



## Barbara Mae Rollin

August 24, 1926 - December 18, 2025

Barbara Mae Rollin (nee Clark)

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On December 18, 2025, Barbara Mae Rollin passed away peacefully at home in Severna Park, Maryland with both of her daughters holding her hands.

When asked about her obituary, Barbara stated she wanted it to say – “I lived and died.”

We, as her daughters, Karen and Kaye, wholeheartedly disagree that this is the sum of her.

Barbara Mae Clark was born during the night. It was her cousin, Leonard, who met the doctor with a lantern on the street corner. After her home birth in Wayne, Michigan, the doctor held her in one hand and declared her weight to be “about 5 pounds.” She was a small child and nicknamed “Granny Grunt” because she was a stubborn and willful child. She was also called “Lady Love.” Throughout her life she would be both of these and fiercely loving. With the love of her parents, Bertha and Mac Clark, she and her brothers Paul and Kenneth thrived during the Great Depression. Sometimes this meant cardboard in your shoes due to holes in the soles and fried egg sandwiches, but it also meant sharing a fresh quart of ice cream and laughing with the

extended family who lived next door. She lost her brother Kenneth when he was 9 years old. When a larger girl made an unkind comment about her brother, she didn't hesitate to take her on. Even at 99, she missed her younger brother. Barbara was an aunt to her brother Paul's eight children whom she absolutely adored (Barbara Jean, Paul Jr., Clifford, Mike, Naomi, Judith, Cheryl, and Russell).

As a young woman, Barbara was independent and fun loving. She occasionally skipped high school to go to Detroit with her friends to attend plays. She and her best friend, Patsy, decided that two driving permits equaled a driver's license. When she was nineteen, she applied for a job at the local bank while the men in her community were fighting in WWII. She later became their Head Teller. She used this money to put herself through her first year of college at Michigan State.

In her early thirties, Barbara flew out to Arizona from Michigan for the second year in a row to visit her friend Betty. A shy physicist, Russell Rollin, was introduced to Barbara at dinner. Barbara later joked that if he sat any closer to her, he would have been in her lap. It was discovered over dinner that they lived within a short distance of one another. Barbara was home only for a day before he flew back to take her out to a fancy dinner at the Dearborn Inn. Within the year, they were engaged and married. When asked if she wanted an engagement ring or a long honeymoon in Hawaii, she chose Hawaii because she valued time and experiences over things. They married in a church with 2 witnesses and their spouses on August 13, 1960. Their marriage was truly exemplary. They had disagreements, but never a true fight and always treated each other kindly and thoughtfully.

At the end of their marriage when Russell Rollin was on dialysis, she would help him get settled in his chair with a blanket and wait in the lobby three days a week because he felt better knowing she was close. When the dialysis staff tried to encourage her not to come back there to settle him in the chair, she politely declined to follow their rule, and they eventually gave up trying. His physician stated the only reason he lived as long as he did was due to her

love and care. She spent 27 years of her life missing him.

Her second love in life after her children was reading. Barbara frequently kept three to four books going at any given time. In addition to the local newspaper, she subscribed to the New Yorker, The Atlantic, and the Washington Post. If you sat beside her long enough, she would hand you an article to read and expect you to discuss it. She enjoyed fiction as much as she enjoyed autobiographies and books about history, world religions and mythology. She read philosophy books repeatedly; and made notes in the margins and on the back pages in pencil. Stoicism was her favorite.

Barbara considered herself an accidental trendsetter for the modern woman as she chose to marry late and have children in her late thirties and early forties. She gave birth to her first daughter, Karen Alice Rollin in 1964. When it was discovered that her child had a hearing impairment, she made it her job to ensure her child would thrive. To help her daughter speak more clearly, Barbara would spend hours writing words on a chalkboard and saying them aloud which inadvertently taught Karen Alice to read at the age of three. Her second daughter, Kaye Elizabeth Rollin was born four years later when she was 41. She was the kind of mother that would make cookies at 9am, kept stacks of books in the car to read aloud while they waited in the school pickup line and allowed her kitchen table to be taken over by crafts. To ensure her daughters did not have any college debts, Barbara rejoined the workforce in her fifties and sixties.

