



Laurena D. Smith

December 5, 1952 - October 30, 2025

Laurena Deniece (Hill) Smith, age 72, passed away peacefully at home on October 30, 2025. She was born on December 5, 1952, to Bayard and Christine (Turner) Hill.

Laurena attended Detroit Catholic and public schools. She was a cheerleader at John J. Pershing High School, perfecting a signature airborne twist move.

Laurena danced professionally with Garth Fagan Dance and married her college sweetheart. After earning a bachelor's degree from Wayne State University, Laurena spent her career protecting vulnerable children as a social worker. She received a coveted star award for her work contributions, including running a health fair for those in need.

She joyfully dedicated her life to being a devoted and loving mother, creating countless fun and cherished memories along the way with her only child, Doug.

Laurena retired from the State of Michigan after a long and successful career fueled by her unwavering commitment to helping others. An avid exercise enthusiast, she spent her time hiking and exploring the outdoors, traveling, cooking and reading. She also was a selfless and exemplary caregiver to her father until he passed.

Laurena was preceded in death by her parents and brother, Terrance. She will be remembered by her son, her siblings, Don Hill, Sr. (Eulalia), Ingeborg Taylor-Hill, Harry Hill, Jamil Ali (Dyan) and Christina Hill-Johnstone (Keith), a host of family and friends, and special friends Evelyn Johnson, Wanda Booker and Nicole Nelson.

Laurena was a phenomenal, strong, honest, nurturing, funny, resilient, one of a kind person. She will be missed beyond measure. May her light continue to shine in all those blessed to have known her.

The family respectfully requests that, in lieu of flowers, memorial donations be made to the Laurena D. Smith Scholarship, Sacred Heart Church Education Commission, Attention: Ingeborg Taylor-Hill, 1000 Eliot, Detroit MI. 48207

Previous Events

The family is grateful for your prayers.

NOV 3.

None

We are grateful for your prayers, there will not be a service for Laurena Smith.

Tribute Wall

TC

“Wow. I've spent a few years looking for Ms. Laurena and was not successful until now, unfortunately. As I am sitting here at home, she came across my mind and something told me to look her up and here was the obituary. I volunteered for the State of Michigan as a teenager while my mom and her worked along side of each other. I loved Ms. Laurena. We understood each other and she was like my second mom. I am saddened to learn of her passing. May she rest in peace. Love and miss you dearly Ms. Laurena.

Tara Clark - March 14 at 09:24 PM

MC

“Miss Annie Carmicheal lit a candle in memory of Laurena D. Smith



Miss Annie Carmicheal - November 19, 2025 at 07:33 PM

KJ

“Katie Johnstone lit a candle in memory of Laurena D. Smith



Katie Johnstone - November 14, 2025 at 04:51 PM

KJ

“ Aunt Lol was one of a kind. People who know me know that the two career professionals I admire the most in this world are social workers and teachers. Aunt Lol dedicated her career to helping others as a social worker, and while she may not have been a teacher in the formal sense, I learned so much from her. She led by example. She was a good person with great integrity. She was witty. She was creative. She was strong.

She may not have had a daughter, but I was lucky to have her in my life as another maternal figure. I always say that strong women raise strong women, and I'm grateful to have had a village of strong women raise me, including Aunt Lol who was a total badass. Plus, what can I say, middle kids are always fun to be around :).

Aunt Lol, this isn't a goodbye. This is an "I will see you again." If I live my life half as well as you lived yours, I hope to be joining you and Granddad one day. (Save a fishing pole and some bait for me).

Katie Johnstone - November 14, 2025 at 04:49 PM

CR

“ Charles Rodgers lit a candle in memory of
Laurena D. Smith



Charles Rodgers - November 13, 2025 at 08:48 AM

ED

“ It’s taken me a while to come to grips with the fact that Laurena has left this physical plane. I am sad and miss being able to reach out to her at anytime but I am thankful she is no longer feeling the pains nor is she struggling.

I have so many amazing memories of Loll that I’m turning to and replaying in my head in order to comfort myself. It feels selfish but for now I need to do this.

Laurena did more for me than anyone will ever know. Her advice, her smile, fun times...so much she has given me.

I’ll never forget that she even took time out of her schedule to take me for my driver’s test. What a beautiful human and gorgeous soul. I will miss you Loll so so much. Now you are pain free, flying and reuniting more amazing souls who also left us too soon.

I Will Love You Forever.

Your Nephew, Eric Dulan

Eric Dulan - November 11, 2025 at 04:37 PM

CP

“ Cousin Pamela lit a candle in memory of Laurena D. Smith



Cousin Pamela - November 11, 2025 at 11:15 AM

CP

Cousin Charles and Erica Rodgers send their condolences for the loss of Laurena. Our prayers and thoughts are with you and the Hills. 🇺🇸

Cousin Pamela - November 11, 2025 at 11:19 AM

CP

“ *Cousin Pamela lit a candle in memory of
Laurena D. Smith*



Cousin Pamela - November 10, 2025 at 06:48 PM

NM

“ *Laurena lived a life of devotion to her son, Doug, and family. Her
laugh and smile were followed or preceded by moments of great wit.
She will be forever missed while there is comfort that her deep and
enduring faith has guided her home to be with the Lord and reunited
with her parents.*

Nerissa Morris - November 08, 2025 at 09:35 AM

MC

*Doug my sincere and deepest condolences to you and your family.
Stay confident and knowing that this was a life we'll lived. Laurena is
smiling she is at peace. Trust in God he will see you through it all.*

Miss Annie Carmicheal - November 12, 2025 at 12:40 PM

CH

“ *4 files added to the album Laurena*



Christina Hill-Johnstone - November 07, 2025 at 01:47 PM

DP

May God be with Laurena Family and continue to keep them in his arms.

Dee Pickens-Monts - November 12, 2025 at 09:23 PM

CJ

“ *Cindy Johnstone lit a candle in memory of Laurena D. Smith*



Cindy Johnstone - November 03, 2025 at 06:38 PM