



Mahala Elizabeth Ernest

March 26, 1942 - November 6, 2025

Mahala, whose journey began somewhere near Ranger, Georgia, passed from this life in the same unmistakable way she lived it: entirely on her own terms. She was the beloved daughter of Lora P. Ernest and was raised by her mother and grandmother, Katie Earnest. Although Mahala did not have a family of her own, she was surrounded by love and care until her last day. She became a cherished member of Agnes and her mother, Eva's, family, filling their lives with warmth and joy.

A woman of grit, humor, and unmatched stubborn charm, Mahala spent many years as a dedicated X-ray technician. She cared for others deeply, even while carrying her own burdens. She eventually stepped away from her career to face life head-on, in her own way, and at her own pace.

Mahala was a loyal and passionate animal lover. Her home was always shared with cats — each one convinced they were her favorite — and she held a lifelong devotion to horses. Long before Asheville grew into the city it is today, she rode horses along unpaved mountain roads and fell deeply in love with the place that became her true home. She knew many of the people who helped shape Asheville into the vibrant community it is today, and she remained fiercely proud of its history, beauty, and spirit.

She cherished the Biltmore Estate, found comfort in the mountains that

surrounded her, and spent quiet hours lost in books, especially those by her favorite author, James Patterson.

Mahala's sharp wit could cut like a scalpel, but it was always followed by laughter. She defended those she loved with fiery loyalty and never sugar-coated a thing in her life. Though she could be difficult to know, people found themselves drawn to her — returning again and again for her humor, her unexpected tenderness, and her unfiltered, unforgettable perspective.

She leaves behind a legacy of independence, unapologetic honesty, and deep — if unconventional — love. Those who knew her will remember the laughter she sparked, the animals she protected, the spirited battles she waged with squirrels at the bird feeder, and the way she made life a little wilder, funnier, and brighter.

She was one of a kind, and she will be deeply missed.

-In Keeping With Her Wishes-

In accordance with Mahala's wishes, there will be no memorial service. She asked to be remembered as she was in happier moments.

Mahala will be laid to rest alongside her mother and grandmother, several hours from Asheville. For this reason, we kindly ask that no flowers be sent, as they cannot be transported to the burial site.

For those wishing to honor her memory, Mahala leaves behind her beloved cat, Tinker, along with several other cats she inherited from a dear lifelong friend. They will continue to be cared for with love. Donations of cat food are welcome in lieu of flowers. Any surplus will be donated to a local nonprofit animal shelter — a cause Mahala supported whenever she was able.

Due to changes in the decisions made by Ingles Management and Corporate, the setup date for the memory bins for Mahala Ernest has been altered. Anyone wishing to donate in memory of Mahala is welcome to call 828-676-9918, and we will arrange for pickup. Additionally, gift cards for local pet stores such as Petco and Petsmart can be mailed to PO Box 16934, Asheville, NC 28816. Thank you for your understanding and support. For the convenience of neighbors and others, a bin will be placed on Mahala's porch, specifically for canned food items, due to the presence of bears in the area. We will begin setting up bins on November 17, 2025, and continue until November 30, 2025.

Tribute Wall



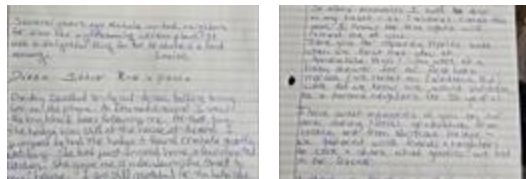
“ Hello everyone,

I want to take a moment to express my deepest gratitude to all of you for sharing your cherished memories of Mahala. She was undoubtedly a loving and caring individual who had a special affection for her kitties. Mahala always enjoyed seeing horses and often recounted stories of her horseback riding adventures back when Asheville didn't even have paved roads. Her presence will forever remain in our hearts and memories.

I also want to extend my heartfelt thanks to everyone who made donations for her kitties. Rest assured, they will be well taken care of. Additionally, I am sharing a picture of some personal notes from her friends and neighbors who kindly donated kitty food to her house and shared their moments with Mahala.

