



Josephine Lane Meares

October 20, 1937 - April 25, 2026

Josephine Lane Hayes Meares of Little River, South Carolina, and formerly of Tabor City and Burlington, North Carolina, died Saturday, April 25th at her residence. Mrs. Meares was born in Robeson County on October 20, 1937, and was the daughter of the late Joseph David Hayes and Annie Mae Meekins Hayes of Cerro Gordo. She was also preceded in death by her husband, Ralph Meares, and an infant daughter, Nora Luann Meares. Josephine leaves behind two sons, Mr. Ralph Timothy Meares (Diane) of Emerald Isle, North Carolina, and Mr. Samuel Lane Meares, of the home. She had two grown grandchildren, Luke Lewis Meares (Audre) of Savannah, Georgia, and Rachel Erin Jensen (Samuel), of Winston-Salem, North Carolina. Josephine also leaves behind two brothers, Claude Hayes and Harold Hayes (Dolly) of Cerro Gordo, and a sister, Sylvia Hayes of Fayetteville, North Carolina.

Her unending love of basketball began at Cerro Gordo High School where she played for three years as a forward. Upon graduating early from high school, Josephine attended Flora McDonald College in Red Springs, North Carolina, where she received her bachelor's degree in early elementary education in 1959. She and Ralph were married soon thereafter and moved to Fayetteville, North Carolina, where Josephine began her teaching career at Alger B. Wilkins Elementary School. They returned to Tabor City two years later, with Josephine teaching at Tabor City Elementary School before transferring to

Williams Township School, where she would teach for another 34 years. Mrs. Meares loved children and had a passion for educating them well, including attending to their spiritual development. She began each day by sharing a short Bible story from Little Visits with God.

In addition to serving for 41 years as a public school teacher, Josephine also taught Adult Sunday School, supported and led the Women's Missionary Union, and directed Vacation Bible School sessions at Forest Lawn Baptist Church in Tabor City. Additionally, she was an avid summer gardener, freezing and canning countless quantities of vegetables for her family and community. Devoted as a loving wife and mother, she also tended to the various needs of her many friends and extended family members throughout the years. She will be missed by all who knew and loved her.

Always adventurous, she lovingly enjoyed meeting new people, especially in recent years. Josephine was able to travel domestically and internationally to her most desired destinations, including Alaska, Georgia, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Missouri, New York at Christmas, Switzerland, Germany, the Netherlands, France, and England. It was in Amsterdam in 2022 that Josephine fulfilled her life-long-dream of 78 years to see the tulips and windmills of Holland. Her most recent travels took her to Central America where she toured the countries of Mexico, Belize, Honduras, Costa Rica, and Panama where she was finally able to hold a six-toed sloth. She just loved that!

A Service to the Witness of the Resurrection and a celebration of her life will be held at First Presbyterian Church Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, 3810 Grissom Parkway, at 2 PM on Sunday, May 3rd with staff ministers presiding. In lieu of flowers, memorial gifts may be made to Presbyterian Women in care of the church. The family will receive friends and relatives following the service in the Kirk Room at the church, with light refreshments to be served. Interment will take place in Burlington, North Carolina, at Alamance Memorial Park, on

Saturday, May 16th at 11 AM. The family would like to express their sincere gratitude to devoted caretakers Mrs. Dee Franklin, Ms. Wanda Williams, and Mrs. Tosha Bellamy.

Goldfinch Funeral Home, Conway Chapel is in charge of the arrangements.

Previous Events

Memorial Service

MAY 3. 2:00 PM (ET)

First Presbyterian Church of Myrtle Beach
3810 Robert M Grissom Pkwy
Myrtle Beach, SC 29577-6422
(843) 448-4496

Tribute Wall



“ Mrs. Meares was my first grade teacher, my husband, Dewayne's, first grade teacher and she also taught both of our children in second grade. My daddy had great respect and admiration for her as they worked together at Williams Township for many years. She was still teaching when I began my teaching career in the mid 90's. I remember her quoting from Romans 8 at her retirement party. In October 2000 we both attended the Walk to Emmaus retreat and truly became sisters in Christ. Christ was always the center of everything she did and it flowed onto those around her. I am thankful for the gift of Mrs. Meares in my life.

Julia Hardwick - May 03 at 07:51 AM

BO

“ Josephine was a very gracious lady and I enjoyed her and her son, Sam, every Sunday at church. Jo and Sam made me feel very welcome and offered me their friendship as I was a snowbird. Jo will be greatly missed by all but we know she is at peace with our Lord.

