



Karen J. Gunnels

October 11, 1965 - May 18, 2025

Mrs. Karen J. Gunnels, age 59 of Griffin, passed away on Sunday, May 18, 2025. Karen was born October 11, 1965, in Shreveport, Louisiana.

Karen was beautiful inside and out. She was a loving wife and mother. She was also a devoted friend.

Karen was a Journalism graduate from Louisiana Tech. She went on to get her masters in English, as well as Education. Karen first worked at Ruston Daily Leader. After a few years of working at the paper, Karen took a teaching job in Spalding County, GA. Karen taught for several years at both Griffin and Spalding High Schools before returning to her true passion of journalism at the Griffin Daily News in 2016.

As a reporter there, Karen won top Awards from the Georgia Press Association year after year. She was promoted to Managing Editor in 2021 at the Griffin Daily News. Even then, she continued to be a fearless and relentless reporter, uncovering corruption at the highest levels of local government and covering crime and courts, where she reported on some of the biggest trials in Spalding County, GA.

The only thing Karen loved more than her work was her family - husband Darren, daughter Katie, and son Jacob. Karen is also survived by her brother, Ryan Jones, and her mother, Bettye Bogue Jones, both of Griffin. She is also

survived by her Griffin family: Royce Gunnels, Blake Gunnels, Susan Gunnels Hodgson and husband Peter. She was preceded in death by her father, Franky Cleveland Jones, grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. O.D. Jones, Mr. and Mrs. Leon Bogue, and Bernie Gunnels.

Karen will be missed terribly by all who were fortunate enough to know her. She was a beautiful, loving, kind, sweet, generous, hard-working, funny, stubborn soul. She was also a ravenous fan of Rick Springfield, whom she saw in concert numerous times, meeting him several times. Karen was original and loved by many. There will never be another like her.

Services will be Saturday, May 24, 2025, starting with a 10:00 AM visitation with a funeral service to be held at 11:00 AM at Haisten McCullough Funeral Home, 1155 Everee Inn Rd., Griffin, GA.

In lieu of flowers, please make donations to Stepping Stones Educational Therapy Center, 141 Futral Road, Griffin, GA 30224.

Cemetery Details

Westwood Gardens and Mausoleum

1155 Everee Inn Road
Griffin, GA 30224
(770) 229-4998

Previous Events

Visitation

MAY 24. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (ET)

Haisten McCullough Funeral Home
1155 Everee Inn Road
Griffin, GA 30224
(770) 229-4994
<https://www.haistenmcculloughfunerals.com>

Service

MAY 24. 11:00 AM (ET)

Haisten McCullough Funeral Home
1155 Everee Inn Road
Griffin, GA 30224
(770) 229-4994
<https://www.haistenmcculloughfunerals.com>

Tribute Wall



“ *Lavender Reflections Spray was purchased for the family of Karen J. Gunnels.*



May 23, 2025 at 03:42 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Karen J. Gunnels.

May 23, 2025 at 03:42 PM



“ *Enchanted Cottage was purchased for the family of Karen J. Gunnels.*



May 23, 2025 at 09:49 AM

TB

“Karen Gunnels was an exceptional human being. She was a fine teacher, a caring cheerleading coach, a dedicated Senior Prom coordinator, a loving wife and mother, and a loyal friend and colleague. I was blessed by her kindness during the years we worked together at Spalding High School, and it was inspiring to watch the impact she had on the students she taught and coached, both in and out of the classroom. She was proof that angels walk among us. I send my deepest condolences to her entire family during this difficult time. May the Lord bless and hold Karen in the palm of his hand now and always. Karen, I will be forever grateful that our paths were able to cross. Rest in eternal peace.

Todd D. Benz - May 23, 2025 at 08:40 AM

WW

“Karen last time I saw you you were still in high school. It's been many years in one way but way way too early in so many more. I remember your smile and your laugh and how close you and Ryan were. I remember our trips out to the lake for a day swimming with your mother and Friends, when I took you to the Donnie and Marie Osmond concert and you were so excited you could barely contain yourself. And I especially remember our trip to Dresden Florida on the way back after being in the car and hotel room with you and Ryan that weekend I told you when I got back to Shreveport I was having a vasectomy at age 21. I didn't get to see you graduate college and start your career and your marriage and children that I see from the pictures in the post on here you had a wonderful life. Keep smiling girl.

William Woods

William C Woods - May 23, 2025 at 12:56 AM

SC

“ Stacey and Andy Cernicky purchased the *Your Light Shines* for the family of Karen J. Gunnels.