Once again, thank you all so much for your kindness, memories, and stories. Mahala would have greatly appreciated each one of you for your friendship.

*Warm regards,
Agnes & Eva*



Agnes & Eva - December 03, 2025 at 07:43 AM

JD

“ So thankful Mahala had such good friends there for her. I can still see her pushing that big & noisy portable x-ray machine through the halls at Mission from long years ago. Her love & devotion to animals is so greatly appreciated. Thank you for all you did to make the earthly end for her easier. My condolences to you for your loss.
Jane Dotson R.N.

Jane Dotson - November 18, 2025 at 03:52 PM

TE

“ Mahala and I shared a great love of animals for many years and I knew her also when she worked at Mission Hospital. What a light of love she was and so extremely funny! She adopted a torti persian from the rescue I worked with many years ago and the cat fell madly in love with her. I will miss her beautiful smile, fly high young lady!
Love Terry Miltier

terry - November 17, 2025 at 12:50 PM

JM

“ Mahala was certainly one of a kind and always fun to be around.
RIP my friend.

Jim Miller - November 16, 2025 at 09:01 PM

TK

“ I was always in awe of Mahala for caring around those big c-arms through the OR, the way she did. One day I pushed one a little too hard and she said not that hard. I loved her so much and loved her humor!!! She was one of a kind. I missed her when I moved to TN.

Tracey Helmuth Keller - November 15, 2025 at 08:56 PM

JF

“ Mahala was certainly a character, very realistic in her view of life. A real pleasant addition to the human race. I don't remember the exact details but Scotty -her best friend at mission told me during some type of inclement weather mahala had Scotty go out to do to do a special favor for his best buddy -she had surgeryWell, as I remember it Scotty wasn't thrilled about the snowy adventure when it was determined he was going to go feed some stray cats but for his friend he did it. From a personal note seemed like Mahala always got fellow xray techs to use their right / left markers as she claimed she still had her original markers and from the looks of them I always believed her. Someone once said You always make people happy, either when you come or when you go. Safe to say Mahala was in the first group. Last thought we should all be as consistent as Mahala was in life - truly down to earth!

john glenn fellow mission hosp friend - November 14, 2025 at 09:34 AM

AW

“ Loved this lady. She was a bit of an icon at Mission Radiology. When doing an evening shift rotation as a student, she was my teacher for portables and OR. She was very proud to show me the "purple staircase". That paint still exists today on the railings for those stairs! I think of her every time I take that route. Good times.

Andrea Wilson - November 13, 2025 at 07:26 PM



“ Mahala was a wonderful lady, I had the privilege of working with her as a brand new tech. She worked mostly in the OR and always had me do “her paperwork”. She would bring it to me after her cases and have me complete them for her. When I went on maternity leave she told me to “put my baby in drawer in the dresser and he would be fine while I came to work to do her paperwork” he would just sleep she said and would be safe. She always had me laughing but she was serious she wanted me back to help her with her paperwork. She was set in her ways at work with her magazines and her dinner time with Scotty. I am glad a got to see her not long ago and hug her neck, she remembered me after all this time. What a wonderful lady who will be missed

Jamie Dewey - November 12, 2025 at 09:39 PM



“ I loved Mahala...
Great woman, taught me much that made successful! Miss you and know you loved the cats. Maybe that's why they say hi to me....

Chris Chandler - November 12, 2025 at 08:54 PM



“ Mahala was my coworker and everyone was always happy to see hee walk through the door at Mission Hospital. She had a great sense of humor with a little sass and I always loved her "find the needle" magazine she would bring into work as well as her bird ones. Never gonna forget her skeleton in the back of her car in parking garage spooking passerby. One if kind lady. I am very blessed to have been her coworker and share her love for the kitties. May all she has loved welcomed her home.