Bonita L Olin - May 02 at 07:45 PM

MA

“ Josephine was a dear friend and loving person to everyone she met I will miss her terribly but knowing in my heart she is with Jesus now . My condolences to all family members and hold you in my prayers for comfort God Bless, her friend marylou



Marylou - May 02 at 03:16 PM

DD

“ *Diane Hardwick and Dave Dillehunt purchased the Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum for the family of Josephine Lane Meares.*



Diane Hardwick and Dave Dillehunt - May 01 at 06:30 PM



“ *Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Josephine Lane Meares.*



May 01 at 04:53 PM



“ *A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Josephine Lane Meares.*

May 01 at 04:53 PM

MW

“ *Jo and I met while teaching at Tabor City School and were friends ever since. We have been close friends for the past 60+ years and shared many good times up until the last month. We both retired at Williams Township School. Jo was a very gifted lady. She was a genuine Christian for our lord. I love her very much.*



Mrs. Ward - April 30 at 08:54 PM

DM

“ Dearest Samuel and Tim, even though we only knew your mom a short time she made a great impact on our lives with her positive attitude and Southern accent! She will be greatly missed seeing her and talking to her on the porch in our community! The care you have given her is second to none! You all should be proud. In Christ Love, Dean and Paula McDaniel from Mariners Pointe. (108)

Dean McDaniel - April 30 at 03:54 PM

FC

“ Forest Lawn Baptist Church purchased the Beautiful Heart Bouquet for the family of Josephine Lane Meares.



Forest Lawn Baptist Church - April 30 at 03:45 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Josephine Lane Meares.

April 30 at 11:12 AM



“ Small Garden Dish was purchased for the family of Josephine Lane Meares.



April 30 at 11:12 AM

JC

“ Dear wonderful Sam,

I am so deeply sorry for your loss. Your mother lived an extraordinary life—one defined by purpose, compassion, and an unwavering commitment to others. For over four decades, she shaped minds and hearts through her teaching, and her influence extended far beyond the classroom. She poured into people—guiding, encouraging, and uplifting them in mind, body, and spirit. Her devotion as a Sunday school teacher and her care for women in need speak to a life anchored in faith and service. And yet, alongside all she gave, she also embraced the beauty of the world—fulfilling her dreams of travel and experiencing so many remarkable places. That balance of giving and living fully is something truly special.

I see her legacy so clearly in you—in your character, your values, your love for others, and your faith. The way you honored and cherished her is a testament to the deep bond you shared, and to the incredible mother she was.

Please know that you are in my thoughts and prayers. May you find comfort in the memories you hold, the lives she touched, and the enduring impact she leaves behind.

I am sending a generous donation (as requested in lieu of flowers) to help further the good work your mother did.

Many prayers and loving thoughts Jillene Collins

Jillene Collins - April 29 at 10:53 PM

RE

*Tim,
So sorry to hear about your mom passing. You and your family are in my thoughts and prayers.*

Richard Eskridge

Richard Eskridge - May 03 at 08:35 PM

DN

“ *I would like to send my condolences to the family. She was my first grade teacher at Williams Township. She was a great teacher and person. She will be greatly missed.*

Donna Hewett Narnes - April 29 at 06:51 PM

DB

Donna Hewett Barnes

Donna Hewett Barnes - April 29 at 06:53 PM

TF

“ *The Blankenship Family purchased the Sweet So lace Spray for the family of Josephine Lane Meares.*



The Blankenship Family - April 29 at 03:52 PM

LB

“ *My wonderful first grade teacher at Williams Township School in 1971. She was a blessing.*

Layne B - April 29 at 03:20 PM

JH

“ Jimmy Hodges purchased the Simply Elegant Sp
athiphyllum for the family of Josephine Lane
Meares.



Jimmy Hodges - April 29 at 03:10 PM

CH

“ Josephine was so important to our Lydia Circle group. We always
enjoyed her wisdom and kindness. She will be so missed by all of
us. Prayers for the family and friends. She loved you all so much.

Crystal Hutchinson - April 28 at 06:17 PM

SM

“ Mrs. Meares was my first grade teacher! She was the sweetest and
Best teacher ever!! She never forgot her children that she taught! As
an adult, she still remembered me! I'd always take the time to talk to
her every time I saw her. She will definitely be missed!

Selena Spivey McPherson - April 28 at 05:39 PM

SH

“ I had the privilege of working with Jo for many years!!! She was
such a love and a great example of what a great teacher needs to
do! She was loved by all she came in contact with. My thoughts and
prayers or with her family, she'll be greatly missed!! Suzanne Hall

suzanne hall - April 28 at 03:14 PM

KA

“ Our sincere sympathy for the loss of your loved one. May cherished memories and earnest prayer bring comfort for family and friends at this time.
Psalm 46:1

Kathryn - April 28 at 01:25 PM

DL

“ She was my teacher and a wonderful caring one. Sending prayers to all of you.

