



## Elizabeth Curlee

September 17, 1927 - November 12, 2020

Elizabeth Michael Curlee died Thursday, November 12, 2020, at her home in Booneville, Mississippi. She was born September 17, 1927, to Nolen Bell and Ruby Glenn Moore Michael in Rienzi, Mississippi.

A graduate of Booneville High School, she earned a bachelor's degree at Blue Mountain College, a Master's Degree in Business Education from Mississippi State University, and a Master's Degree in Journalism from the University of Mississippi. Her study at the University of Mississippi was completed on a scholarship from the Wall Street Journal. Mrs. Curlee also completed postgraduate work at Mississippi University for Women and the University of Missouri. Although she was certified in five subject areas, she primarily taught business education, English, and journalism. Her methods for teaching shorthand attracted the interest of the business department at The University of Minnesota.

Having studied journalism, Mrs. Curlee sponsored student newspapers and yearbooks, and at times, the literary journal at the schools in which she worked. During her years at Marks High School, the school paper published articles and photos about the physical condition of the dated, two story, red brick school building. The articles drew the attention of the Memphis Commercial Appeal which ultimately resulted in renovations throughout the building.

Later, at Aberdeen High School, in the mid and late 1960s, when integration was in its infancy, the school newspaper reported extensively about the

transition that occurred within the school district. While commercial newspapers as distant as California and Chicago duplicated the stories, the Memphis Commercial Appeal sent a film crew to the school and filmed a story for a newscast. Mrs. Curlee's students won national, state and district awards, and the student newspaper took top honors in contests for years. Year after year, yearbook publishing companies would secure her services for yearbook workshops for colleges such as Louisiana State University, The University of North Alabama, The University of Southern Mississippi, and The University of Georgia. Some of Mrs. Curlee's journalism students became career journalists and worked for newspapers in Idaho, Atlanta, and Shreveport. One of her most notable career accomplishments was the awarding of the Golden Key by Columbia University, New York, School of Journalism. At that time, Mrs. Curlee was only the second recipient to receive the award from Mississippi. She served as president of the Mississippi Teachers of Journalism Education and was a member of the Mississippi Education Association, the Mississippi Business Education Association, and Qwill and Scroll.

Mrs. Curlee was raised in the Gaston Baptist Church, where her father and his family were charter members. As a teenager, she helped the Baptist Missionary Association conduct Vacation Bible Schools in Prentiss County Baptist churches. Always mission minded, she organized the first Woman's Missionary Union in First Baptist Church, DeValls Bluff, Arkansas. She served as an association leader in Tippah County and other various offices, including WMU director for many years in local churches. She often taught leadership and Bible studies, worked in Vacation Bible Schools, taught Sunday School classes, and led prayer groups. She was currently a member of First Baptist Church of Booneville, MS.

On September 5, 1947, she married John McFerrin Curlee Jr. upon his return from Germany after WWII. They had three sons, John McFerrin Curlee III (Mac) and wife, Martha; Nolen Michael Curlee (Mike) and wife, Debra; one sister, Iris Easterling; three grandsons, John M. Curlee IV (Jennie Bradford); Russell Michael Curlee (Lauren); Jared Roan (Mylia); one granddaughter,

Elizabeth Curlee Russell; four great-grandsons, Walker Gibbs Russell; Lewis Whitley Russell; Miles Richardson Curlee; Hudson Roan; and one great-granddaughter, Hadlee Roan; several nieces and nephews.

She was preceded in death by her parents; her husband; son, James Franklin (Frank) Curlee; brother, Forrest Michael; sister, Gwendolyn Cleghorn; father-in-law, John M. Curlee, Sr; mother-in-law, Mary Glenn Curlee; and two sister-in-law's, Betty Michael; and Mary Whitley Curlee Beal.

