



PRESS RELEASE

Construction Underway on New Event Venue at Lanier Islands

Georgia Resort to Unveil the Lakeside Chapel and Garden in Spring 2025 With A Dedication to the Late Sara D. Williams and Mendy Williams Bowling

Buford, Ga. – November 19, 2024 – A spire is on the rise in Georgia – one that holds deep personal meaning for the family behind one of the South’s most popular destinations, [Lanier Islands Resort](#). Under their company – Islands Management, The Williams Family purchased the lease rights to the lakeside resort from the State of Georgia in 2005. The latest vision of CEO Virgil R. Williams, the Lakeside Chapel and Garden will serve as the newest addition to the Resort’s impressive collection of [wedding and event venues](#). Set amongst the towering pines, mighty oaks, and crystalline waters of Lake Lanier at one of the highest points within the Resort, it represents far more than that for the Williams family. Upon the completion of the non-denominational structure and neighboring garden in Spring 2025, the Lakeside Chapel and Garden will be dedicated as living memorials to Mr. Williams’ late wife, Sara D. Williams, and their only daughter, Mendy Williams Bowling.



“The Lakeside Chapel and Garden will serve as perfect tributes to my grandmother and mother,” said Matthew Bowling, President of [Lanier Islands](#). “Both women embodied elegance, loved a great love story, and were the very best of friends. I can’t imagine a better way to memorialize them – they’ll continue to be a part of the Islands and so many families’ special memories, celebrating side-by-side for all eternity. My grandfather always speaks about the importance of leaving a legacy. The love story he shared with my grandmother is an incredible legacy that spanned 62 wonderful years. I hope it’s one that every single couple who says, ‘I Do’ in that Chapel embraces and carries on over the decades to come.”

Inspired by Lower Chattahoochee Valley architecture, the white clapboard structure will exemplify simple Southern elegance – like the woman to whom it will be dedicated. A covered porch leads to a foyer that feeds into the sanctuary, with seating for up to 130 guests. Surrounded by arched windows and framed



by heavy timber columns and beams, the beautifully lit sanctuary will face a raised lectern. The chapel will also feature a bridal holding room – where countless brides will await the moment when they take their first steps down the aisle – just as Sara did when she married Virgil in 1959. Sara went on to raise three sons and one daughter, who gave her nine grandchildren whom she cherished deeply until the day she passed away in 2021.

The garden adjacent to the chapel will be dedicated to the memory of Mendy, an avid gardener and devoted mother who tragically passed away in 2019 – gone too soon from the lives of her loving husband and two sons. Her stunning garden will boast brick-lined pathways that lead to a timber-framed gazebo, ideally suited for wedding photos, cocktail hours, receptions, and more.

“This realization of my grandfather’s vision goes hand in hand with his belief that faith and family come first,” added Bowling. “Whatever their faith, it will be a place where couples come together to become family, and people gather to celebrate

meaningful moments. Collectively, the entire Lanier Islands team is incredibly honored to be a part of so many milestones in our guests’ lives, and this chapel and garden will be a beautiful continuation of that purpose.”

In addition to wedding ceremonies and vow renewals, [Lanier Islands](#) envisions hosting celebrations of life, baccalaureates, and more at the new chapel. The resort has been recognized with a host of awards for its wedding venues over the years, most recently with The Knot Best of Weddings 2024 and the 2024 WeddingWire Couples’ Choice Award®. The Lakeside Chapel and Garden represents the first new addition to [Lanier Islands’ wedding venues](#) since the premiere of Peachtree Falls in 2019. Bowling encourages wedding planners and couples interested in learning more about weddings at Lanier Islands to visit www.LanierIslands.com to view the various venues, packages, menus, accommodations, and more. The latest news regarding the Sara D. Williams Chapel and Mendy Williams Bowling Garden will be shared on [Facebook @lanierislands](#), [Instagram @lanierislands](#), [Twitter @lanierislands](#), and [LinkedIn @Lanier Islands](#).

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