



Mary Cobb Martin

October 13, 1940 - March 21, 2025

Mary Cobb Martin passed away peacefully on Friday March 21st, 2025, with her daughter, Linda Lipka and her son, Steven Martin by her side.

Mary was born on Sunday October 13th, 1940, at her family home in Black Oak Arkansas. She moved to Ferguson Mo with her family as a toddler and grew up at the corner of Millman and Robert. She went to Central School and Ferguson High School, now Ferguson Middle School. She was a proud graduate of Washington University School of Art and graduated in 1962.

Her first job was working for Hallmark designing greeting cards in Kansas City, Mo. Some of her designs are still on the market today. She met her husband, William D. Martin while living in KC. They were married in May of 1963 and moved to Huntsville Alabama. Bill worked for the US government within the Strategic Defense Command Program as an Advanced Technology Director.

Mary juggled raising her daughter Linda and her son Steven while building her art career. She quickly became a sought-after artist all across the state of Alabama. It didn't take long before she was invited to art shows all over the southern part of the US and eventually all across the United States. She was a fashion illustrator for the most exclusive clothing stores in Huntsville. She was a portrait artist incorporating her talents with gold and silver leaf, allowing

her to capture the goddess in all of her clients and giving them an ethereal quality. They used to say, "What God got wrong, Mary Cobb can fix" referring to the beauty of the portraits. Many still hang proudly in some most outstanding homes all across the south

After her divorce she returned to St. Louis to be near her family support system. Being near her parents, brother, and sister, she found the freedom to expand her artistic endeavors. She expanded her illustration career with Angelica Uniform Company, illustrating fashion forward uniform designs for resorts, casinos, and corporations all over the world. She then parlayed her abilities to include court room sketch artist for cases that denied TV cameras for many years. It wasn't uncommon to see her sketches on local and national news. In one case that was tried in St. Louis involving Steven Spielberg and Michael Creighton defending their creative rights for the movie TWISTER, Mr. Creighton and Mr. and Mrs. Spielberg would ask to see her work at the end of each day. At the end of the trial they asked if they could buy the originals, Mary wouldn't sell them, she gave them as a gift, and they hung them in their homes proudly. Many judges and lawyers throughout St. Louis have illustrations she did of them hanging in their offices as well.

Mary's skills were so sought after that the popular TV show America's Most Wanted commissioned her to illustrate an execution of a criminal from Missouri that was caught with the help of the television show. It was an experience she was glad she did but would never do again. As she got older and would tell people stories of her life, we had to correct her constantly when she would start with, "I was on America's Most Wanted".

As Mary lived her life to the fullest and checked things off her bucket list, she was presented with the opportunity to teach. She accompanied her daughter on a college visit to Stephens College and while in the office of the director of

the Fashion Department talking with Linda, the conversation turned to the fashion illustrations on the wall and how similar the style of drawing was to Mary's. Well, that interview ended not with Linda going to Stephens, but with Mary accepting the job of the new Fashion Illustration Teacher. Mary taught at Stephens for 6 years and then returned to St. Louis. She began teaching at her alma mater, Washington University as a Fashion illustration professor for 13 years. In those years she accompanied her students to Paris France to compete and win in an international Fashion, Design, and Illustration competition with colleges from across the world. No victory was sweeter than the ones they captured against FIT, the Fashion Institute of Technology! When her teaching career ended, she took her talents in different directions! Mary began hand painting silk cloth just as she did a canvas but then created complete clothing lines out of it. Her hand painted silk jackets, shells and pants were spectacular. She also began glass blowing and creating her own beads for jewelry, which led to a new passion designing high quality, fashion forward pieces with semi-precious stones mixed with hand crafted beads.

As you look at her art throughout her life you see the path of growth, her interests, and her passions. Every artist has "stages", Mary was no different. From her early stages showcasing owls, wildlife, barns, and landscapes to her stages of Victorian men, women and children experimenting with texturized backgrounds. Her Native American Indian Stage honoring those she met and befriended at pow wows and reservations. Her pencil drawing stage captured humanity and froze it in action. Her floral stage brought vivid color and line against a white background for bursts of intensity. Her Egyptian and Geisha stage that showcased women in powerful and beautiful headdresses owning their world.

In the 70's she was fascinated and emotionally moved by the calls of society and painted portraits of random people she found interesting along the streets

of life.

The one that moved me (Linda) the most, (I even remember when we met this man, I was about 8 years old), was the Vietnam vet sitting in his torn uniform on the corner panhandling, he was so surprised that mom wanted to sketch him. The smile that formed on his face looked foreign to the landscape of his fatigue. We sat there for an hour or so while mom drew. Some people scowled at us, said hateful things, some people smiled and gave him money, some stopped to watch mom draw, he just posed with pride and ease. When mom finished, I could tell she gave him something that was priceless, she gave him acknowledgment. She “saw” him in an environment where he was invisible. With her art and her talent, she not only made him visible, but she also made him eternal. That drawing won many awards and sold years later to a man who came to an art show looking for it. We were in St. Augustine, Florida when he walked into her exhibit area, said “Hi Linda, you’ve grown up”. I was caught off guard that this good looking and nice man knew me, knew my name. Mom turned to speak to him and knew him instantly! Our Vietnam Vet became the proud owner of that piece of art.

Mary was an avid reader all her life! If she wasn’t drawing, she was reading and experiencing the world through the written word. As an adult she finally got to see the world. From Gloucester to Los Angeles, to New York and Arizona. She traveled to Thailand, Bangkok, Seoul, Tokyo, London, Paris, and Scotland and many more places.

