



## Denise Smith

December 6, 1957 - June 1, 2023

Denise Murray Smith, 65, of Greer, South Carolina, wife for 36 years of the late Carl Lee Smith, died at home on June 1, 2023, surrounded by family. She was born in Atlanta, Georgia to the late James O. and LaMar W. Murray. Her family moved to Richmond, Virginia, and then to Greer, South Carolina. Denise excelled academically as well as musically, and she was active in church choirs from an early age. She was a graduate of Berry College where she received her Bachelor of Music degree in 1980. She later completed her master's degree in education.

Denise married her high school sweetheart, Carl Lee Smith, in 1979, at the end of her Junior year at Berry College. She was a partner in ministry with her husband at the various churches in which he served as pastor. They were appointed as Home Missionaries by the Home Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, serving in Brooklyn, New York for several years, before returning to South Carolina to serve in churches there. Once she and her family settled back home in Greer, South Carolina, she taught music in the Greenville County School District, and retired from teaching at Skyland Elementary School.

Denise was a person of many talents, not the least of which was singing. Her music brought inspiration, joy, and comfort to many people through the years, and was an expression of her love of God. As chronic illness began to affect her singing, she applied herself to other artistic endeavors, choosing to not let what others would see as a disability affect her desire to learn and grow and

serve in different ways. She could light up a room with her smile, and people loved being in her presence. As Proverbs 31:25 says, "Strength and dignity are her clothing, and she smiles at the future." Her life exemplified grace, faith, and courage in the face of lifelong physical challenges.

Perhaps her greatest joy was in her children and grandchildren. She instilled in them her love of God and the importance of service to others. She provided an example to them of persevering with joy and faith through whatever life brought to her.

Surviving are her children, Josh Smith of Greer, Maria Leigh Beasley (John) of Greenwood, South Carolina, and Mark Smith (Jaden) of Kenai, Alaska; grandchildren Silas, Owen, Porter, and Griffin Smith of Kenai, Alaska; and Marleigh and Naomi Beasley of Greenwood, South Carolina; and sister, Dr. Sharon Murray of Greer.

The family expresses their gratitude to Dr. Michael Porter, Dr. Britt Boleman, and Dr. Billy Bolton of Prisma Health for their compassionate care of Denise through these many years, along with the many nurses and other healthcare personnel who have participated in her care. The family is also grateful to Via Health Partners Hospice for helping Denise and her family in her final days.

A Celebration of Life service will be held at Brushy Creek Baptist Church, 4999 Old Spartanburg Road, Taylors, South Carolina 29687 at 6:30 pm on Tuesday, June 6, 2023.

Memorial gifts may be given to Set Free Alliance ([setfreealliance.org](http://setfreealliance.org)), an organization which Denise supported, and which helps serve the needs of people and shares the Gospel in India, Sierra Leone, and Liberia.

Online condolences may be made to [www.thewoodmortuary.com](http://www.thewoodmortuary.com).

# Previous Events

## Celebration of Life

JUN 6. 6:30 PM (ET)

Brushy Creek Baptist Church  
4999 Old Spartanburg Road  
Taylors, SC 29687

# Tribute Wall

SB

“ I do not remember having the opportunity to meet your mother or your father, even though I married into this family many years ago. My mother-in-law was Jemie Nell Smith Blackman, a sister to Morris Franklin Smith. Reading about Denise I wish we'd known each other as I am a retired school music teacher. I am working on the family of Julius and Nannie Smith genealogy. I would enjoy a contact with your family. Sharon Forbes Blackman on FB or sharonblackman@gmail.com. My condolences to each of you.

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**sharon blackman** - May 31, 2024 at 12:05 PM

GV

“ Denise was a fine lady who loved everyone, especially the children she taught for so many years. As a former co-worker in the school district I remember her fondly. My wife also died on June 1st. May they both rest in the peace of Almighty God.

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**George Vassey** - July 03, 2023 at 09:20 PM

ML

“ I am so very sorry for your loss! Denise was such a sweet and humble lady. I taught with her at Skyland for many years and then she taught two of my grandchildren. My thoughts and prayers are with you at this difficult time.

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**Margaret Lindsey** - June 06, 2023 at 05:51 PM

SK

“ Dear Maria and family,  
We are sad to hear of the loss of your mother. She was a beautiful, brave and godly woman. We lift you up in prayer and send our love during this difficult time. You have always been like a daughter to us as one of Amanda's closest friends. We are here for you if we can be a support to you in any way.  
Love,  
Ken and Susanne Kessararis

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**Susanne Kessararis** - June 06, 2023 at 03:16 PM



“ Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Denise Smith.



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June 06, 2023 at 11:48 AM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Denise Smith.

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June 06, 2023 at 11:48 AM

JT

“ To Denise's family - I am so sorry for your loss. I served on the Kairos ministry team with Denise. She was always a joy to be with. She was filled with the love of Christ and was loved by our team. We are praying for you all and will miss her very much. Julie Turner

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**Julie Turner** - June 05, 2023 at 02:07 PM



“ *Country Basket Blooms was purchased for the family of Denise Smith.*



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June 05, 2023 at 12:21 AM



“ *Enchanted Cottage was purchased for the family of Denise Smith.*



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June 04, 2023 at 10:46 PM



“ *Maria and your beautiful family, I did not know your beautiful Mother, looking at her picture light of Jesus shines. You and your family are in my prayers.  
Love and Prayers,  
Brenda Zwart (Anna's mom)*

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**Brenda Zwart** - June 04, 2023 at 09:50 AM



“ *Your precious Mom was a light in this world. She lifted you up, just by talking a moment with you. Always an encouraging word. She has impacted me with her love and caring . You all are so much like her. It is a joy to know your family. My love and prayers are with you.  
Nancy McIntyre*

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**Nancy McIntyre** - June 03, 2023 at 10:57 PM

WG

“ *Wilma G. purchased the Sweet Tranquility Basket for the family of Denise Smith.*



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**Wilma G.** - June 03, 2023 at 10:39 PM

DA

“ *Maria, Josh, Mark and family,  
I am so sorry for your loss of your mother; she was a Woman of  
faith, and my sweet friend. Y'all are on my heart and in my prayers.  
Love and prayers, Debbie Knight Allen*

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**Debbie Allen** - June 03, 2023 at 04:49 PM