



Debra Gates

May 27, 1953 - September 2, 2025

Debra Marie Gates, age 72 years, a resident of Vienna and a former resident of Cypress, Illinois, passed away unexpectedly Tuesday afternoon, September 2, 2025.

Debra was born May 27, 1953 in Lakewood, New Jersey. She was the third child born to Nelson and Margaret Ann Mathis.

On February 14, 1993, Debra was united in marriage to Michael Allan Gates in Paducah, Kentucky. He preceded her in death in June 2021.

Debra is survived by: her mother – Margaret Mathis-Davis; her daughter – Mandy (Doug) Moore of Belknap and their children – Hope (Malik) and their children – Colton and Rylan; as well as Lily (Maddy); and Trace; her son – Vincent Ruggeri of North Carolina and his daughter, Victoria; her siblings – Charlotte (Tom) Kitz and Arthur Mathis all of Florida, Bev (Dave) Hancock of Pennsylvania; and Mona Davis of Florida; as well as many nieces, nephews, great nieces, great nephews, and dear friends. Debra also leaves her faithful feline companion, “Baby.”

In addition to her father and husband, Debra was preceded in death by a granddaughter – Rose.

Debra was a lifelong caregiver. She achieved her certification as a Licensed Practical Nurse (L.P.N.) and was employed by several local healthcare facilities during her nursing career. Debra last worked at Integrity Healthcare in Anna, prior to her retirement to serve as a caregiver for her husband, during his illness. Debra earned a Bachelors Degree in Social Work from Southern Illinois University at Carbondale. During her residency in Florida, she was employed as a social worker at Life Management Center in Panama City. Professionally, Debra was a member of the National Association of Social Workers (N.A.S.W.).

Debra was a member of Panama Chapter # 102 Order of the Eastern Star in Panama City, Florida. She was also a member of the Rush L. Darby Court # 28 Order of Amaranth, also in Panama City.

Debra enjoyed a variety of hobbies and pastimes, including – horses, reading, raising house plants, and caring for her animals. Debra's love of animals extended to caring for and feeding stray cats. Following her move to Vienna she would still visit Cypress and show her concern by leaving food for stray cats. She would worry that no one else would take on this responsibility.

Debra cherished time spent with her family. She particularly enjoyed time spent with her grandchildren and watching her great grandchildren grow.

Debra worshipped at Harvest Church of Southern Illinois, located in Anna.

A service honoring the lives of Debra and Michael Gates will be conducted Saturday afternoon, September 6, 2025, at 2 P.M. at Bailey Funeral Home in Vienna. Pastor Matt Crain will officiate.

Burial will be in the Belknap Masonic Cemetery.

Visitation will be conducted Saturday afternoon, September 6, 2025, from 1 P.M. until the funeral hour at 2 P.M.

Memorials may be made to the family to assist with expenses and left in the care of Bailey Funeral Home, P.O. Box 695, Vienna, Illinois 62995. Also, the family suggests that memorials may be made to any no-kill animal shelter of the donor's choice.

Cemetery Details

Belknap Masonic Cemetery

Sunflower Lane
Belknap, IL 62908

Previous Events

Visitation

SEP 6. 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM (CT)

Bailey Funeral Home
705 North First Street
PO Box 695
Vienna, IL 62995
(618) 658-2311
baileyfhinc@hotmail.com
<https://baileyfh.com>

Service

SEP 6. 2:00 PM (CT)

Bailey Funeral Home
705 North First Street
PO Box 695
Vienna, IL 62995
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baileyfhinc@hotmail.com
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Tribute Wall

BR

“ Bobby Rentfro lit a candle in memory of Debra Gates



Bobby Rentfro - September 04, 2025 at 04:51 AM

BJ

“ Brittany Johnson lit a candle in memory of Debra Gates



Brittany Johnson - September 04, 2025 at 02:03 AM



“ Tammy Upshaw lit a candle in memory of Debra Gates



Tammy Upshaw - September 04, 2025 at 12:29 AM

KA

“ Kala lit a candle in memory of Debra Gates



Kala - September 03, 2025 at 09:24 PM

BJ

“ *Barbara Jeffress lit a candle in memory of Debra Gates*



Barbara jeffress - September 03, 2025 at 08:52 PM

TW

“ *Tammy Werner-King lit a candle in memory of Debra Gates*



Tammy Werner-King - September 03, 2025 at 07:28 PM