



Shirley Grace Brown

September 28, 1928 - December 16, 2024

Shirley Grace Brown (nee Isenberg) died December 16, 2024, surrounded with the love of her family, and in the care of National Church Residences Hospice.

Shirley is survived by son Gregory Brown and wife Nancy Perkins, grandsons Nicholas Brown and Kyle Brown, and Kyle's wife Amy Brown; and, daughter Patricia Brown James and husband Gregory James, and step grandsons Drew, Cameron, Joshua and Jonathon James. She also has numerous nieces and nephews, and countless friends in Columbus and across the globe.

Shirley was a resident of Friendship Village of Dublin for 18 years, the last two in the tender care of the staff of Waterford assisted living. At Friendship she was well known for her outgoing and friendly personality. She loved games, particularly card games, and for years led the organization of the Saturday night bridge event. She played euchre every Friday. Known for her direct communication, she was part of a group that advocated for and helped design the Fireside Room, a lounge for residents.

Shirley was born in September 1928 in Detroit, Michigan, third daughter of Frank and Lucy Isenberg (nee Bruce). She attended Western High School in Detroit, where she was a good student and on the swim team. She fondly remembered being in school plays, dances, operas, gymnastics and sports.

She married Carl Brown in 1949 and they were together nearly 60 years when he died in 2008. They met at the Stanton Park Baptist Church in Detroit when she was 18 and he was just out of the navy after WWII. They honeymooned in Niagara Falls, in January. After their wedding, they lived in Detroit before moving to Chicago where Carl attended seminary. That began a long, shared life of Christian ministry.

Following seminary, they moved to Wheaton, Ill. where Carl became pastor at Geneva Road Baptist Church. Shirley remembered those years as happy and filled with friends whom she kept in touch with over her lifetime. In Wheaton, she and Carl were foster parents to seven children over five years.

In 1963 the family moved to Columbus when Carl became pastor of the University Baptist Church (UBC), near The Ohio State University. Again, deep friendships were formed at UBC with other families and countless students from across the globe.

Shirley started taking classes at Ohio State at age 36, and graduated with a degree in education in 1968, subsequently earning her master's degree in guidance and counseling. She began teaching at The Ohio School for the Deaf in 1968, and taught there for 25 years.

Shirley saved her first year's salary and paid for the family's journey to Europe in 1969, visiting many countries on that trip. One memorable night that summer was in Heidelberg, Germany. The family arrived to town in darkness with no lodging booked. Shirley made her way into a pub at the center of town and asked the publican if he knew of a place they could stay. After a quick phone call, he gave Shirley directions to a family's home nearby, and upon arrival they welcomed her family with open arms into their cozy house.

Neither family could speak the other's language, but all communicated anyway over dinner and "conversation." As everyone went to bed the Germans assured Shirley and her family that they would wake them up to see the first moon landing. At 3:00 a.m. the whole household gathered around the small TV and despite no common language understood the awe of the moment they shared. Words were not needed for deep connection.

Shirley and family continued to travel internationally, including three extended trips to Israel. Travel around the USA was a rich part of family life, partly because of the many places they visited but mostly because of the many friends and family they traveled with or met along the way. She and Carl attended many of his naval reunions, including the Columbus reunion that she had a huge part in planning. They also journeyed with members of Mountview Baptist Church on countless trips to nearby locales as part of their ministry.

Shirley loved attending the Bruce Family reunion in Cave City, Kentucky and catching up with her uncles, aunts and cousins. It's where her parents were born and lived prior to moving to Detroit as adults. Kentucky always held a special place in Shirley's heart and as a child arrived from Detroit on the train with her older sisters Bernice and Maxine.

Despite having her own career, she was an essential partner in Carl's ministry. She regularly opened their home in Clintonville as an extension of the church with parties and dinners.

No matter where her family and friends lived, she worked hard to keep in contact by phone, mail, and visits. A social person at her core, family and friends were the sustenance of her life. In the last couple years her friends and caregivers at Waterford at Friendship Village meant the world to her being, and she'd talk about them at length.

She loved going to the Ohio State Fair with her grandsons; long visits from Patti in town from Tennessee; special occasions at Greg and Nancy's home; the Buckeyes; time with out-of-town friends and family; and playing card games till wee hours of the morning.

She loved her family and was a devoted wife, mother, grandmother, and friend. She will be dearly missed.

A memorial service is scheduled for 2:00 p.m., Monday, December 23, 2024 in the Muirfield Room at Friendship Village Dublin, 6000 Riverside Dr., Dublin, OH, 43017. Visitation will follow the service. In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation to Friendship Village Dublin.

Previous Events

Memorial Service

DEC **23**. 2:00 PM (ET)

Friendship Village of Dublin- Muirfield Room
6000 Riverside Dr
Dublin, OH 43017

Tribute Wall

EL

“ My mom, Jenny Lukens, so enjoyed working with Greg Brown at OSU. Our family greatly appreciated both Carl - who preached at my father Bob Lukens' funeral on June 18, 2005 - and Shirley - who shared a fondness for Detroit history. I just learned of Shirley's death today and want to express my condolences.

Ed Lukens - December 28, 2024 at 11:19 AM

MS

“ Mark, Alyson, Reese, and Danica Sujeebun purchased the Serene Retreat for the family of Shirley Grace Brown.



Mark, Alyson, Reese, and Danica Sujeebun - December 22, 2024 at 08:07 PM

MS

“ Mark, Alyson, Reese, and Danica Sujeebun planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Shirley Grace Brown.

Mark, Alyson, Reese, and Danica Sujeebun - December 22, 2024 at 08:07 PM

GL

“ Shirley was a dear friend for many years . I loved to work with her at our church teaching children in Sunday School and visiting church members who were unable to be out. She helped me at OSU presenting her concern for mental illness with patients I was working with. My husband Stan and her husband Carl were good friends and we frequently met for dinner . A warm and caring loving friend will be missed by so many. Gloria Lusher

Gloria Lushet - December 19, 2024 at 11:53 AM

ZB

“ Zach and Maressa Brown purchased the Arrive in Style for the family of Shirley Grace Brown.



Zach and Maressa Brown - December 19, 2024 at 11:40 AM