Stacey and Andy Cernicky - May 22, 2025 at 11:08 PM

SC

“ Stacey and Andy Cernicky planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Karen J. Gunnels.

Stacey and Andy Cernicky - May 22, 2025 at 11:08 PM

KA

“ I wouldn’t have made it through my first year of teaching if it hadn’t been for Karen. She was someone I could lean on—and she made everything more fun. One night in particular stands out: Buckhead, the Violent Femmes, and a fishbowl. Enough said.



Karen had the most beautiful blue eyes, a radiant smile, and a laugh that could light up any room. Some of my favorite memories are of us dancing in her living room to 80s music, completely carefree.

Darren, you made her light up. She loved you deeply. And Katie and Jacob—your mom was so incredibly proud of you. You could see it in her eyes every time she spoke about you.

My sincerest condolences to Karen’s family and to everyone who loved her.

Karen was a true friend, and I feel so blessed to have had her in my life. I’m going to miss my Ya-Ya sister.

Kristine Ahrens

Kristine Ahrens - May 22, 2025 at 09:30 PM

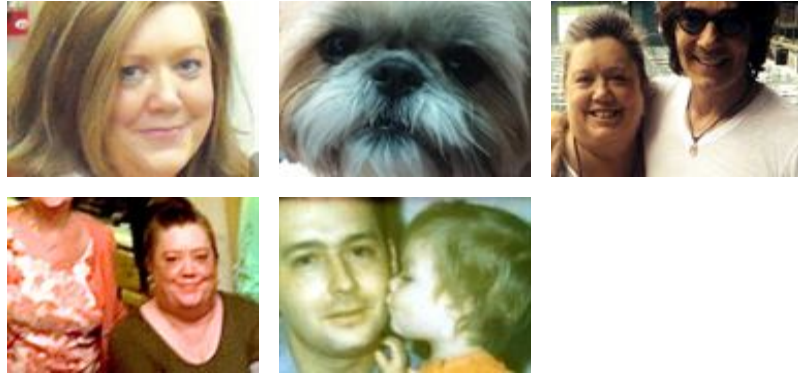
AB

“ I am saddened to hear of Karen passing. She was such a good person and teacher. My favorite memory was at a Rick Springfield concert, she jump on the stage and was right there with him singing. Such a fun spirit and always a good friend. Much love to family,
Amanda Breland

Amanda Breland - May 22, 2025 at 12:13 PM



“ 18 files added to the album Life Tributes



Haisten McCullough Funeral Home - May 22, 2025 at 11:07 AM

RK

“ R.I.P. Mrs. Gunnels

She was my Freshman 6th period English teacher at SHS in 2012❤️

I vaguely remember her reading us a story about a cyclops, as she was teaching us about Mythology. May she rest in heavenly peace. My condolences to her family.



Reana Kurasaka - May 22, 2025 at 11:02 AM



“ Medium Dish Garden was purchased for the family of Karen J. Gunnels.



May 22, 2025 at 10:43 AM



“ 17 files added to the album *Life Tributes*



Haisten McCullough Funeral Home - May 22, 2025 at 09:05 AM



“ *Full Of Love Bouquet* was purchased for the family of Karen J. Gunnels.



May 21, 2025 at 10:30 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Karen J. Gunnels.

May 21, 2025 at 10:30 PM

LA

“ My dear friend, Karen —oh what an amazing smile you had & an even better laugh! There are far too many great memories from spending summer break going to Atlanta Braves baseball games, to loud 80s music “therapy” , a much too fun trip to New Orleans, & of course, MANY road trips to Rick Springfield concerts. Thelma & Louise - YaYa sisterhood -books & discussions of books. I will always remember the light & the laughter of those times. Now may the light of God’s glory shine on you & give your body rest & your soul peace ❤️



*My heartfelt sympathy for you Darren, Katie, & Jacob —you were her treasure!
Also, deep condolences for her entire family & all those that feel her loss!*

Larissa Earnest

Larissa - May 21, 2025 at 08:44 PM

MS

“ Mrs.Gunnel was my daughter Lydia Ali Simmons Cheerleader Coach at Griffin High during her Freshman year. That year we won 1st place during the competition the first time for Griffin High School. She was a great Coach. Karen was also a member of Griffin Spalding Association of Education at that time I was the President. The last few years I've talked to her when I needed to put information in the News Paper. She assisted me to make sure that all of my information was correct and on time. She was a special person to us during her time at G.H.S. Spalding County we've lost a great one that the Lord has received back. I will continue to pray for your Family.All my Love Mrs.Shirley Ali and Mrs.Lydia A. Simmons

Mrs.Shirley S.Ali - May 21, 2025 at 03:08 PM