



Rubey Freda Choonoo

October 3, 2025

Obituary: Rubey Choonoo

Rubey Freda Choonoo passed away on October 3rd, 2025, at 102 years. She was born September 12th, 1923, in Ladysmith, South Africa to the late Matthew and Sama Lawrence and granddaughter of the late Grace and John Thomas. She was 5th in a family of 11 children with 8 sisters and 3 brothers. After WWI, her parents relocated to Pietermaritzburg where she grew up on the famous Church Street in PMB. Under apartheid in South Africa, life was difficult, and they faced many hardships. but with her parents and grandparents influence she became resilient, steadfast, and strong in her faith. Hers was a close-knit family who supported and helped each other through to their adult lives.

Rubey's personality was magnetic. Her father named her Rubey because at birth his first words to her was "she's a gem." She lived up to her name and was a beacon of hope, love and strength to many, affectionately being called, Ma, Teacher, Aunty Roob, Granma. Her mantra was "have fun and laughter", and her playful streak and humour brought smiles and roaring laughter at parties and family events.

In 1947, Rubey married the late Allan Choonoo. They had six children who they raised in Durban in the infamous Himalaya House. Rubey's plate was full. She cared for Allan who suffered a stroke while also supporting her 6 children. Not to mention having to work everyday and also fit in her numerous community activities. With her indomitable strength, she put her children

through school and helped their passage to the US to continue their studies. She instilled in her children and grandchildren, a commitment to God, a love for reading, and an overall optimism about life. At age 60, after Allan's passing Rubey relocated to the US. Here, she continued to serve and support all around her whenever she was needed.

Rubey was devout in her faith and in the Lorne Street Methodist Church she actively contributed to the Woman's Auxiliary and Leaders Meetings and many charitable endeavours. In the US, she attended the Grace Redeemer Church and in her latter years resided at the Family of Caring. After her son Jeff's passing in 2003 Rubey leaned on her faith to heal.

There were many talents and interests that Rubey had. She knitted her children's jerseys when they were little, and she undertook several projects knitting and crocheting for charity. She also sewed most of her own, and her children's clothes and undertook quilting, completing many impressive projects. Amongst her hobbies she enjoyed reading and travelling and had the opportunity to travel to Australia, parts of Europe and the "holy land" with her siblings.

Rubey served as a nurse in the red cross during WWII and her life's career was as an infant schoolteacher. Many of her students remember her fondly to this day.

Rubey is survived by her five children, six grandchildren, and many nieces and nephews around the world. She touched many people and will be deeply missed by all. A true legend for us all.

May the road rise to meet you, Ma, Mum, Aunty Roob, Gam, Granma

Previous Events

Visitation

OCT **9**. 3:00 PM - 6:00 PM (ET)

Barrett Leber Funeral Home
148 Dean Dr
Tenafly, NJ 07670
(201) 568-8043
<https://www.barrettleberfuneralhome.com/>

Funeral Service

OCT **10**. 10:00 AM (ET)

Tenafly United Methodist Church
34 W. Clinton Ave.
Tenafly, NJ 07670

Interment

OCT **10** (ET)

Brookside Cemetery
425 Engle St
Englewood, NJ 07631

Tribute Wall

JA

“ I am so sorry to hear this. She was a wonderful person.

Judith Allen - October 17, 2025 at 11:06 AM

RO

“ Sorry about the spelling, I meant "Rubey".

Rosalind - October 10, 2025 at 07:12 AM

RO

“ How I will remember RUDEY, She was a very sweet and caring person. She was always smiling and willing to pray for us, or, With us in rm. 110, at Family of Caring.

Rosalind - October 10, 2025 at 07:08 AM

YL

“ Your kindness, compassion, love and care for all of us will never be forgotten . You will always remain in our hearts. Rest in peace dear Aunty Ruby

Yvonne Lawrence - October 10, 2025 at 05:27 AM

AN

“ Rubey always had a smile on her face whenever I saw her. She loved everyone around her and was a kind person who lived life to the fullest and will be treasured forever and greatly missed. Fly with the angels Rubey.

Annette - October 09, 2025 at 10:57 PM

RA

“ Rhoda Abrahams lit a candle in memory of Rubey Freda Choonoo



Rhoda Abrahams - October 09, 2025 at 10:53 PM

EL

“ I met you once, yet your warm smile and gentle spirit left a lasting impression. Through Pearl's stories, I came to know your kindness, strength and love, qualities that reminded me so much of my own mother. Your light continues to shine through those you have touched. Rest peacefully, Ma Rubey.



Elizabeth Lewis - October 09, 2025 at 01:30 PM