



Gay Dawn Davis

February 13, 1953 - April 12, 2026

Gay Dawn Davis, 73, of St. James, Missouri, passed away peacefully surrounded by her family on Sunday, April 12, 2026, at Cedar Pointe Nursing Home in Rolla, Missouri.

She was born on February 13, 1953, in San Diego, California, to the late James and Dawn (Manwarring) Burns. Gay lived a life centered on caring for others, both professionally and in her community.

Gay was a Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) and dedicated more than 30 years to working in nursing homes, where she was known for her compassion and steady presence. She also served the Sullivan Elementary School community for over 20 years as the school nurse. Affectionately known as “Nurse Gay,” she was a comforting figure to generations of children, often making everything feel better with her kindness—and the mints she was famous for handing out during visits to her office.

Before pursuing her nursing career, Gay worked as a school bus driver. She remained deeply involved in her community throughout her life, volunteering with Meals on Wheels and serving as a Girl Scout leader when her daughter was active in scouting.

Gay had a practical and generous spirit. She enjoyed sewing and was often heard saying, “Let me fix that for you—you can probably get more wear out of it.” She found joy in giving to others and was known for thoughtful gift-giving throughout the year. Family traditions were especially important to her; she cherished annual two-week camping trips to Montauk, where she loved trout

fishing with her family.

In her later years, Gay found peace in birdwatching, taking special care to keep her hummingbird feeders full so she could enjoy their visits.

Gay is survived by her children, Heather Cronk of Sullivan, Missouri, and Chris Davis and his wife, April, of St. James, Missouri; her sister, Paula Gross of Jefferson City, Missouri; her grandchildren, Blaine Emily, Shelby Emily, Ben Emily, Allie Synder, Ashton Davis, Memphis Kellogg, and Emmalynn Davis; her great-grandchildren, Ashton and Cecilia; as well as a host of extended family and many dear friends.

She was preceded in death by her parents, James and Dawn Burns; her husband, Don Davis; and her infant brother, Anthony Burns.

Gay will be remembered for her selfless heart, her dedication to caring for others, and the warmth she brought to everyone who knew her.

A Celebration of Life will be held on Saturday, May 2, 2026 at the United Methodist Church in Sullivan, Missouri with Reverend Matt Dudley officiating.

Visitation will be held from 11:00 AM until service time at 12:00PM.

Previous Events

Visitation

MAY 2. 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM (CT)

Grace United Methodist Church
952 N Church St
Sullivan, MO 63080-1195
(573) 468-6010

Celebration of Life

MAY 2. 12:00 PM.

United Methodist Church of Sullivan
Sullivan, MO

Tribute Wall

LD

“ Love, JD & Katie Dodd purchased the Full Of Love Bouquet for the family of Gay Dawn Davis.



Love, JD & Katie Dodd - April 24 at 10:19 AM

MB

“ Oh, the memories I have with this special lady. She had the biggest heart and was always doing something for someone else. She was so kind to my dad, staying with him on weekends so my mom could have a much-needed break and go with my daughter and me to horse shows. My mom always found comfort in knowing Gay was with him—and Dad absolutely loved her. She spoiled him in the best ways, letting him have things Mom wouldn't lol.

She even played a part in choosing the nursing home he went to, because we knew he would feel comforted having her there. That's just the kind of person she was—someone who made people feel safe, cared for, and loved.

I also had the honor of working with her for years, and those were truly great times. She was always willing to help, no matter the situation. I'll never forget how calm she was under pressure—like the time a child came in with rebar stuck in their leg. While others panicked, she stayed steady and focused. That was her strength.

She cared for people far beyond what was expected. I remember once feeling anxious about something with one of my boys, and she told me to bring them to the nursing home she was working at—she would check on them herself. She was that kind of person. She would give the shirt off her back to anyone in need.

She also had a way of making people feel special through the little things. Her gifts were always thoughtful, and even after retiring as a nurse, she continued helping with the book fair—often buying books for kids who didn't have the money. I'm pretty sure she gave more than she ever let on.

Her family meant a lot to her. She spoke often about her kids and grandkids—they were her pride and joy. And even when she worked two jobs, it never seemed to be for herself, she loved doing for people.

She was truly one of a kind—a legend in every sense of the word. I feel so grateful to have known her, worked alongside her, and to call her my friend. She will be deeply missed and forever remembered.

Michelle Brown - April 21 at 10:34 AM