Deanna Todd Lopez - April 28 at 10:37 AM



“ Mrs. Meares was my first grade teacher as well as my father’s 2nd grade many years prior. I remember her starting every morning with the pledge of allegiance, a bible story, and prayer time. She made a life long impact. I could not begin to imagine the amount of little minds she impacted. Prayers for her family and friends.

Matthew Gaskins - April 28 at 08:56 AM

AB

“ I have you in my prayers as we celebrate Josephine’s beautiful life. She touched so many lives. She was one of the very best friends I ever had. We shared a lot of joy and sadness. As it was with Josephine, I’m here with a shoulder to cry on and an ear to listen. I love all of you.

Alma Barnhill - April 28 at 08:42 AM



“ There’s so many things that can be said about Miss Josephine that I’m really not sure where to begin. I have been doing her hair for years now, and she was always a bright light and a smile on her face Every time she came in the door.. I would always ask her. How are you doing today and she would say I’m as fine as frog hairs split four ways!!!! she loved everyone and she would tell you that. She was always smiling and always happy to see me even on days when she didn’t feel good. Her light and laughter was contagious and she will be greatly missed.

Allison Leder - April 28 at 08:07 AM

DW

“ What a beautiful tribute to such a lovely woman and Mother. I am so blessed as many were to have known her. She made a positive impact wherever she went. Saying prayers for you, Sylvia, Timothy, Diane, Mark, your family, her friends and all those who loved her. What a special lady she was to many. She was my spiritual Mother and I loved her dearly. I loved to see her face light up when I stopped by and so enjoyed our visits and bringing her a little sweet treat to share. She will be truly missed. May she rest in peace with our Lord and Savior. May God comfort you and your family as only He can. 🙏✝️

Donna Watts - April 28 at 04:54 AM

BS

“ Mrs. Meares was a great teacher and a wonderful person. She taught my daughter at Williams Township she worked with my brother Willis Nealy there. I remember when he had a anyrisym she found out and immediately formed a prayer chain. She will be missed by so many. The Nealy and Simmonds family is praying comfort for her family.



Belinda Simmonds - April 27 at 11:19 PM

DS

“Mrs. Josephine was one of my Mother’s best friends and is probably why I became acquainted with her. My earliest memories was having her for my Sunday School teacher. She knew the scripture and tried her best to teach all in her class the proper way to act as Christians. I don’t recall being in her class at Williams Township, but I know many people that were. I remember everyone saying she would start class with prayer. I remember her as well respected leader of Forest Lawn Baptist church and one that knew how to set you straight if you got out of line. She loved her yard and her plants and she spent a lot of time caring for them. She kept Mr Ralph (husband) straight and he would refer to her as Mama! Ms. Josephine and Mr. Ralph always made me feel special and that had a genuine concern for my welfare. Julia(my wife) and I would go to Ms. Josephine’s Class when we were in high school and help her with chores a lot. She seemed to appreciate our company and I could spend time with my girl friend! In later years Me Ralph would ask me to help him with various repairs other house, and Ms Josephine would make sure I got something good to eat. I enjoyed being able to help them, and they were always so appreciative. Mr. Ralph was my barber and when I went to church, Ms. Josephine would inspect my haircut and get on Mr. Ralph if it was not to her liking. I remember leaving my favorite Bible on top of my truck one time and it blew off and I lost it. Ma. Josephine found out about it and presented me with her Bible. On the presentation page of this Bible that I carry to this day, reads “Presented to Dale Stanley From Josephine and Ralph Mears Because we love and Pray for You! August 26, 2007 and “May this word be so close to you- the book will never be lost. Psalm 112.i see her notes in the margin of this Bible today. I have many more found memories of Ms. Josephine and honored to have been her friend.

Dale

Dale Stanley - April 27 at 09:52 PM

DS

“I had the privilege of working with Joshine as a Personal Trainer for the past three years, and in that time she became far more than someone I worked with. She was truly one of a kind—full of strength, grace, and a spark that could light up any room. She had a way of speaking her mind, sharing her wisdom, and making every conversation memorable. I will always remember her spirit, her stories, and the warmth she carried with her. Knowing her was a gift, and I will miss her deeply.”

*My heartfelt condolences to the family during this difficult time.
Wishing you comfort and peace in the days ahead.
With Love , Debbie and Mike Spooner*

Debbie Spooner - April 27 at 09:06 PM

RJ

“ 2 files added to the tribute wall



Rachel Jensen - April 27 at 09:05 PM