Private services for immediate family will be held at Booneville Funeral Home Chapel in Booneville, MS, on Sunday, November 15, 2020, at 1:00 PM. Dr. Lynn Jones will conduct the services, and Mrs. Jannette Peugh, of Aberdeen, will deliver the eulogy. Burial will be in the Booneville City Cemetery.

Memorials may be made to the Lottie Moon or other preferred offering at First Baptist Church, 401 West Church Street, Booneville, MS 38829.

The family would like to express its sincere appreciation and gratitude to Alma Vuncannon, a very special friend of the family and companion to Mrs. Curlee who provided excellent care and exhibited a kind spirit to not only Mrs. Curlee, but also to Frank and Mr. Curlee.

Condolences may be extended to the family at [boonevillefuneralhome.net](http://boonevillefuneralhome.net).

# Cemetery Details

**Booneville Cemetery**

# Previous Events

## Service

NOV 15. 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM (CT)

Booneville Funeral Home  
506 North Third Street  
Booneville, MS 38829  
(662) 728-6607  
<https://www.boonevillefuneralhome.net>

# Tribute Wall

BP

“*Mrs. Curlee was a magnificent teacher and wonderful lady. I learned so much from her journalism class and working on The Highlander staff at Aberdeen High School. Farewell and RIP dear lady!*”

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**Billy Pullen** - November 28, 2020 at 04:03 PM

GB

“*Gloria Broyles Dunlap Mrs. Curlee a special Jewel too everyone's, her presence will never be forgotten!*”

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**Gloria Broyles** - November 26, 2020 at 04:22 PM

GH

“*A Christian who has lived her witness. I am going to miss this extraordinary woman with whom I shared much in common.*”

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**George Houston** - November 15, 2020 at 02:21 PM

BM

“*Deepest sympathy to the family. Mrs. Curlee was a sweet lady and a great teacher. I have a lot of fond memories from her classes.*”

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**Bessie Gunn McGee** - November 15, 2020 at 11:57 AM

ME

“ Mrs. Curlee was our neighbor, family friend and an exceptional teacher. She was such an inspiration to me and my family and to so many others. Her son, Frank and my brother were best friends growing up on the "circle" together so he was like another brother to us. We cherish all our memories together on Woodcrest Drive as neighbors for all of those years. Mrs. Curlee always had a smile on her face and a word of encouragement to all she encountered. Her faith in God was evident in her daily walk through her life. Praying God's peace and comfort for her family, she will be dearly missed by many.

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**Mary Ellen Menetre Edwards** - November 15, 2020 at 10:27 AM

PI

“ My heart is broken. Mrs. Curlee taught me to love writing and the positive impact she had on my life is endless. Heartfelt condolences to her family and may God hold you close.

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**Priscilla Ivy** - November 14, 2020 at 08:06 PM

MC

“ Elizabeth was a beautiful and caring lady. Attended many years at Gaston church with she and her family. My condolences to all, especially Iris.

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**Mamie Johnson Cain** - November 14, 2020 at 06:09 PM

JT

“ I was in Mrs. Curlee's journalism class around 1980. I still remember things she taught me, and I also remember her kindness and graciousness. Deepest sympathies to her family.

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**Jane Tinkham** - November 14, 2020 at 12:49 PM

HP

“ *Mrs. Curlee was a teacher who made a difference. I know because she made a difference in my life. Thoughts and prayers to the family.,*

*Harvey Parson*

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**Harvey Parson** - November 14, 2020 at 12:31 PM

CT

“ *Elizabeth was a blessing to all who knew her. She kept her eyes focused on Jesus and to the ministries to which she had been called. She was faithful to her calling. She made a difference in this world. She will be missed. Carolyn Tigrett*

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**carolyn Tigrett** - November 13, 2020 at 09:39 PM

NP

“ *A true friend to missions, a diligent prayer warrior, and one who faithfully served her Lord until His calling her home. She will be missed by many!*

*Nelene Pannell*

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**Nelene Pannell** - November 13, 2020 at 01:45 PM