warmth. Among those moments, her three youngest great-grandchildren, Lenox, Ava, and Hayes, held a special place in her heart. They were her light, bringing excitement, smiles, and a renewed sense of joy, reminding her that her legacy was still unfolding through new generations.

Mary Kay lived by her belief in "giving flowers while living", receiving a constant stream of visitors and bouquets of flowers until her final transition.

### **Resting in Grace**

Mary Kay was preceded in death by her parents, Freddie and Annie; her beloved sister, Argeon L. Hall; and her "brother-in-love," John Hall.

She leaves to cherish her memory her loving son, Rodney C. Vance (Phyllis); her devoted daughter, Cheryl Vance Thomas (Jim); her five wonderful grandchildren, Andre Atkinson, Ashley Rhodes (Randy), James B. Thomas IV, Jillian Kay Thomas, and Rodney C. Vance II; special niece, Kimberly Hale; dear great nephew Michael Russaw; nine great-grandchildren; and a host of treasured cousins and friends.

A bold trailblazer and a dedicated "straight shooter," Mary Kay championed the cause of equality and led with a firm, principled hand. She lived life at full speed, always standing on the right side of history and giving selflessly to all.





## *Pallbearers*

James B. Thomas IV (Grandson)  
Randy Rhodes (Grandson)  
Maurice Nash (Cousin)  
Joshua Nash (Cousin)  
Leamon Crawford (Cousin)  
Jonathan Nash (Cousin)

## *Honorary Pallbearers*

Andre Atkinson (Grandson)  
Rodney C. Vance II (Grandson)  
Michael Russaw (Great Nephew)



### **A Mother's Hands**

The hands of a mother-strong, firm, disciplined, determined and loving. She worked hard, and dressed sharp. She gave us the best of everything. We lacked for nothing because she made sure of it. It was always the three of us. Her hands guided us, disciplined us, protected us, and loved us endlessly. That love will never leave us.

Rodney and Cheryl

## *Interment*

Lake View Cemetery  
12316 Euclid Avenue  
Cleveland, OH

## *Repast*

Mt. St. Joseph  
Rehabilitation Center  
21800 Chardon R. Euclid, OH

Services entrusted to Watson's Funeral Home.

Please visit [www.watsonsfuneralhome.com/](http://www.watsonsfuneralhome.com/) to share a memory or leave condolences to the family.