



Mrs. Irene Gray

October 11, 1939 - January 14, 2026

Mrs. Irene Smith Gray was born October 11, 1939, in Auvergne, Arkansas, to Arthur Smith and Edoma Taylor Smith. At age 3, she spent her early years with her Uncle Clarence and Aunt Irene Hawkins. In 1951, she rejoined her parents and five siblings at age 12. She accepted Christ at an early age.

Growing up in Blacksville, Arkansas, she graduated from Blacksville Elementary Training School in 1954 and WF Branch High School in Newport, Arkansas in 1957, then moved to Kansas City, Missouri to live with her oldest sister Willa French. Irene lived in the Kansas City, Missouri area most of her life.

In 1960, Irene married Paul Hamilton Gray in Kansas City, Missouri. They were happily married for 29 years until his passing in June 1989. To this union two children were born, Glenn Lamar and David Anthony.

Irene worked at Beloved Toy Factory in Kansas City, Missouri before a 31-year career at Western Electric/AT&T in Lees Summit, Missouri from 1965-1996, earning several professional certificates and awards. After retiring, she worked for Primerica Financial Services as a Field Trainer, with a Certificate of Diploma from AD Banker & Company on the Basics of Insurance/Entrepreneurial Certification and H&R Block as a tax preparer until retirement in 2013.

A dedicated member of Palestine Missionary Baptist Church of Jesus Christ for over 40 years, Irene served on church committees, as a Church Treasure Trustee, Member of the Adult Sunday School Class and on the Usher Board until her illness.

Irene enjoyed traveling, especially during her husband's Air force service in Zeist, Netherlands, and continued exploring destinations after his passing. Irene took cruises with her sister and friends to: Alaska, Holland, Amsterdam, Mexico; attended Family Reunions in different cities and took road trips with son and his family. Her hobbies included sewing, cooking, collecting recipes, upholstering furniture, crocheting, gardening, exchanging plants with sister-in-law, talking on the phone, shopping all day with daughter-in-law and visiting her sister. Irene made her sons clothes when they were younger and created products like the Do-bee sleep/shower cap which was sold in beauty supply stores.

Family meant everything to Irene. From the moment you met Irene and asked about her family, you could tell she was the happiest when she was with her sons, grandchildren, great granddaughter or relatives.

Irene passed away on January 14, 2026. She was preceded in death by her husband, Paul Gray; parents Arthur Smith Sr. and Edoma Taylor Smith; sister Willa French, and three brothers, Arthur "Cleo" Smith Jr., Edward "Smitty" Smith, and Marvin Smith. Irene is survived by her sons, Glenn Gray (Bernita) and David Gray (Elizabeth); sisters Helen Bryant (Melvin Sr.) and Martha Hampton; sister-in-law Dorothy Nell Smith; four grandchildren, Tyson Canty (Elree), Whitney Gray, Dane Gray and Dorian Gray; one great-granddaughter, Nicole Canty; nieces and nephews; a host of other relatives and friends.
An Angel Touch Her and She Slept

Funeral Services will be held on Friday January 23, 2026, at 11:00 a.m. at

Palestine Missionary Baptist Church 3619 East 35th Street KCMO 64128.
Interment: Mt. Moriah Cemetery. Visitation: 10- 11:00 a.m. at the Church.
Arrangements entrusted to Lawrence A. Jones & Sons Funeral Chapels.
Condolences may be shared on our website lawrenceajones.com

Cemetery Details

Mount Moriah Cemetery

10507 Holmes Road
Kansas City, MO 64131

Previous Events

Visitation

JAN 23. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (CT)

Palestine Missionary Baptist Church
3619 East 35th Street
Kansas City, MO 64128

Funeral Service

JAN 23. 11:00 AM (CT)

Palestine Missionary Baptist Church
3619 East 35th Street
Kansas City, MO 64128

Tribute Wall

HR

“ For over 25 years Irene served Clients at the Blue Parkway H&R Block.

Irene Gray was an incredible tax preparer, kind and compassionate to her clients and coworkers. She was committed to helping each person who entered the Blue Parkway office no matter it was by explaining the tax return, or giving advice to help a client have a more favorable outcome the next year.

Irene had a way of talking with people to put them at ease. She was instrumental in helping associates not from the Blue Parkway area acclimate. She was giving and her quiet grace made an impact on those in the Blue Parkway office and throughout the Block culture.

There was never a doubt that Irene was a 'King's Kid'. She talked about her Lord. She talked about her church; often inviting others to an event at the church. She shared her Sunday School lesson and was often giving mother and bible wit to others at the tax desk.

I enjoyed hearing Mrs. Irene (as she was known) and her good friend Mattye Callahan talk about the good old days. And every one of those conversations eventually came around to family - Glenn, David and tales of Whitney.

We are so happy to have had our lives changed by Mrs. Irene. She offered good counsel, a positive role model and demonstrated a work ethic you can not find these days. We thank God for her life and her legacy with us at H&R Block. Family thank you so much for sharing your loved one with us.

*Humbly Submitted
H&R Block
Tax Professionals and Office Management*

HRBlock - January 23 at 02:46 PM



“ *Large Basket Garden was purchased for the family of Mrs. Irene Gray.*



January 22 at 04:13 PM



“ *Aerin Flournoy, Amber Bryant and Family planted a Memorial Tree in honor of Mrs. Irene Gray.*

Aerin Flournoy, Amber Bryant and Family - January 22 at 04:13 PM



“ *Martha Hampton and family planted a Memorial Tree in honor of Mrs. Irene Gray.*

Martha Hampton and family - January 22 at 03:42 PM



“ *Martha Hampton and family purchased the Full O f Love Bouquet for the family of Mrs. Irene Gray.*



Martha Hampton and family - January 22 at 03:42 PM

MH

“ Irene and I were half-sisters who bonded quickly and became very fun of each other. We often talked about our life paths and our families, and we shared many jokes and laugh together. Irene was kind-hearted and always treated me with respect and kindness. She was a loving sister with an infectious laugh, and she will be truly missed. I will be eternally grateful for the time I had with her and for having her in my life.

Love you always,
Marti

Martha (Marti) Hampton - January 22 at 12:07 PM

TC

“ Terri Williams from California planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Mrs. Irene Gray.

Terri Williams from California - January 22 at 11:32 AM



“ Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Mrs. Irene Gray.



January 22 at 11:32 AM

MG

“ *God be with you
at this time and
give you strength
to bear this loss*

*May His love
impart the peace
and understanding
that brings comfort
to you and your family
at this time of sorrow.*

*Irene's beautiful smile and spirit will be missed but not forgotten, her
legacy lives on in her loving son's and their families, including their
children and grandchildren.
The Gadson and Gray Family*

Ms Cookie Gadson - January 21 at 11:29 AM

DB

“ *To the family of Irene Gray, Lionel and Deloris
Brown want you to know we are praying for all
of you and asking God to sustain you during
this challenging time. Irene was always
pleasant and had a welcoming smile on her
face that made it easy to engage with her whenever we would see
her. May the beautiful memories you have created throughout the
years support during this time and forever.*



Deloris Brown - January 17 at 10:55 AM