



Paula Kay Key

March 24, 1941 - June 19, 2020

For decades and up to a few short weeks ago, Paula Kay (Ampey) Key would call each of her daughters and sons on their birthdays, and belt out the “happy birthday” song. The whole song. Every word. In slow, operatic fashion. They let her. And they loved it, even when they pretended to be embarrassed. Over time, Paula would add her grandchildren and great grandchildren to the rotation, so they, too, could look forward to the musical tribute, which she sometimes left on their voicemail when she couldn’t make a live connection.

Sadly, Paula’s sweet voice fell silent on June 19, 2020. It was on that day that she “left this earthly expression,” as she used to say when others made their own final transition. Paula passed peacefully at home in Columbia, Maryland, surrounded by her four children, who had gathered in recent weeks to care for her during her last illness.

Paula was born in Paw Paw, Michigan on March 24, 1941, to the late Paul Russell Ampey and Louisa May (Brown) Ampey. She and her younger brother Kenneth grew up in farm country among their many Ampey cousins. Paula attended and graduated from Paw Paw High School. She participated actively in sit-ins and other forms of peaceful protest in the early years of the civil rights movement.

While a student at Western Michigan University, Paula met and married Sam

Key. After the birth of their first daughter, they relocated to Altadena, California, where they added another daughter and two sons to the roost. Sam was passionate in his pursuit of a professional basketball career, so the family moved to Belgium after he missed making Oakland's NBA team. They lived there for eight years, during which Paula planned and organized the family's many vacations throughout Europe and Northern Africa. That's when Paula developed her zeal for travel. It would remain with her for life.

After returning stateside, having recently divorced, Paula set out on a new life adventure, completing travel school, getting her first job as an agent, and establishing residence with her four children in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Not long into her career, she transferred to her travel agency's Washington, D.C. office, and moved with her two sons to Columbia, Maryland (her daughters were already in college by then).

Paula met Dr. Russell Davis a few years later, and the two spent the next three decades together sharing their mutual love of travel, politics, music, and family. Paula tended to Russell with loving care through his long-term illness, until his death in August 2019.

Paula leaves to honor her journey, the family she loved so deeply: her four children - Darlynda Key Bogle (David); Kimberlee Key; Michael Key; and Steven Key (Janka); her ten grandchildren - Brandon, Evan, Ryan, Jalen, Brickney (Darnell), Tayler, Kammeron, Kendal, Sidney, and Noah; her five great grandchildren - Benny, Kaleb, Konnor, Alivia, and Zaylah; a host of nieces, nephews, and cousins from the Ampeys and Keys; her many "heart" children and grandchildren, born of additional unions and family expansion; and numerous dear friends close enough to call kin.

In this time of extra health precautions, our family will not host a service or other gathering this year. Instead, we will incorporate a brief tribute into the

rescheduled "Grand Ampey Reunion" in Paw Paw, currently set for August 2021. According to her wishes, Paula's ashes will be laid to rest in the family plot with her mother and late brother, also in Paw Paw.

We kindly ask anyone wishing to honor Paula with a donation, to please select a charity advancing the health and well-being of children, as nothing broke her heart more than to see or hear of their suffering.

Thank you and God bless.

Tribute Wall

HR

“ I had a horrible sinking feeling when I called Paula's number and learned that it was disconnected. We last talked when Russell passed and I could not attend his service as we were out of town. This year has been so difficult for so many reasons. So, to learn that Paula had passed as well was such a shock. I loved working with her at Devon Walker Travel. She was such a class act and I learned a lot from her. I remember so much about her and all of the kids and much loved grand children, and her Mom (who lived at Friendship Terrace where I also worked). I will always remember her with love and much affection and send love and condolences to all family.
Helen Ramsey

Helen Ramsey - August 30, 2020 at 07:31 PM

PH

“ *With loving memories of Paula Key.*

Priscilla (Peach) Hooks - August 18, 2020 at 07:24 PM

DB

“ *Feeling Mom's beautiful presence today.*

Darlynda Bogle - July 25, 2020 at 10:19 AM

MB

“ *Inspiring, creative, beautiful, beloved mother, strong woman, nurturing soul. Words can hardly describe her life, love and spirit she gave so many.*

Mark Baker - July 21, 2020 at 06:24 PM

CO

“ For my Dear Sister and Best Friend. Loved and missed every single day.

Connie - July 21, 2020 at 05:07 PM

DB

“ As I find more reasons to smile each day in remembering Mom, I wanted to share a list of \"what Mom loved\" that my siblings and I started. Maybe you can add to it? Strawberry malted milkshakes. The largest size. Ok if sometimes the malted part was missing. A good ol hamburger (\"I hardly ever eat them,\" she would say each month as she bit into one). Traveling around the world. Planning her clients' trips around the world. Cooking and eating exotic foods. Even when she was the only one who would eat them. Planting and tending to her flower garden. Each year, starting with the hibiscus and portulaca on Mother's Day. Her MSNBC shows. Especially Rachel. And Joy. Reading. Fiction, non-fiction, biographies, historical, all of it. Hardcover books. Paperbacks. Kindle. Especially late at night, and sometimes all night. Brassrubbing. A hobby she started when we lived overseas. She rubbed and collected hundreds of them. And framed and hung dozens.

Dede Bogle - July 21, 2020 at 03:02 PM

DS

“ Aunt Kay was always so kind to me and always was so loving to my daughter. I am so heartbroken and she will be missed.

Darecia Scott & Danielle Scott - July 12, 2020 at 05:40 PM

AL

“ *Paula was such a wise, lovely lady. The adoration of her children is well deserved. I always enjoyed her company and marveled at her perfect combination of admirable values combined with a hearty dose of common sense.*

Antonia Lenane - July 09, 2020 at 07:42 PM

KK

“ *My Mom is missed every second of every day. One of her last requests of me, was to give her a mani/pedi! She \"demanded\" that I put bling polish on each nail and not just the ring finger! Of course, I obliged and proceeded to add it to her toes as well. My siblings and I appreciate all the kind phone calls, cards, texts, FB messages, & flowers. I really love & miss my Mom, love Kimmie Kim! 😊💜*

Kimberlee Key - July 09, 2020 at 01:39 PM

BC

“ *Wishing you peace to bring comfort, courage to face the days ahead and loving memories to forever hold in your hearts.*

Brandi, Bruce, Carter, and Twix Caughman - July 08, 2020 at 10:51 AM