



Gayle Karch Cook

March 1, 1934 - August 17, 2025

Gayle Karch Cook, 91, of Bloomington, and co-founder of Cook Group Inc., passed away peacefully at her residence on August 17, 2025.

Gayle, born on March 1, 1934, in Evansville, Indiana, was the daughter of Arthur and Thelma Karch. Her surviving relatives include her son Carl Cook of Bloomington, daughter-in-law Marcy (Heshelman) Cook, and granddaughter Eleanor Lynnette Cook. She also has nephews Kurt Karch (Waverlyn) and Kevin Karch (Lori Campbell), great-niece Kayla Karch (Aaron) Wilder, and daughter Millie. Additionally, there's great-nephew Allen (Christine) Karch and son Flynn.

Gayle was preceded in death by her husband, William A. Cook, who passed away in 2011, as well as her brother, Glenn Arthur Karch, and his wife, Marian.

A proud native of Evansville, Indiana, Gayle grew up in a tight-knit farming community, near Angel Mounds. Her parents encouraged her to pursue her artistic and academic talents, and she graduated as salutatorian from Bosse High School in 1952 before obtaining a Bachelor of Arts degree in fine arts, graduating Phi Beta Kappa from Indiana University in 1956 and was a member of Alpa Omicron Pi.

Gayle married Bill Cook in 1957, and their son Carl was born in 1962. The couple settled in Bloomington, where they began developing medical devices from their apartment—work that grew into what is now Cook Medical.

Throughout her life, Gayle was a tireless advocate for restoration, preservation, and civic improvement. She championed the successful completion of more than 70 projects in economic development and historic preservation. She co-authored two books on the subject: *A Guide to Southern Indiana* (1972, with Bill Cook) and *Monroe County in Focus* (1990, with Diana Hawes and Will Counts). Her leadership and dedication were recognized with numerous honors, including Indiana Landmarks' Williamson Prize, the City of Bloomington's Freedom of the City Award, Indiana University's Gertrude Rich Award, and an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters.

Gayle and Bill shared not only a lifelong partnership but also a profound sense of responsibility to their community and company. Together, they worked to improve the lives of those around them and to preserve the cultural and historic fabric of Indiana.

Visitation will be held on Friday, September 5, 2025, from 2:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at Cook World Headquarters – Front Rotunda, 750 Daniels Way, Bloomington, Indiana.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that memorial contributions be made in Gayle's honor to the Monroe County History Center, 202 E. 6th Street, Bloomington, Indiana, 47408, or to a charity of one's choice.

Allen Funeral Home and Crematory 4155 South Old State Road 37 has been entrusted with arrangements and online condolences, photos and memories may be shared with family and friends at www.allencares.com

Previous Events

Celebration of Life

SEP 5. 2:00 PM - 8:00 PM (ET)

Cook World Headquarters Front Rotunda
750 Daniels Way
Bloomington, IN 47404

Tribute Wall

TB

“ I never met Gayle Cook, but like so many others have benefited from her generosity and vision. I am a 1987 graduate of Indiana University and live in California. When I visit Bloomington (once or twice per year) I am always amazed at how vibrant and nice downtown Bloomington has become. Gayle and Bill Cook are directly responsible for that transformation. Many years ago I took a tour of the West Baden Springs Hotel when it was a total wreck. I have since stayed in the restored hotel. The restoration was incredible. The fact that this beautiful and important historical structure has been returned to its former glory is attributable to Gayle Cook. I could go on and on. Thank you Gayle! Your impact will be felt for generations to come. Tom Bunton

Thomas Bunton - October 12, 2025 at 12:01 PM

DW

“ My deepest condolences to Carl and the family. She was a lovely woman, always very kind when I interacted with her.

Doug Wright - September 05, 2025 at 01:56 PM

JM

“ Jeff & Vicki MacFarlane purchased the Full Of Love Bouquet for the family of Gayle Karch Cook.



Jeff & Vicki MacFarlane - September 05, 2025 at 11:16 AM



“ *Large Basket Garden was purchased for the family of Gayle Karch Cook.*



September 04, 2025 at 11:59 AM



“ *Magnificent Life Spray was purchased for the family of Gayle Karch Cook.*



September 03, 2025 at 10:14 AM



“ *Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Gayle Karch Cook.*



September 02, 2025 at 06:59 PM



“ *Heart Throw was purchased for the family of Gayle Karch Cook.*



August 27, 2025 at 06:24 PM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum* was purchased for the family of Gayle Karch Cook.



August 27, 2025 at 06:19 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Gayle Karch Cook.

August 25, 2025 at 08:38 AM



“ *Large Basket Garden* was purchased for the family of Gayle Karch Cook.



August 25, 2025 at 08:38 AM



“ *My parents have such fond memories of Bill and Gayle since they moved next door to them in Bloomington in the 60’s. They continued to stay in touch throughout the years. We were blessed to get Gayle and my mom together when we visited Indiana in 2021. Gayle will be missed!*

The Feldkamps



Patricia Isaak - August 23, 2025 at 04:41 PM

EF

“ *Sorry for your loss, she was an extraordinary woman and will greatly be missed.*



Eads Family - August 22, 2025 at 09:14 PM



“ *Sentiments of Serenity Spray was purchased for the family of Gayle Karch Cook.*



August 22, 2025 at 12:06 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Gayle Karch Cook.

August 22, 2025 at 08:03 AM



“ Full Of Love Bouquet was purchased for the family of Gayle Karch Cook.



August 22, 2025 at 08:03 AM