



Shirley Cornwell St. Etienne

May 14, 2026

Shirley Cornwell St. Etienne departed this earthly life for eternity on Thursday, May 14, 2026, at the age of 98.

Shirley was born on January 24, 1928 in New Orleans. She was baptized and confirmed at Corpus Christi Catholic Church and on January 31, 1948 exchanged vows with Emile St. Etienne at the same church. Together they raised a family and enjoyed 23 years of marriage until her husband's untimely death in 1971. Going from homemaker to breadwinner, she began a career with the New Orleans Public Schools Food service program until her retirement in 1991.

As her family grew, Shirley became "Granny" to generations of loved ones. A wonderful cook, she often complimented her own meals before anyone else could. Shirley cherished her family, enjoyed being around others, and remained close to her siblings. Her lively sense of humor brightened every conversation.

At 98, Shirley still made her bed each morning, exercised in bed, and did her best to remain as independent as possible. But this year it seems God had another plan for her. He called her home on May 14 and she accepted.

She is preceded in death by her parents John Cornwell, Sr. and Almina Fornerette, husband Emile St. Etienne, Jr., infant daughter Jenet St. Etienne and son Emile St. Etienne III, one sister Maxine Cornwell Rose and two brothers John and Louis Cornwell.

She leaves to cherish her memories one daughter Jeanne (Ronald) Ayler, one

son, Glenn St. Etienne, siblings Louise Denson Simmons and Charles Denson, six grandchildren, Michelle (Derrick) Melton, Brandon (Ashlyn) Ayler, Shandra St. Etienne Bowens, Christopher, Sean and Kelsey St. Etienne, seven great grandchildren, devoted nieces Robin Gorman and Rachelle Gilliard, devoted friend Gloria Perrier, and a host of nieces, great nieces, nephews, great nephews and other relatives and friends.

Relatives and friends of the family are invited to attend a Memorial Service on Saturday, June 20, 2026 at Rhodes Funeral Home, 3933 Washington Ave. Visitation will begin at 1:00pm followed by the Memorial Service at 1:30pm. Interment: Private.

In lieu of flowers, please consider making a gift in memory of Shirley St. Etienne to Lighthouse Louisiana (lighthouselouisiana.org/give/)

Please visit www.rhodesfuneral.com to sign the online guest book.

Cemetery Details

Private

Upcoming Events

Visitation

JUN 20. 1:00 PM - 1:30 PM (CT)

Rhodes Funeral Home - Washington Avenue
3933 Washington Avenue
New Orleans, LA 70125
(504) 822-7162
<https://www.rhodesfuneral.com>

Funeral Service

JUN 20. 1:30 PM (CT)

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