



Wanda Lee Powell

April 21, 1920 - January 20, 2015

Wanda Lee (Smith) Powell, 94, of Charlotte, MI died peacefully on Tuesday, January 20, 2015. Wanda was born April 21, 1920, in Albany, KY, the daughter of Clarence and Sally (Duvall) Smith. She attended Western Kentucky University, where she met her husband, Robert K. Powell. The two married in 1940 before moving first to Bloomfield, IL, and shortly after to Michigan, where they settled in Charlotte in 1945 when Robert took a job as the high school band director. Wanda taught high school in Charlotte briefly before the birth of their daughter, Nancy. In her early years, Wanda was very involved with the Lawrence Avenue United Methodist Church and her professional sorority Delta Kappa Gamma. Later, she went back to education, becoming a 3rd grade teacher in Olivet, MI for nearly 30 years, retiring in 1985. Wanda traveled all over the country and overseas with her husband for various band trips. Many band students remember her as the number one band booster for over 30 years, which was her true joy. After her retirement in 1985, she continued to correspond with many of her students for the rest of her life. She loved painting, drawing, reading and writing poetry. She was a very gifted speaker, presenting the Robert K. Powell Memorial Scholarship for many years. In her retirement, she lived a very social life and was known and loved by all. Wanda is survived by her daughter; Nancy (Billy) Gordon of Birmingham, MI; grandchildren, Keith (Jamie) Gordon, Andrew (Michelle) Gordon and Victor (Mary) Gordon; and great-grandchildren, Liam, Rylee, Madeleine Rose and Luke William. She is predeceased by her husband,

Robert K. Powell; brothers, Perry Shelby Smith and Randolph Smith; and her sister, Sue Long Flowers. Funeral services will be held at 2:00 p.m. on Saturday, January 24, 2015 at Lawrence Avenue United Methodist Church in Charlotte. Visitation will be from 3:00-5:00 and 7:00-9:00 p.m. on Friday, January 23, 2015 at Pray Funeral Home in Charlotte, MI. Interment will take place in Maple Hill Cemetery. Memorial contributions may be made to the Robert K. Powell Memorial Scholarship to benefit Charlotte graduating music students. Arrangements by Pray Funeral Home, Charlotte.

Tribute Wall

KP

“ Mrs. Powell was loved. I had her in 3rd grade at Fern Persons' Elementary School. She had such a love for teaching; we felt we mattered to her. Peace to her family. You live in my heart, Dear Mrs. Powell. Rest well! Karen (Fuller) Petersen

Karen Fuller Petersen - February 09, 2015 at 10:58 AM

CW

“ Wanda brightened the hearts of so many of us who had the pleasure of being near her. Too many years have passed since I was in her presence, but seeing her picture and hearing about her life brings back fond memories. It was an honor to be member of the Charlotte High School Band and be a recipient of Bob and Wanda's love and teaching. Blessings, Craig (Class of 68)

Craig Wiley - January 27, 2015 at 03:48 PM

S"

“ To Nancy and family, it was such a pleasure to know your parents. Your father was my band director and friend for 7 years, he took us to won the Wash. DC cherry festival. He not only taught the love of music but life skills to live by. Your mother was a extra special person in her own right, being a member of the Methodist church too since birth I knew both of them and your mother which always carried with her, her great smile and personally for years for us to share and enjoy. We will miss her as we still do your father for they contributed a great share of themselves to all they came in touch with. My prayers are with you and your family. Sandy "Anderson" McDonald class of 1959. My God be with always.

sandra "anderson"mcdonald - January 24, 2015 at 10:48 AM

CW

“ Our thoughts are with you today as you celebrate the life of your precious mother. She is a very special person and our remembrances of her are special. We are so grateful to God for the hope we have in Christ of seeing our loved ones again in Heaven. May the Lord comfort you today by His presence and the promises of His eternal Word. Charles & Judy Whitfield Birmingham, Michigan

Charles & Judy Whitfield - January 24, 2015 at 05:59 AM

K(

“ I was just talking about Mrs. Powell a couple weeks ago. She was my first grade teacher. I will never forget her. I loved her accent and how energetic and loving she was with us. I will never forget in first grade my appendix burst and I was in the hospital for quite a few days. She bought a gift of coloring books, crayons...lots of fun things to do...and brought them to the hospital so I would have something to do. So special. What a special lady! She will always be remembered.

Karen Schriener (Collins) - January 23, 2015 at 08:35 PM

SW

“ Years ago, I remember overhearing a conversation between two of my very young cousins. The youngest was relating playing on lunch break in the snow when somebody on a sled rammed into the back of his teacher, Mrs. Powell, and sent her flying into a snow drift. His brother gasped and said, "boy, I bet she was mad! What did she do the kid?" My little cousin said, "naw, she wasn't mad. She just laughed and laughed." I thought at the time what an incredible teacher she must be to 3rd graders. How many hearts her life touched, including all those Charlotte band members. We did the band trip to the New York World's Fair, and she was so gracious, full of energy and fun. The world was certainly made a better place because of her.

