



## Irene Frances (Bowker) Matthew

April 9, 1917 - December 29, 2012

Irene Frances (Bowker) Matthew was born April 9, 1917, in Lansdowne PA, to Irene Frances (Rementer) Bowker and Edwin Bowker. As a road construction foreman, Edwin was staying in the boarding house run by his future mother-in-law when he won the elder Irene's heart. Their only child was born at home with her grandmother and Aunt Lillian in attendance. Young Irene's father's job required frequent moves. She spent parts of her childhood in Baton Rouge, in Cuba, and in Valencia, Spain, where she finished her primary education. During the Spanish Civil War, non-nationals were expelled and forced to abandon the money they had placed in Spanish banks. Irene and her family then returned to the U.S. and lived in her great-uncle's house in Massachusetts. After a while her father landed a job in Lee, MA (in the Berkshires); Irene enjoyed playing basketball and ice skating; she graduated from high school there. Before she graduated from Mount Holyoke College (MA) in 1939, her parents had moved to New Orleans. Armed with her degree in Humanities and Romance Languages, Irene joined her parents in Louisiana and went to secretarial school. After that graduation, she secured a job at New Orleans Public Service in their secretary pool; she quickly became Executive Secretary to the President, A. B. Patterson. During this climb to one of the higher rungs of the ladder available to the women of her day, she met her future husband, Frederick Charles Matthew, in Church; and, after a long courtship, he won her heart. They married in June, 1944, just before Fred's military orders sent him to Europe. He served in the Mechanized Cavalry

Reconnaissance Division, where he arranged the surrender of an SS fragmented division in the Austrian Alps.

After Fred's return from Europe and a period of recovery from his internal injuries and undiagnosed PTSD, he and Irene built their home, which stands today, in Metairie on juxtapositional lots they had bought before being wed. They were featured on the front page of the local newspapers for building a levee around their home, saving it from the flood of 1947. She remembered seeing something move on the bathroom floor. When her glasses were on, she saw it was a water moccasin; which was quickly dispatched by Fred.

Irene left her position with NOPSI to concentrate on rearing two children, as she continued to help her husband as his bookkeeper and secretary for their manufacturing and distribution business. Once the children were in high school, her husband hired a bookkeeper so that Irene was free to received her credentials in Library Science. She spent most of her employment years with Jefferson Parish as manager of the Harahan Library. She was a krewe member of Iris for many years, also a member of Stonecroft Ministries, a non-denominational, non-profit Christian organization providing global leadership in women's ministry. Its mission is to "equip and encourage women to impact their communities with the Gospel of Jesus Christ where her daughter-in-law for a time was president. She served as an officer with the American Association of University Women and the Jefferson Parish Historical Society. She was a Board Member along with her two children for the Jefferson Parish Museum, founded by her husband in 1970 becoming after his death a non-profit corporation with her son as Curator.

Irene is predeceased by her parents and her husband. She is survived by her children, Frederick Edwin (Christine Pettus) and Charlotte Lillian (Timothy Parker) and five grandchildren: Kimberly Matthew Reck (Mathew J. Reck), Frederick Charles Matthew, II, John Aaron Matthew (Emily Johnson Matthew),

Irene Frances Matthew Parker, Katherine Caroline Matthew-Parker, and six great-grandchildren.

Relatives and friends are invited to attend the Funeral Service at Metairie Ridge Presbyterian Church, 215 Phosphor Ave., Metairie on Saturday, January 5, 2013 at 1:00 p.m., with visitation beginning at noon. Evening visitation at the Kenner Funeral Home of L. A. Muhleisen and Son, 2607 Williams Blvd. on Friday, January 4, 2013 from 6 pm until 8 pm. Interment at Garden of Memories Cemetery.

# Cemetery Details

## Garden of Memories Cemetery

4900 Airline Dr.  
Metairie, LA 70001

# Previous Events

## Visitation

JAN 4. 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM (CT)

L.A. Muhleisen & Son Funeral Home  
2607 Williams Blvd  
Kenner, LA 70062  
(504) 466-8577  
info@muhleisen.com

## Visitation

JAN 5. 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM (CT)

Metairie Ridge Presbyterian Church  
215 Phosphor Avenue  
Metairie, LA 70005

## Service

JAN 5. 1:00 PM (CT)

Metairie Ridge Presbyterian Church  
215 Phosphor Avenue  
Metairie, LA 70005



# Tribute Wall



“ *Irene Frances (Bowker) Matthew*

October 15, 2023 at 09:39 PM



“ *SO SORRY TO HEAR YOUR MOM PASSED  
SHE WAS A NICE LADY & FRIEND  
SHE WILL BE MISSED  
SHARON LANG & LORRAINE AUFRECHT*

SHARON LANG - April 10, 2013 at 09:46 PM



“ *R.I.P Mrs. Irene. You were my sunshine at work. No other patient will ever take your place. God blessed me when he brought you into my life. I'll remember and love you always! Your angel??*

Crystal Davis - January 26, 2013 at 09:38 AM



“ *I met Mrs Matthew only one time. I will always remember the encounter. Fred was wheeling her in her wheelchair. We shared some time together at a business luncheon. Her spirit captivated mine. She was so pleasant to be with.*

*Mom, Grandma and friend Mrs. Matthew, will be sorely missing from our lives. But as believers in the life, death and resurrection of our LORD Jesus Christ, we have hope of being reunited in a land where there is no more dying and the sun never sets because Jesus, the Son of God, is the Light that lights that world. I look forward to that day, Fred.*

Karl Lewis - January 07, 2013 at 11:51 AM

PB

“ We were sorry to hear of Irene's passing. We remember how much she enjoyed the trip to Venezuela for Johnny's wedding. She enjoyed sharing childhood memories and practicing her Spanish. John and I wish the family a time of comfort, peace and joy as you remember and celebrate Irene's life at the viewing and funeral.  
*John and Pam Bryant*

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**Pamela Bryant** - January 04, 2013 at 04:39 PM

RB

“ *Uncle Ed,*  
  
*Your mother had a beautiful smile and spirit! So sorry for your loss, and y'all are in my prayers.*  
  
*Rachel Bryant*

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**Rachel Bryant** - January 03, 2013 at 03:15 PM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Irene Frances (Bowker) Matthew.*



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January 03, 2013 at 12:44 AM

JB

“ *Uncle Ed,*

*Angela and I were very sorry to learn of your mother's passing. Our thoughts and prayers are with you and the family.*

*John and Angela Bryant*

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**John Bryant** - January 02, 2013 at 03:33 AM

DA

“ *Ms. Matthew, I am so sorry to hear of the passing of your mother. My deepest sympathy and most sincere prayers are with you and your family during this difficult time. Always remember to Trust God even when Trusting Him seems to be the most difficult thing to do at the time. May His Presence surround you all and His Loving Peace bring you all comfort. He is Still God and He's Definitely Able to see and carry you through. Be Blessed and Comforted...*

*Delisha Adams*

*Benjamin Franklin Elementary School*

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**Delisha Adams** - January 01, 2013 at 04:12 PM

JB

*Irene was a much loved and respected member of MRPC for many years. She has now reached her final reward. God bless you all.*

*Jack Boudreaux*

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**Jack Boudreaux** - January 03, 2013 at 10:39 PM