



Dr. David Lee Sheppard Sr.

December 30, 1938 - June 13, 2025

Dr. David L. Sheppard, Sr., 86, passed away peacefully at his home on Friday, June 13, 2025, with his beloved wife and family at his side.

Funeral services will be held at 2:00 p.m. on Saturday, June 21, 2025, at Memory Chapel Funeral Home in Laurel, Mississippi, with burial to follow at Lake Park Cemetery. The service will be officiated by his son, the Reverend Chris Sheppard. Visitation will begin at 12:00 p.m. on Saturday at Memory Chapel, preceding the service.

Born on December 30, 1938, in Delhi, Louisiana, David was the son of Carl and Katherine Smith Sheppard. He graduated from Charleston High School and continued his academic journey at the University of Southern Mississippi, where he earned his bachelor's, master's, and doctorate degrees.

On July 10, 1960, David married the love of his life, Cynthia Jane Whitehead, and shortly thereafter, they moved to Laurel, Mississippi. In September of that same year, David began his distinguished career in education as an art teacher in the Laurel City Schools. Over the next 37 years, he served in various roles—including coach, elementary principal, assistant superintendent, and ultimately superintendent, a position he held for 19 years.

Dr. Sheppard was a trailblazer in Mississippi education, named Mississippi

School Superintendent of the Year and elected president of the Mississippi Association of School Superintendents (MASS)—the only superintendent ever to serve two consecutive terms. His leadership was marked by a passionate commitment to student success and the development of young educators.

Beyond education, Dr. Sheppard was deeply involved in his community. He served on the boards of the Laurel Jones County Library, Boys and Girls Club, and United Way. A skilled and competitive golfer, he served as president of Dixie Golf Club and claimed championship titles. He was a long-standing member and leader at Justice Heights United Methodist and Franklin Methodist Church, teaching adult Sunday School and holding various leadership positions. In recent years, he and Cynthia cherished their fellowship at First Methodist Church in Ellisville.

Dr. Sheppard was preceded in death by his parents and his brother, Mikel Sheppard. He is survived by his beloved wife of almost 65 years, Cynthia Whitehead Sheppard; his children: Rev. Chris Sheppard (wife Christy) of Brookhaven and Cellie Scoggin (husband Patrick) of Laurel; his cherished grandchildren: Patrick Lee Scoggin (wife Kyasia), Tom Scoggin (wife Erin), Annie Ebbers (husband Elijah), and Maggie Sheppard; and greatgrandchildren: Elliot, Mya, Eden, Ruby, and Shep Scoggin. He is also survived by his sister, Beth Roberts; sister-in-law, Carrie Lynn Cupit (husband Donny).

Dr. David Sheppard will be affectionately remembered as a devoted husband, sacrificial father, beloved grandfather, “Doc”, dear friend, and respected educator whose legacy lives on in the lives he touched.

Pallbearers will be John Brown, Donny Cupit, Elija Ebbers, Mike Jordan, Patrick Lee Scoggin, Jr., and Thomas Clark Scoggin. Honorary pallbearers will be Doug Boler, Ronnie Jones, Dale Keyes, Howard Robertson, Richard L.

Yoder, Sr., and Bubba Valentine.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to the building fund for Grace Life Church of Brookhaven, the home church of Rev. Chris Sheppard, located at 220 South Jackson Street, Brookhaven, MS 39601; to the educational scholarship fund established in Dr. Sheppard's name through the Kids First Education Foundation, P.O. Box 6512, Laurel, MS 39441; or to a charity of your choice.

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

Cemetery Details

Lake Park Hills Cemetery

2806 Emmy Dr.
Laurel, MS 39440

Previous Events

Visitation

JUN 21. 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/>

Funeral Service

JUN 21. 2:00 PM (CT)

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Tribute Wall

RR

“ *Mrs Cynthia and family,
What a wonderful man Mr David was. Such a great leader and educator always so inspiring to others. Always so involved in our community and lived and led by example. He will be greatly missed. Our thoughts and prayers will be with you all during the difficult days ahead.*

Renee' Roddey and Sheila Roddey Van Fleet

Renee Roddey - June 25, 2025 at 07:28 AM

CL

“ *So sorry to hear of David's passing. He truly was a great man, teacher, husband, father, and friend. Some of my best memories are when David taught Sunday School. He will truly be missed. My thoughts and prayers are with you, Cynthia. Sending all my love.
Carolyn*

Carolyn Laird - June 21, 2025 at 05:06 PM

TJ

“ *Talley Family, Inaya, James, Susan, John purchased the Emerald Garden Basket for the family of Dr. David Lee Sheppard Sr..*



Talley Family, Inaya, James, Susan, John - June 18, 2025 at 10:17 PM

GG

“ So sorry to hear of David’s passing. Many fond memories of younger days with Chris in the Sheppard house!! Sorry won’t be able to attend services Saturday, we have a family wedding out of town. Your family is in our prayers...David was a great man and leader in our community.
Love all of you
Geof Galaher and Family

Geof Galaher - June 18, 2025 at 03:12 PM

TM

“ Precious memories of the 60's when we all were connected as young teachers in Laurel. Cynthia, I join you in recognizing David's lifetime of service. And I pray that you and your children feel blessed by this memory. My love to each of you as you now continue to hold him in your hearts.
Respectfully, Tappy Murray

Tappy Murray - June 17, 2025 at 10:42 AM



“ Ocean Breeze Spray was purchased for the family of Dr. David Lee Sheppard Sr..



June 16, 2025 at 08:43 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Dr. David Lee Sheppard Sr..

June 16, 2025 at 08:43 PM