



Cynthia Whitehead Sheppard

June 6, 1939 - April 30, 2026

Cynthia Jane Whitehead Sheppard, 86, passed away at her home on Thursday, April 30, 2026.

Funeral services will be held at 2:00 p.m. on Saturday, May 9, 2026, at Memory Chapel Funeral Home in Laurel, Mississippi, with burial to follow at Lake Park Hills Cemetery. The service will be officiated by her son, Rev. Chris Sheppard. Visitation will begin at 12:00 p.m. on Saturday at Memory Chapel, preceding the service.

Born on June 6, 1939, in Woodville, Mississippi, Cynthia was the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Sample Douglas Whitehead. She graduated from Woodville High School and continued her education at the University of Southern Mississippi, where she earned both her bachelor's and master's degrees.

On July 10, 1960, she married the love of her life, Dr. David Lee Sheppard, Sr. They made their home in Laurel, where Cynthia began a lifelong career in education with the Laurel City Schools. She taught at Stone Deavours, Lamar, Stanton, Mason, Powers, and Bay Springs Elementary Schools. After retiring, she continued teaching second grade at Laurel Christian School. "Miss Sheppard" had a gift for teaching children to read, sing, square dance, and—most importantly—believe they were special.

Following her “second retirement,” Cynthia devoted her time and talents to serving the Laurel–Jones County community. She shared her love for floral design, her attention to detail, and her passion for mentoring others. She was a member of the Guild at the Lauren Rogers Museum of Art, an active member of the Three Arts League, and an active member of the Park Place Garden Club, where she founded the Dandy Lion Junior Garden Club. She also served as Regent of the Nahoula Chapter of the National Society Daughters of the American Revolution, a role she especially enjoyed as she often included “her David” in its activities.

Cynthia and David were longtime members of Justice Heights United Methodist Church and Franklin Methodist Church. In the later years of their lives, they found great joy in the fellowship of First Methodist Church in Ellisville.

Cynthia was preceded in death by her parents, her beloved David, and sister, Joy Douglas Whitehead Brown.

She is survived by her children: Rev. Chris Sheppard (wife Christy) of Brookhaven and Cellie Scoggin (husband Patrick) of Laurel; her cherished grandchildren: Patrick Lee Scoggin (wife Kyasia), Tom Scoggin (wife Erin), Annie Ebbers (husband Elijah), and Maggie Sheppard; and great-grandchildren: Elliot, Mya, Eden, Joel, Ruby, and Shep Scoggin. She is also survived by her “baby sister”, Carrie Lynn Whitehead Cupit (husband Donny).

Cynthia Sheppard will be lovingly remembered as a devoted wife, loving mother, beloved grandmother, “Mama Cynk,” “Aunt Cynk,” dear friend, and respected educator whose legacy lives on in the many lives she touched.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to a charity of your choice. Those wishing to honor Cynthia’s memory may consider Grace Life Church of

Brookhaven Building Fund, 220 South Jackson Street, Brookhaven, MS, or
Kids First Education Scholarship Foundation.

To view or sign the online guest book, visit www.memorychapellaurel.com.

Cemetery Details

Lake Park Hills Cemetery

2806 Emmy Dr.
Laurel, MS 39440

Previous Events

Visitation

MAY 9. 12:00 PM - 2:00 PM (CT)

Memory Chapel Funeral Home
3100 Audubon Drive
P. O. Box 674
Laurel, MS 39440
(601) 428-5235
memorychapel@comcast.net
<https://www.memorychapellaurel.com/>

Service

MAY 9. 2:00 PM (CT)

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Tribute Wall

ST

“ Randy and I were so sad to hear of Mrs. Shepherd's passing. I loved her as one of my first friends when I moved to Laurel 35 years ago, and had the utmost respect for her as a teacher to our son. She was my example and influenced me to go into teaching as a career.
We are praying for the peace of Christ for this family. Love you all.

Sharon Turner - May 08 at 09:13 PM

DB

“ As a child, Sunday School music time was a favorite lead by Mrs. Sheppard. The Christmas programs were fun, too. She never told me I could not sing or not to sing so loud. She let me make a not so joyful noise.

Debbie Buckhaults - May 07 at 10:03 PM

LP

“ Deepest Sympathy Extended to the Family.
Many Prayers for Comfort and Peace.

Linda Grafton Patterson

Linda Patterson - May 06 at 10:26 PM



“ When I was 6 years old, I remember being really nervous because I saw everyone around me using their right hand to write. I tried to emulate them. Mrs Sheppard came by and whispered that I needed to use my left hand. I told her, "Actually maam, I'm ambidextrious." She looked at me, questioningly, and asked what that meant. I told her I could use both. She smiled tenderly and said "honey, you're special. You'll need to use the other hand." She put my pencil in my left hand.

The next week or two later, I was sent to Stone Deavours and I was sent with a woman that had a stop watch. She made me do mazes and asked me a bunch of MK-Ultra-esque questions. Next thing you know, I was being put on a bus and shipped two Mason elementary 2 days a week for GOAL class.

Mrs. Sheppard will always have a huge space in my heart. She was the gateway to my world as a 1st grader. She refined my reading skills, coaxed me into trying to have better handwriting, and taught me the words to "Go Mississippi!".

It broke my heart when Dr. David passed away, and this seals the deal.

She touched a great amount of lives, and I will be forever grateful to have been in her class.

There is a Betamax cassette of the 1984-1985 Stainton Elementary square dance at my mother's house, if anyone wants to convince her to hand it over and convert it to digital! I remember because you can hear Mrs. Sheppard calling the dance moves over the music.

<3

Jonathan Clark - May 06 at 05:53 PM



“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Jonathan Clark - May 05 at 06:18 PM

EB

“ I was lucky enough to know Cynthia from the Guild and Garden Club. She was a talented and precious lady. She always gave the sweetest devotionals at Garden Club. She is dearly missed. Prayers for her family.

Ellen Brown - May 05 at 04:04 PM



“ Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Cynthia Whitehead Sheppard.



May 05 at 12:29 AM

GG

“ Sheppard Family I am so sorry for your loss and the fact that I am going to be out of town for your mother's funeral. I have many fond memories of spending time at your house and always enjoying Cynthia's scrumpdelicious Brownies!!! Love yall....Geof

Geof Galaher - May 04 at 05:27 PM



“ *Heavenly Sentiments Spray was purchased for the family of Cynthia Whitehead Sheppard.* ”



May 04 at 02:32 PM