Barbara preached to her daughters to treat everyone with kindness and to always stand up for yourself when you disagree. When she was in church, she would sing different words to the hymns if she felt the words were too negative. She would stand up in meetings at work and openly and politely disagree. When the minister at the church preached a sermon she wasn't in agreement with, she wrote him a letter detailing her thoughts about needing more positive words within the sermon. She wasn't afraid to stand up for individuals who were disadvantaged. When gay marriage was placed on the

ballot in Maryland, she was proud to vote for it.

Barbara was a neighbor, friend and aunt who showed up when you needed her. She encouraged two of her nieces to come live with her family for a few years when they were young women to experience a different part of life.

When someone was down on their luck, she was quick to send a check through the mail. If you showed up on her doorstep needing a place to stay, she welcomed you and set up cribs for your babies. When a neighbor came down with cancer, she helped care for their children by greeting them each day at the school bus stop. She gave back to the community by volunteering at Meals on Wheels, Folger McKinsey Elementary School and Woods Memorial Church.

As Barbara stated, she lived and she died. Those who knew her believe she left the world in a far better place.

Barbara Mae Rollin was preceded in death by her loving husband, Russell Alger Rollin Jr, her parents Bertha Mae Clark (nee Alexander) and Clifford McKinley Clark and her brothers, Paul McKinley Clark Sr and Kenneth Howard Clark. She is also preceded in death by her niece Cheryl Lynn Clark and her nephews, Paul McKinley Clark Jr and Clifford Ernest Clark.

She is survived by her daughters, Karen Alice Rollin and Kaye Elizabeth Rollin, and her son-in-law Edwin Eugene Ott, Jr. She is also survived by her nieces Barbara Jean Wonch, Naomi Ruth Ball, Judith Ann Knappman, Nancy Jean Rollins and Thais Johnson, and her nephews, Marion Burton Clark and Russell Lee Clark. Barbara is also survived by Karen Dorothy Siska who was like a daughter to her.

Barbara is also survived by her great nieces, Anne Marie Armacher and Catherine Knight with whom she had a special bond.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be made in the name of Barbara Rollin to Meals on Wheels of Central Maryland.

A graveside service will be held on Friday, January 2 at 1:00 pm at St. Paul's Episcopal Church Cemetery in Chestertown.

# Cemetery Details

## St. Pauls Cemetery (Kent County)

7600 Sandy Bottom Road  
Chestertown, MD

# Previous Events

## Graveside

JAN 2. 1:00 PM (ET)

St. Paul's Church Cemetery (Kent)  
7579 Sandy Bottom Rd  
Chestertown, MD 21620

# Tribute Wall

CT

“ During our time at Mary Baldwin, Mrs. Rollin would visit and always include me in much appreciated dinners, usually at our favorite restaurant, Rowes. It was such a pleaser being in her company listening to stories about Kaye growing up. Mrs. Rollin's presence was always a comfort providing me with a little piece of home. Thank you ,Kaye, for sharing her with me. Thinking of you and Karen Alice at this time. I hope you get peace remembering what a wonderful lady your mother was. Love and miss you, Chrissy Taylor.

Chrissy Taylor - January 03 at 02:27 PM

MF

“ Melinda & the whole Crossley Family purchased the Florist Choice Bouquet for the family of Barbara Mae Rollin.



Melinda & the whole Crossley Family - December 31, 2025 at 11:42 AM

KR

“ 3 files added to the tribute wall



Kaye Rollin - December 23, 2025 at 10:18 PM

KR

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



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**Kaye Rollin** - December 23, 2025 at 03:02 PM

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“ 4 files added to the tribute wall



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**Kaye Rollin** - December 22, 2025 at 10:39 PM

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“ 4 files added to the tribute wall



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**Kaye Rollin** - December 22, 2025 at 09:35 AM