



Leonola (Lola) Theresa LeBlanc Fortner

February 25, 1926 - August 22, 2024

Leonola was born February 25, 1926, in Donaldson, Louisiana, to Leonard (Chauncy) and Neola (Nell) LeBlanc. She passed away at her home in Laurel, Mississippi, on August 22, 2024.

She was the fourth of five children and, according to her brothers and sisters, she was her father's favorite. She was preceded in death by her parents and siblings (Bubba, Rosemary, Leise and Paul).

She was married to and preceded in death by William Douglas (Bill) Fortner.

Lola leaves behind four children: Doug (Margie), Tom (Marian), Missy (Bill) and Nell. Grandchildren are Tyler Fortner (Cris), Laurel Harvin (Chris), Benjamin Patin, Katy McCraw, Jesse McCraw, Alley Samuels (Alex), Will Sanderson (Morgan), Sam Sanderson and Ben Sanderson (Rachelle). Great grandchildren are Conor and Violet Fortner, William, Robert and Zella Samuels, and Grace Sanderson.

Lola grew up in south Louisiana. She was proud of her Cajun roots and carried on many traditions, especially in her cooking. Family gatherings were a huge part of her life, living near the Mississippi River, and she continued to enjoy close relations with her many, many relatives. LeBlancs, Roberts, Kleinpeters, Persacs, and Marchands were just a few of the families she had deep ties to.

She attended high school in Lake Charles, Louisiana, and graduated from LSU in 1947 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Music. While in college, Lola met Bill in Baton Rouge at a USO club while Bill was training to serve in World War II. After serving in the war (Africa and Europe), Bill returned to attend LSU. They were married in Baton Rouge on July 17, 1948, and remained happily married for the rest of their lives.

As Bill started his career with United Gas in New Iberia, they moved from city to city and the kids came along; New Iberia (Doug), Lake Charles (Tom), Jackson (Missy and Nell). There were also stops in Shreveport, LA, St. Petersburg FL, Laurel, MS, and finally, New Braunfels, TX. Upon Bill's retirement, the couple moved to Gulfport, MS, and made their home on 2nd Avenue.

Lola had strong attachments to her families, both hers and Bill's. She built deep connections between her children and the LeBlanc and Fortner families. She did this by creating small rites of passage for her children and grandchildren. Family meals, regular family gatherings, strong moral standards, being invited to eat at the adult table, coming together in her kitchen for chocolate milk, visits to Mississippi and Louisiana aunts and uncles....and the stories!

Lola was an excellent Southern chef. Hot meals were a staple at her house and attendance was required of all. She passed on her secrets as demonstrated by the cooking prowess of all her children and grandchildren. As all of her children and her husband were active and involved in all sorts of athletic and civic pursuits, her cooking had to be done in volume. Her pot roast was huge and legendary, her gumbos were heavenly, her breakfasts were hearty and on time and there were always snacks in the pantry. How she did it all we will never know!

Her support and involvement in the churches she attended was strong. She organized and directed many choirs, sang at many services, put on many Fellowship Hall events, and always won the LeBlanc Family Reunion talent shows. Her voice was one with the angels and she passed that on to her daughter, Missy, and granddaughters, Katy and Jesse.

After retirement, Lola remained as active as ever in Gulfport. She led the Body Recall exercise program at First Methodist Gulfport for over ten years. She was active in the church and socially, but her big focus in Gulfport was her grandchildren. They all spent weeks in the summer with GrannyMama. Under GrannyMama's watchful eye, they learned to play, cook, swim, ride bikes and be cousins.

With Hurricane Katrina, they evacuated to Laurel. Since Katrina washed away their Gulfport home, they decided to remain in Laurel. God was looking after Lola and Bill with that storm, because it brought them closer to the loving support of Bill, Missy, Tom, and Marian that they both enjoyed for the rest of their lives. In Laurel, Lola thrived at her church, with her friends, at the beauty shop, with her bridge club, watching sports with Bill (particularly Georgia Tech women's basketball), at the Sunflower grocery store (where everyone knew her name), and with her family.

The family would like to thank her caregiver, Cindy Williamson; Ricky Nicholson; Dr Ken Grafton; her special friend, Ginny Gough; and all her loving friends that visited with her so often, in person or by phone.

Services for Lola will be Friday, August 30, at 11:00 a.m. at First Methodist Church of Laurel, with a family graveside service in Gulfport, MS.

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

Previous Events

Service

AUG 30. 11:00 AM (CT)

Laurel First Methodist Church
420 North 5th Avenue
Laurel, MS 39440

Tribute Wall

CT

“ Wonderful person! You will truly be missed! Rest in peace. Charles Twiddy.

