



Sheila Gay Williams Hester

June 19, 1951 - December 28, 2025

Sheila Gay Williams Hester, went home to be with her Lord and Savior on Sunday morning, December 28, 2025 surrounded by her loving family. Sheila is the daughter of the late Mr. and Mrs. John Davis Williams. Sheila exemplified a fierce unwavering love for God, Country, Family. Among those honoring her life are Ernie Hester, and her siblings Brenda Williams, Martha Holland (Alan), John Williams (Sherry), Kathey Watts, and Jimmy Williams. Sheila's energetic personality and joyful laughter could fill even the largest of rooms. Sheila's nature was to be a positive influence and lift up others to help them be their best. Throughout her life, Sheila invested time, energy, money, love, and guidance into each of her brothers and sisters. Although she did not have children of her own, she loved her nieces and nephews as if they were her own. Now as adults, Daniel, Alana, D.J., Adrienne, Kaitlin, and Jacquelyn cherish fond memories of Sheila during family gatherings and church. Sheila regularly treated her nieces and nephews to Saturday outings to the movies, shopping, and other activities.

Professionally, Sheila was an over-achiever as well. She served 35 years in the U.S. Army Reserves, 87 th Division (Exercise) in Birmingham, AL. In 1993, Sheila Gay Williams, made history by becoming the first female Sergeant Major (E-9) in the history of the 87 th Division. The rank of Sergeant Major is the highest military rank held by enlisted soldiers. Her military awards

include the Meritorious Service Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Armed Forces Reserve Medal, Army Reserves Component Medal with 2 Oak Leaf Clusters, NCO Development Ribbon, Army Service Ribbon, Marksman Marksmanship Badge Rifle/M-16. Education was extremely important to Sheila. Her military education includes Non-Commissioned (NCO) Basic and Advanced Courses, Observer Control Course, Senior NCO Course, First Sergeant Course, Master Fitness Trainer, Command Sergeant Major (Designee), Small Group Instructor Trainer, and Sergeants Major Academy.

In addition to her military education and career, Sheila graduated from the University of Alabama in Birmingham with a double major in accounting and finance, and the Birmingham School of Law. As a Certified Public Accountant (CPA), she retired as the Chief Housing Auditor with the Birmingham Housing Authority.

Sheila attended the Church of the Highlands and read her Bible faithfully. She believed in the promises of the Lord: He has prepared a place for all who believe in Him (John 14:2-3) and she would one day dwell in the house of the Lord forever (Psalm 23).

Sheila Williams Hester will be laid to rest with full military honors on Wednesday, January 7, 2026 at 11:45 AM in the Alabama National Cemetery. 3133 Hwy 119, Montevallo, AL 35115.

In lieu of flowers, please consider honoring Sheila's memory by sponsoring a wreath and/or volunteering with the Alabama National Cemetery – Wreaths Across America. <https://www.wreathscrossamerica.org/pages/15482/Overview/?relatedId=0>

Cemetery Details

Alabama National Cemetery

3133 Highway 119
Montevallo, AL 35115

Previous Events

Funeral Service

JAN 7. 11:45 AM (CT)

Alabama National Cemetery
3133 Highway 119
Montevallo, AL 35115

Tribute Wall

RP

“ My wife, Jan, and I both had the honor of serving with Sheila at the 87th. She always wore a smile and greeted you when meeting in the hallways or outside the Reserve Center. She was the epitome of class

We both have such wonderful memories of Sheila. Some of my favorite memories are attending Chapel services with Sheila. She lived the Army values and ethos. We were so proud of her upon her promotion to SGM/E-9.

Lord, we thank you for Your servant, Sheila Williams Hester. She served You faithfully and serving this Nation faithfully. Please bless this family during this time of loss. Amen

We love you Sheila!

Jan & Rocky Pienezza

Rocky Pienezza - January 09 at 02:32 PM

JC

“ My love and sympathies to all of the Williams family on the passing of Shelia. She was such an accomplished woman as loved her family with such passion. Each of you did an amazing job caring for her and giving her dignity and love in the difficult years. May God comfort you as only he can!



Jonnie

Jonnie Caddell - January 06 at 09:48 PM



“ *I am deeply heartbroken by the loss of this remarkable Lady and Soldier. She was consistently kind, respectful, and positive in all she did. Another shining light has gone home to be with the Lord. My prayers are with her family and friends, that God may comfort and strengthen them during this difficult time.*

Bob Pearl

Paula Pearl - January 01 at 12:12 PM