Stephanie Kaleda - November 12, 2025 at 08:34 PM

AH

“ *Mahala was my friend! I loved her so very much! We was buddies at Mission and I kept in touch after she left. She was one of a kind. Her loves for animals was amazing. She will be missed.*

Abbie Hyder - November 12, 2025 at 08:25 PM

DS

Diane Sitton. Mahala will be greatly missed. I was her caregiver, she also became my friend. She can rest now. Loved her.

Diane Sitton - November 12, 2025 at 09:49 PM

JG

I remember her well from Mission. Her kindness and her spunk made an impression on me. May her memory be a blessing!

James Garrison - November 15, 2025 at 08:32 AM

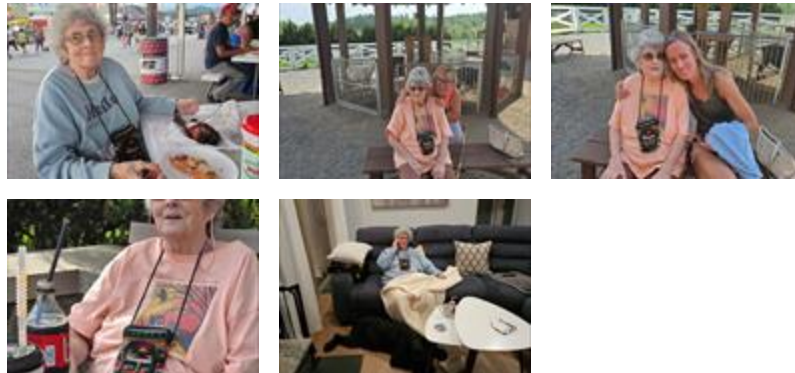
KO

Mahala was my grammar school classmate at St. Genevieve's til 8th grade. And stayed in sporadic touch over the years. She was so smart, so funny, so full of mischief and kind to a fault. Our favorite memory together was of weekend days when we were around ten years old, in the woods behinds her house. We made a project out of hacking away like lumberjack at a very tall tree with small hatchets. One sunny afternoon we heard a very loud Crack, realized the tree was falling and ran for our lives! She was full of adventure, fearless and determined in a life that made a difference in so many ways.

Kieta Osteen-Cochrane - November 16, 2025 at 06:35 PM



“ 9 files added to the album Memories



Morris Funeral Home - November 12, 2025 at 05:37 PM

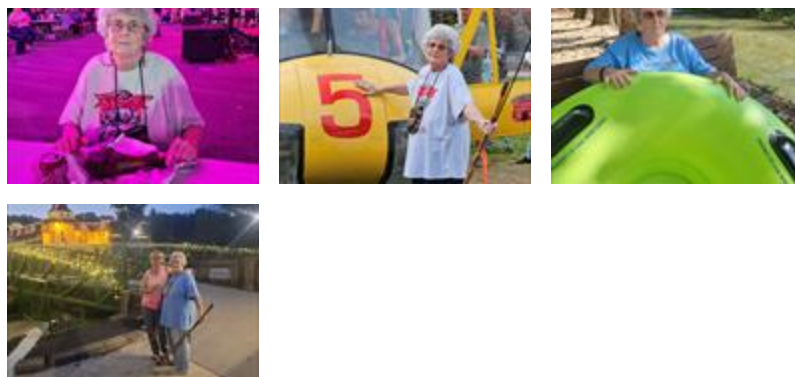
RM

“ We were so fortunate to have known Mahala through many decades! She had a compassionate nature towards all living beings, especially her cats! She always had a welcoming smile on her face and an optimistic attitude! She will be missed!

Rick and Bettye Meyer - November 12, 2025 at 05:37 PM



“ 4 files added to the album Memories



Morris Funeral Home - November 12, 2025 at 12:10 PM

BB

Mahala was my customer at Ingles 29 Tunnel Rd. She was a regular at the store and up until last year she bought me lunch when she was able. We shared a love of cats and rescue and a friendship with Agnes. She was a very caring person.

Blanche Berger - November 12, 2025 at 07:51 PM