



Mrs. Joanna Cruse

February 26, 1928 - March 17, 2026

Mrs. Joanna Cruse, age 98, transitioned on March 17, 2026, in Gainesville, FL.

Joanna Coward Cruse was born on February 26, 1928, in Gainesville, Florida. She was the fourth of seven children born to William S. Coward and Henrietta Heyward Coward. She attended schools in Alachua County and graduated from Lincoln High School in 1946.

After graduation Joanna moved to New York City and ultimately settled in Springfield Massachusetts. She attended the local college and excelled in business administration and accounting. She married Gerald Cruse in 1961, and they operated a construction business for many years. They moved the business to Lakeland, Florida in 1979, where they enjoyed continued success until Gerald's death in 2007.

Joanna was a consummate cook and enjoyed preparing food for all holidays and special occasions. Her love of cooking led her to positions in food services with the Polk County School System and upon returning to Gainesville, the Alachua County School System. She retired from Eastside High School in 2018.

Joanna was preceded in death by her parents William and Henrietta Coward, and sisters Ruth Goring, and Flossie Alston and brothers, Thomas Coward, Lawrence Coward, Tommy Coward, and Willam Coward. She is survived by

sister-in- laws Dona Coward, Gainesville and Birdie Cruse Woodgett, Springfield, MA. and a host of nieces, and nephews.

A Funeral Service for Mrs. Cruse will be held on Monday, March 23, 2026 at 11:00 AM at Holy Trinity Episcopal Church, 100 NE 1st Street, Gainesville, FL 32601.

Interment will follow immediately in Forest Meadows Cemetery East, 3700 SE Hawthorne Road, Gainesville, FL 32641.

Resolutions may be emailed to wecare@chestnutfh.com before 5:00 PM on Friday, March 20, 2026. Floral Arrangements may be ordered on this website or delivered to Chestnut Funeral Home, 18 NW 8th Avenue, Gainesville, FL 32601.

"A CHESTNUT SERVICE"

Cemetery Details

Forest Meadows Cemeteries East

3700 SE Hawthorne Rd.
Gainesville, FL 32641

Previous Events

Funeral Service

MAR 23. 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM (ET)

Holy Trinity Episcopal Church
1000 NE 1st
Gainesville, FL 32601

Graveside Service

MAR 23. 12:30 PM - 1:00 PM (ET)

Forest Meadows Cemeteries East
3700 SE Hawthorne Rd.
Gainesville, FL 32641

Tribute Wall

EW

“ Ed and Willa Wolcott purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Mrs. Joanna Cruse.



Ed and Willa Wolcott - March 21 at 04:41 PM

EW

“ Ed and Willa Wolcott planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Mrs. Joanna Cruse.

Ed and Willa Wolcott - March 21 at 04:41 PM

LF

“ Loretta and family purchased the Divine Peace Bouquet for the family of Mrs. Joanna Cruse.



Loretta and family - March 20 at 11:51 PM

LF

“ Loretta and family planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Mrs. Joanna Cruse.

Loretta and family - March 20 at 11:51 PM