Sandy Willis - January 21, 2015 at 07:28 PM

CT

“*Mr and Mrs. Powell were friends of my parents Violet and Jarvis Wotring. Mr. Powell was the band instructor for both my sister and I. Rowena and I have spoken about the great value of learning self-discipline and team work from our band experience, and a great love of music over our lifetimes. I always enjoyed seeing Mrs. Powell whenever the band was performing or when our teacher families would get together. I think what I enjoyed most was Mrs. Powell's southern accent back in the 50's and 60's and a special grace of movement. A beautiful, charming lady and kind person. I was so delighted that she came to the 50th Band Reunion a couple of years ago we were all so pleased to be with her again sharing memories. Mr and Mrs. Powell will always hold a special place in our memories for which we are grateful!*”

Cessily Wotring Thalacker - January 21, 2015 at 05:27 PM

SB

“*I knew Mrs. Powell through my parents and she was also a neighbor. Mrs. Powell was very kind to share her memories of my mom when I was looking for people to add to a video collection for my mom's retirement ceremony. To her children and grandchildren, may God comfort you as your families transition through these difficult times. Remember the times that were good and funny. My condolences to all of you.*”

Sally Nash Boyd - January 21, 2015 at 03:04 PM

JP

“ Dear nancy: I was saddened to hear of you Mother's death. She was one of my favorite teachers. Of course the connection continued on in band. I was also your baby sitter from time to time. I always enjoyed a visit with her when I was in Charlotte. She was a delight with a great sense of humor. My parents enjoyed many happy times with both of your parents. She & my Mother, Thelma continued the connection after both men were gone. I hope your happy members will sustain you during this time. Love, Joellen

Joellen bonham Piskitel - January 21, 2015 at 01:23 PM

JB

“ I LOVED this woman. The little bell on her desk, her perfume. I remeber how much she loved art and how much she pushed me to do my best. She was firm but fair. When my parents divorced she spent extra time with me after school. I was her "helper" and I would clean the erasers and straighten up the room. She never forgot my name. I saw her on and off growing up and she always had time to chat. You are very much loved by me.

Jennifer (Rounds) Burns - January 21, 2015 at 12:38 PM

KT

“ I have Mrs. Powell to thank for so many happy memories of school days. She made learning fun and expected much of us as third graders. We made wonderful art and I held on to that folder of it for years. I have great arithmetic and spelling skills due to Mrs. Powell. She taught back in the day when paddling was still allowed and one of the funniest memories I have of her is hearing her say to a girl, "I am going to paddle you girl, and I don't mean maybe." That girl ran around the room with Mrs. Powell chasing her, paddle in hand. She was a mom to us and invested so much of her life in educating and loving her students. I can only imagine her as mom and grandma, and I offer my sympathies to you, her family. She was a wonderful person who will be dearly missed.

Kim (Hart) Taylor - January 21, 2015 at 12:27 PM

RC

“ Mrs. Powell was my third grade teacher my first year at Olivet I LOVED her southern drawl and she was my first crush ever I ALWAYS remember her fondly R.I.P Dear Lady GOD BLESS HER FAMILY. Rick Colburn Olivet graduating class 1973.

Rick Colburn - January 21, 2015 at 11:50 AM

KH

“ Mrs. Powell has touched so many lives. I for one had her as my 3rd grade teacher, she will forever be my favorite teacher. I would like to offer my deepest condolences to your family. Some of us felt like she was a part of our family for a while. I would like to thank your family for sharing Mrs. Powell us, it was a pleasure to have known such a beautiful lady with a beautiful and loving heart. I will always remember her fondly.

Kay Hotchkiss - January 21, 2015 at 11:44 AM

CB

“ Oh, Nancy, I'm so sorry for your loss. Your mom was a true lady, with a heart as big as all outdoors and a backbone made of steel. She was very dear to me and my family--as my mother's 3rd grade teacher, as band mom to my two aunts and then to me and my sister, and as a friend to my Grandma Cole from their shared band trips and Methodist Women's projects. She was always gracious and loving and kind to me. I had a lovely chat with her at the last Band reunion that will live in my heart as long as it beats. I imagine there was an extraordinary fanfare in heaven when she arrived to be reunited with your dad. The lessons I learned from him continue to inform my life daily even though I graduated 40 years ago. Please accept my heartfelt condolences on your loss.

Cheryl Dunn Bychek - January 21, 2015 at 11:27 AM



“ Wanda and her husband were our neighbors on the seminary side of the corner we lived on for many years, my parents often talked to her and saw her while doing work in the yard. She was a very quiet neighbor, but was to be very vocal when it counted. She was caring enough to call whenever she wanted to talk about things. my step mother took her on errands several times and they became close friends. if ever she had any problems she knew she could always call over to the house and ask for help. I thought she was a very nice lady and she will be missed.

January 21, 2015 at 09:45 AM

NB

“ Nancy: I cannot express how sorry I am for your loss. Your mother was such a special lady. I loved her southern accent and how much of a lady she was. I will miss her very much and treasure the time we shared. You are in my prayers.

Natalie Brocieus - January 21, 2015 at 09:42 AM

AB

“ *Such a wonderful lady and 3rd grade teacher, always so kind to me. I was just thinking of her last week and telling my son about my very first poem I wrote in her class, Tiny Golden Rain Drops. Many fond memories in her classroom, I am thankful to have had her as my teacher. May you rest in peace Mrs. Powell.*

Audrey Brayton - January 21, 2015 at 09:25 AM

DC

“ *I have very fond memories of Mrs. Powell as my 3rd grade Teacher back in 1964 at Fern Persons Elementary in Olivet. She was very sweet and had a very soothing southern accent. I'm sad to hear that she has passed, but I'm very happy she lived a long life. Rest in Peace Mrs. Powell.*

David Campbell - January 21, 2015 at 08:09 AM

GW

“ *Nancy : so sorry for your loss. your Mother was a very special lady. I will always have fond memories of her and your Dad. they made a huge impact on so many of us who were able to be part of the " Oriole Band". my greatest memories of high school are of your parents.*

Gary Wells - January 20, 2015 at 11:45 PM