



Mary Frances Dolan Shomaker

August 4, 1930 - May 28, 2026

Mary Frances Dolan Shomaker passed away peacefully in Dublin, VA on Thursday, May 28, 2026. She was 95.

Frances is survived by her three sons, Nuel Douglas Shomaker of Portsmouth, VA, Dennis Randal Shomaker of Dublin, VA, and Darrell Kirtland Shomaker (Hope Elizabeth Shomaker) of Dublin, VA. Grandchildren surviving are Justin Mathew Shomaker of Portsmouth, VA, Scott Randal Shomaker of Dublin, VA, Bryce Chadwick Nester of Radford, VA, and Elijah Kirtland Reynolds Shomaker of Dublin, VA. She is also survived by many beloved nieces and nephews scattered across Virginia and beyond.

She was born in Nelson County, Virginia on August 4, 1930, to Azel Dupree Dolan and Ida Blane Woody Dolan. She grew up with her large family on an idyllic farm located along the banks of the James River.

As a young adult, Frances moved to Richmond VA and worked as a clerk for Standard Drug pharmacy on Hull Street. Though very shy and quick to blush, Frances' remarkable beauty and charisma no doubt helped her settle into a new and exciting life that occasionally included modeling and promoting the latest fashions for high end clothing retailers in the area. According to one sister's account, "Frances was on billboards and storefronts all around Richmond."

While working at the cigarette counter at Standard Drug, Frances met Nuel Kirtland Shomaker, who was fresh out of the Navy and working for Dupont in Richmond. She sold him a silver Ronson lighter that sparked a forever flame between the two. They married in 1951 and moved to Wythe County, VA where Kirt's family farmed and operated a small family-style restaurant. Frances and Kirt would go on to raise their own family and live in the New River Valley for the remainder of their lives.

Throughout life Frances had a passion for antique furniture, pottery, original paintings, art prints, vintage glassware, dishes and almost anything old and beautiful. She loved buying, collecting, and selling antiques and was a regular at local flea markets and yard sales. During the late 1970s and early '80s, she operated a little antique business called Fran's Antiques. She also discovered her talents for making and selling handcrafts and folk-art items at that time when craft revival movements were going strong in the U.S. Her highly creative and individualistic handmade crafts and artwork inspired many and earned repeated invitations to major craft shows including the Southern Living Christmas shows that she was most proud of.

Most importantly, Frances was a person with extraordinary faith – a true believer who prided herself on being a creative, hardworking and resourceful homemaker, wife, and mother that loved gardening, cooking, baking, and making jelly and jams for her family and friends. She loved fishing too and enjoyed going for catfish and bluegills at Claytor Lake. In her own way, Mary Frances was a true Renaissance woman.

A private, graveside memorial at Highland Cemetery in Dublin, VA will be arranged for a later date.

Those wishing to remember and celebrate Frances' life are encouraged to

support artists, crafters, mothers, and brilliant, hard-working women everywhere.

Tribute Wall

BP

“ *Barbara P. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Mary Frances Dolan Shomaker.*

Barbara P. - June 03 at 03:54 PM