



Melissa Odom Ridgway

October 22, 1930 - June 1, 2025

Melissa Odom Ridgway, age 94, passed into the arms of Christ on June 1, 2025. She was born in Laurel, Mississippi on October 22, 1930. Melissa attended Laurel City Schools furthering her education graduating from Jones Junior College and receiving a Bachelor of Arts in Education from Millsaps College and receiving Master of Education from the Mississippi Southern College. She began her teaching career in Natchez, Ms., later returning to devote 30 years as an elementary teacher in Laurel.

She was preceded in death by her parents Mr. and Mrs. William Thomas Odom, her beloved brothers Charles Leon Odom, William Harold Odom and Clyde LeBarron Odom, Sr., her beloved granddaughter Lucy Bennet Black, and her husband Joseph William Ridgway.

She was a very active member of the First-Trinity Presbyterian Church USA, an active member of Presbyterian Women of FTPC, a member of the Lauren Rogers Museum, a member of the Lauren Rogers Guild of Docents and Volunteers, and a past Board Member of the Laurel Jones County Library, as well as a past Board Member of the Laurel Country Club.

She is survived by her daughters Sarah George Ridgway Willoughby (Gary), Susan Odom Ridgway Black (Phillip) and their children Hannah Stuart Black (Mark Bodnar) Oscar and Romana and Sara Thomas Black. She is also

survived by her stepson, William McBryde Ridgway II (Priscilla), and his children and grandchildren, William McBryde Ridgway III (Faith), and their sons Daniel and Austin; Brandie Jacobs and her children, Ashlea and Rhyon; Shelley Smith (Jude), and their children, Erin (Tyler) Valerie, Alex, and Kate; and Matthew Ridgway and his children, Olivia and Parker.

Private graveside services for the family will be at Lake Park Cemetery.

A Memorial Service will be held at First-Trinity Presbyterian church on June 26th at 3 o'clock. Visitation will follow the service in the Kirk House at the church.

The family would like to thank Dr. George Patton and the staff of St. Catherine's Village for their loving and compassionate care for almost 19 years. And in her final days, Hospice Care team made sure she was very comfortable.

In lieu of flowers, the family encourages donation to First-Trinity Presbyterian Church, Laurel, Mississippi, or St. Catherine's Village, Madison, Mississippi.

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

Cemetery Details

Lake Park Cemetery

1303 Old Bay Springs Rd
Laurel, MS 39440

Previous Events

Memorial Service

JUN 26. 3:00 PM (CT)

First Trinity Presbyterian Church
500 N 5th Avenue
Laurel, MS 39440

Tribute Wall

EH

“ Sincere condolences to all the Odom and Ridgway families. Certainly sad news. We entertained Bill and Melissa at our Texas ranch for about 10 days back in 1992, and then spent time with them at their home outside of Laurel before Christmas that same year. Got to visit her beloved library, country club and meet some teacher friends who were also homeschoolers like us.

An exceptional and dear Lady. May she rest in peace.

Leslie Hogan

EL Hogan - July 03, 2025 at 01:14 AM

RR

“ My condolences to Mrs Ridgeway’s family. What a wonderful teacher she was! She inspired the lives and minds of so many children. What a privilege I had to be one of her students. My thoughts and prayers to those she leaves behind to mourn her passing. May they find peace and comfort in the difficult days ahead.

Renee’ Roddey

Renee Roddey - June 25, 2025 at 07:19 AM



“ Oh Sarah, what precious memories I have of your mom ! I was just going thru some pictures the other day and came across one of her from Stainton. She was one of the best teachers I ever had and she no doubt left impressions that stayed with me to this day. My prayers are with you all.

Kristi Miller - June 24, 2025 at 03:11 AM

LS

“ Sarah, I'm so heartbroken for you and your family in this great loss! I adored your mother! She was one of the best teachers I ever had. You and the rest of her family will be in my prayers for peace and comfort in the days, weeks and months ahead!
Much love,
Lisa Trest Smith



Lisa Trest Smith - June 04, 2025 at 05:24 PM

LF

“ Dear Bill, Priscilla, William, Brandi, Shelley, Matt and the Ridgway families,

So very sorry for the loss of your loved one.
I have heard several wonderful words about your mother (grandmother) over the years. May she rest in peace. Our thoughts and prayers are with you. 🌹❤️🙏

Linda Faulk & family

Linda Faulk - June 03, 2025 at 11:50 PM

JF

“ Mama Ridgway is right up there with my own mom as a great soul and baker of the most delicious pecan pies ever. We are all at a very significant loss from her passing. Condolences to Sarah, Gary and the family as well as to all of Melissa's friends and fellow residents at St. Catherine's. She is missed and will continue to be in so many ways and dimensions.

J. Harry & Jackie Feldman
Wilmington, DE

J. Harry Feldman - June 03, 2025 at 03:12 PM

PR

“ So very sorry to hear of her passing. I talked to her on the phone several times and she was a dear lady and funny. Prayers, Hugs and the hope that the memories will comfort you!!

Pam Rhodes - June 03, 2025 at 12:50 PM