



Mary Frances Arnold

September 21, 1924 - April 18, 2026

Mary Frances Stephens Arnold, age 101, of Shelbyville, TN, went to be with her Heavenly Father Saturday, April 18, 2026. She was born September 21, 1924 in Moore County, TN to the late John Ruben and Minnie Odel (Woodard) Stephens. In addition to her parents, Frances is also preceded in death by her husband of 77 years, James Ray Arnold Sr.; son and daughter in law, James Ray Arnold Jr. and wife Sara Patricia Arnold; sister, Ruth King; and granddaughter, Mary Virginia (Ginny) Shelton.

The family will receive friends from 5 – 8 p.m. Wednesday, April 22nd and 10 – 11 a.m. Thursday, April 23rd at Feldhaus Memorial Chapel. A funeral service will be held in the chapel at 11 A.M. Thursday, April 23rd with Brother Jonathan Curry officiating. Interment will follow in New Bethel Baptist Church Cemetery. Donations may be made to New Bethel Cemetery Fund 421 Himesville Road, Shelbyville TN 37160 or Cannon United Methodist Church. Frances Arnold was a woman of quiet strength, deep faith, and unwavering love for her family. She valued education throughout her life and was an avid reader, rarely without a book in hand until her eyesight no longer allowed her to continue the pastime she cherished so much.

A lifelong and devoted member of New Bethel Baptist Church, Frances held the distinction of being its oldest member. She lived her faith daily, serving as a shining example of what it means to be a devoted Christian woman—kind, faithful, and steadfast in her beliefs.

Frances dedicated 46 years of her life to Empire Pencil Company, where her

strong work ethic and commitment were evident to all who knew her. After retirement, she and her beloved husband enjoyed traveling across North America, creating lasting memories together.

At the heart of her life was her family. She was an exceptional cook who found great joy in preparing meals and gathering her loved ones around the table. Her home was a place of warmth, comfort, and togetherness. She took great pride in caring for her family and ensuring they always felt loved and supported.

A remarkable woman, Frances lived independently in her home until the age of 100 with her faithful dog companion, BB. She had been residing at Carriage House Inn since April of 2025 where she enjoyed companionship with other residents, activities and celebrations, and assistance with daily living tasks by the amazing staff.

One of her greatest joys in her later years was witnessing all eight of her great grandchildren graduating from high school. She ended with the youngest great grandchild, Dalton Holtz, graduating in 2025—a moment she held close to her heart.

Frances Arnold's legacy is one of love, faith, dedication, and resilience. She will be deeply missed by all who knew her, but her example and the memories she created will live on for generations to come.

Frances leaves behind her daughter and son-in-law, Linda and Dr. Stephen Stimpson; granddaughters, Melissa Fox (Andy), Dr. Andrea Anderson (Bill), and Tricia Rhea Arnold; great-grandchildren, Alan Zachary (Jillian), Sara Smith, Amanda Fox, Jamie Fox, Justin Smith, Julia Anderson, Hunter Shelton, and Dalton Holtz. Nieces Brenda Lambert and Nancy Ivey. Nephews: Larry King, Mike Arnold, and Steve Arnold.

Feldhaus Memorial Chapel is honored to be serving the family of Mary Frances Arnold.

Cemetery Details

New Bethel Cemetery Inc.

1832 TN-64 Scenic Road
Shelbyville, TN 37160

Previous Events

Visitation

APR **22**. 5:00 PM - 8:00 PM (CT)

Feldhaus Memorial Chapel
2022 North Main St.
Shelbyville, TN 37160
(931) 684-8356
feldhausgowensmith@gmail.com
<http://feldhausgowensmith.com/>

Visitation

APR **23**. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (CT)

Feldhaus Memorial Chapel
2022 North Main St.
Shelbyville, TN 37160
(931) 684-8356
feldhausgowensmith@gmail.com
<http://feldhausgowensmith.com/>

Funeral Service

APR **23**. 11:00 AM (CT)

Feldhaus Memorial Chapel

2022 North Main St.

Shelbyville, TN 37160

(931) 684-8356

feldhausgowensmith@gmail.com

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Tribute Wall



“ *Feldhaus-Gowen-Smith Memorial Chapel created a Tribute Video in memory of Mary Frances Arnold*



Feldhaus-Gowen-Smith Memorial Chapel - April 21 at 01:42 PM

JW

Very sorry to hear of Mrs Mary Francis's passing. I met her and Brother James when I was a little boy and we starting going to New Bethel Baptist. Bro James was my Sunday school teacher and he and Mrs Mary Francis were so great to us kids. I remember a trip they took several of of on to Beech Bend Park in Bowling Green, KY. It was a weekend trip, we camped out and had a blast at the park. She was a very kind and sweet lady whom I had great admiration and respect for.

jay wright - April 23 at 11:29 AM



“ *Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Mary Frances Arnold.*



April 22 at 01:22 PM

MS

“ Marty,Debbie,Hunter Shelton purchased the Country Basket Blooms for the family of Mary Frances Arnold.



Marty,Debbie,Hunter Shelton - April 22 at 06:05 AM

DC

“ To The Arnold Family,
So sorry to hear about Mrs. Arnold. She lived a good long life. She was such a sweet lady. She worked at Empire with my Mom.
Prayers for you all in this difficult time.

Donna & Ted Cartwright - April 21 at 10:14 AM

BI

“ Barbara Arnold and Nancy Ivey purchased the Enchanted Cottage for the family of Mary Frances Arnold.



Barbara Arnold and Nancy Ivey - April 20 at 07:04 PM

BI

“ Barbara Arnold and Nancy Ivey planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Mary Frances Arnold.

Barbara Arnold and Nancy Ivey - April 20 at 07:04 PM

AZ

“ Alan & Jillian Zachary purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Mary Frances Arnold.



Alan & Jillian Zachary - April 20 at 06:02 PM

AZ

“ Alan & Jillian Zachary planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Mary Frances Arnold.

Alan & Jillian Zachary - April 20 at 06:02 PM

DB

“ Mrs Frances was like a second mom to many, she was my Sunday school teachers and GA'S at New Bethel for many years and always there for me when I needed a hug and someone to say I love you, I will miss her so much but knowing I will see her again one day and she will SEE me is a comfort.

DEBBY BYNUM - April 20 at 12:50 PM

AD

Mrs Frances was a fine lady I went to church at new bethel I know she will be miss we know she in arms or lord now

Ali ce Dunn - May 05 at 05:38 PM