Charles Twiddy - August 30, 2024 at 10:25 AM

RG

“ Missy and all the Family: Please know that we are praying for you all at this time. May the Peace of Christ be with you all now and the days ahead. It is a blessing to have had her in your lives and share the love through these years. Hold on to your precious memories and know we all will be together once again. Love and hugs sweet friend. Roma Rahaim Graham and Family.



Roma Rahaim Graham - August 29, 2024 at 10:03 AM



“ Arrive in Style was purchased for the family of Leonola (Lola) Theresa LeBlanc Fortner.



August 28, 2024 at 08:56 PM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Leonola (Lola) Theresa LeBlanc Fortner.



August 28, 2024 at 08:49 PM

2E

“ 2009 SEC Champs~ War Eagle purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Leonola (Lola) Theresa LeBlanc Fortner.



2009 SEC Champs~ War Eagle - August 28, 2024 at 07:57 PM

2E

“ 2009 SEC Champs~ War Eagle planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Leonola (Lola) Theresa LeBlanc Fortner.

2009 SEC Champs~ War Eagle - August 28, 2024 at 07:57 PM

TF

“ The Maines Family purchased the Joyful Memory for the family of Leonola (Lola) Theresa LeBlanc Fortner.



The Maines Family - August 28, 2024 at 10:14 AM

CV

“ Chris and Johnny Vera purchased the Crystal Cross Bouquet for the family of Leonola (Lola) Theresa LeBlanc Fortner.



Chris and Johnny Vera - August 28, 2024 at 09:31 AM

CV

“ Chris and Johnny Vera planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Leonola (Lola) Theresa LeBlanc Fortner.

Chris and Johnny Vera - August 28, 2024 at 09:31 AM

BC

“ Sorry for your loss.
Bill Chancellor

BILL CHANCELLOR - August 28, 2024 at 08:13 AM

KF

“ Kerry, Sammie, Chasey & Finley purchased the Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum for the family of Leonola (Lola) Theresa LeBlanc Fortner.



Kerry, Sammie, Chasey & Finley - August 27, 2024 at 11:57 PM

KC

“ Nell, Missy, Tom, and Doug,
What can I say that prolly hasn't been said?! Your mom was one of a kind....classy, kind, gentle, motherly, WONDERFUL!
While she was in New Braunfels, she was a 2nd mom to me and I'll never forget how warm she (and your dad) was. Just the BEST!
Know I'm thinking of each of you at this tough time but...what a life!
Yall have great memories to keep close to your hearts.
Wish I could share stories with yall at the services....much love to all.

Karen Chisum

karen chisum - August 27, 2024 at 10:57 PM



“ *Bright and Beautiful Spray was purchased for the family of Leonola (Lola) Theresa LeBlanc Fortner.*



August 27, 2024 at 01:54 PM



“ *Love, Your GT WBB Family planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Leonola (Lola) Theresa LeBlanc Fortner.*

Love, Your GT WBB Family - August 27, 2024 at 01:54 PM



“ *Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Leonola (Lola) Theresa LeBlanc Fortner.*



August 26, 2024 at 10:21 PM



“ *Bob Thomason planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Leonola (Lola) Theresa LeBlanc Fortner.*

Bob Thomason - August 26, 2024 at 10:21 PM

SW

“ Sam deb susan viv NJ and D weems purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Leonola (Lola) Theresa LeBlanc Fortner.



Sam deb susan viv NJ and D weems - August 26, 2024 at 09:10 PM

SW

“ Sam deb susan viv NJ and D weems planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Leonola (Lola) Theresa LeBlanc Fortner.

Sam deb susan viv NJ and D weems - August 26, 2024 at 09:10 PM

ML

“ You know the last place I saw Miss Lola was at Corner Market. I asked if she was alone?? Looking around for Ginny Gough. She said absolutely she was alone! She also pretended to remember me (I wasn't so sure) but just like my Mom she was ever so gentile about the whole matter. Oh yeah when I was checking out I saw she had an aide with her. Bless her heart I will miss her so much.

Marian Latimer - August 26, 2024 at 05:48 PM



“ Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Leonola (Lola) Theresa LeBlanc Fortner.



August 26, 2024 at 01:14 PM

WG

“ With all my love Ginny Gough purchased the Crystal Cross Bouquet for the family of Leonola (Lola) Theresa LeBlanc Fortner.



With all my love Ginny Gough - August 26, 2024 at 01:11 PM

TF

“ The Orr-Claborn Family purchased the Peaceful White Lilies Basket for the family of Leonola (Lola) Theresa LeBlanc Fortner.



The Orr-Claborn Family - August 26, 2024 at 01:01 PM

TF

“ The Orr-Claborn Family planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Leonola (Lola) Theresa LeBlanc Fortner.

The Orr-Claborn Family - August 26, 2024 at 01:01 PM