Mary loved to be around people, she had a positive comment or a compliment for EVERY SINGLE Person she met. She would compliment someone on their smile, their eyes, their hair, their outfit, whatever caught her eye. When she got to the point that she used a walker and looked down a lot as she walked, I would smile as she would complement everyone on their shoes. She always

found a way to make you feel seen and appreciated.

Mary is survived by her Son, Steven Martin, her Daughter Linda Lipka (Martin) and Son-In-Law John Lipka, her Grandson, Albert James Lipka, her Brother-In-Law, Martin Mraz and her nieces and nephews, Laura Mraz, Michele Mraz, Marjean Wilmes, Shawn DeClue, Jennifer (Cobb) Iannitti and Rick Cobb and their children.

Through Mary's art, her vision is immortalized and is an outstanding representation of the life she lived fully. We ask that in lieu of flowers that you donate to the Fashion Design Department at Washington University in memory of Mary Cobb Martin. Checks may be made payable to Washington University, with "Fashion Design school" noted in the memo. Mail to: Washington University St. Louis, MSC 1082-414-2555, One Brookings Drive, St. Louis, Mo. 63130-9989. Thank you for remembering Mary Cobb Martin with a donation that will assist the next generation of illustrators and artists.

Previous Events

Visitation

APR 4. 4:00 PM - 6:00 PM (CT)

Archway Memorial Chapel
111 Taylor Road
Hazelwood, MO 63042
(314) 895-3900
info@archwaychapel.com

Funeral Service

APR 4. 6:00 PM (CT)

Archway Memorial Chapel
111 Taylor Road
Hazelwood, MO 63042
(314) 895-3900
info@archwaychapel.com

Tribute Wall

AP

“ I remember the first time I met Mary. Linda and I had recently started working together at Heritage House, and she invited me over to their house in Columbia one day. Linda was so proud of Mary and her art - she wanted to show me all of the work Mary had done. Mary did share some of her stories, but she kept turning the conversation away from herself towards me and Linda. I feel like she was trying to nurture the beginnings of Linda's and my friendship - a friendship that's lasted 40 years (OMG!) It was a long time before I knew all that Mary had accomplished in her impressive career. Mary was there for the both of us throughout our crazy college years. She raised an amazing daughter who has the biggest heart, and that is an amazing legacy. (Steven's pretty great, too.)



Alison Perkins - April 06, 2025 at 08:47 PM



“ Divine Peace Bouquet was purchased for the family of Mary Cobb Martin.



April 03, 2025 at 06:08 PM



“ Enduring Grace was purchased for the family of Mary Cobb Martin.



March 31, 2025 at 09:30 AM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Mary Cobb Martin.

March 31, 2025 at 09:30 AM



“ Mary was a fantastic artist, I was a designer with Angelica Image apparel, she did many of our illustrations for presentations and made them glow. We became friends and went to London together. We had lots of fun, and I remember her giggling next to a royal guard on duty trying to get him to smile, she did it! Barbara Dean

Barbara Dean - March 30, 2025 at 01:34 PM



What An amazing woman and what an absolutely extraordinary life she lived. I wish I could have known her . My sincere condolences and hugs to Linda, John and all the family and friends.

Debbie cornejo - April 01, 2025 at 02:45 PM



Barbara Dean I hope you get to read her Obit. I included Angelica 😊

Linda Rene Lipka - April 01, 2025 at 03:18 PM

SD

“ I don't know where to start except to say she was the coolest aunt in the world. I remember as a child going to her art shows. She really sparked the creativity in me as a child that would last a lifetime. Every time I create art I think of her. I remember when she was on TV demonstrating how to do gold leaf. Now somebody correct me if I'm wrong on this. lol. Wasn't she the first artist out there doing that technique?



One of my best memories was at her house and she had me model for her. She did my makeup and took all these photos. I still have them. My mom (her sister) kept one of them up in their house. Mom really liked them.

I will never forget her beautiful white hair and gorgeous smile. Very tall, stylish woman. She painted beautiful paintings and made jewelry. I remember her traveling to Paris and how that blew my mind as a youngster. That also inspired me as I became older to travel to other countries. Her sense of adventure and creativity lives through us.

I am thankful I got to see her when I came to visit in St. Louis. I will never forget how her face lit up with a huge smile. I will miss her.

Godspeed to you, Aunt Mary ❤️
All my love to you beautiful lady!!!
RIP 💕💕

Shawn DeClue - March 30, 2025 at 10:45 AM

LL

Beautiful words and your pictures are included on Friday💕🌸

Linda Rene Lipka - April 01, 2025 at 09:45 PM

MM

“ My Aunt Mary was a beautiful lady. She was always dressed so classy and had beautiful jewelry and a smile on her face. She was a very talented artist, and even got into painting textiles and making purses and jewelry. I often think of the time she went to the lake with my mom and us four siblings. She was sitting on the dock with her sketch book and watching us ski. I was in the water getting ready to ski when one of my sisters threw the ski rope to me and the handle hit me in the head causing a huge goose egg to form. Instead of skiing, my mom said I should get out and rest on the dock with Aunt Mary. As I laid on my beach towel with the ice pack that Aunt Mary got for me, we were visiting and she was sketching away. When she was almost done, she showed me the picture she sketched of me, minus the goose egg! I loved it. We had the best visit that day on the dock and she gave such great advice. I will miss her but rejoice that she is at peace with her beloved parents, sister (my mom) and her brother (my mom's twin brother).



Michele Mraz - March 26, 2025 at 10:17 AM

LL

I didn't know that story. Loved hearing it. Thanks for sharing it.

Linda Rene Lipka - April 01, 2025 at 09:46 PM

KS

“ Ken & Archway Staff lit a candle in memory of Mary Cobb Martin



Ken & Archway Staff - March 25, 2025 at 11:40 PM