



# **Flocene Strickland Murphy**

JUL 15, 1908 - JUL 19, 2015



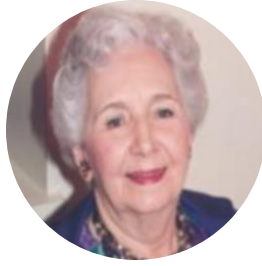
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**MEMORIAL PARK**  
Funeral Home & Cemetery

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**F**locene Strickland Murphy lived a long and full life, remaining strong and vibrant until the last few months of her life. She was a loving wife and mother, an artist, an art teacher and a lover of beauty. Her love of art was expressed in her paintings that adorn the homes of her children and in teaching art in the Memphis City Schools from 1953 to 1975 at Bellevue Jr. High School and Sheffield High School. Her encouragement of her students, many of whom won awards in the Scholastic Arts competition, led a number of them to begin careers in the arts. Her artistic sense also expressed itself in her clothing. She was known to many as the “lady in purple” given the preponderance of all shades of purple from lavender to deep purple that dominated her wardrobe. Had she not chosen a career in art, she easily could have worked for the Memphis Chamber of Commerce. She was an ambassador for Memphis wherever she went. During the very few years of her life when she did not live in Memphis, she yearned to be back in the city she loved. She lived in Central Gardens on Harbert Avenue from 1953 to 1987. Afterward, she moved to the Parkway House Condominiums where she lived independently until 2005, when, at age 97, she moved to assisted living at Carriage Court. The last two years of her life were at the Memphis Jewish Home and Rehab. Flocene was born in Water Valley, Mississippi, on July 15, 1908, to Luther Felix Strickland and Mary Belle Strickland. From there, she and her family moved to Marion, Arkansas. When she was about 12 years old, they moved to Memphis. She attended Cummings School, Rozelle School and graduated from Southside High School in 1927. She worked her way through West Tennessee State Teacher’s College (now the University of Memphis). One of her favorite memories from her student years was working at the Peabody Hotel as a hostess in the Tea Room shortly after the hotel’s opening on Union. While in college she was a member of Alpha Gamma Delta sorority, the President of the Teacher’s Association, the artist for the school yearbook and voted

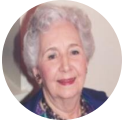


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one of the school's "Best Girls." The 100th anniversary issue of the University of Memphis Alumni Association magazine featured an article about her and the University recently recognized and honored her as its oldest living graduate at the investiture of Dr. David Rudd as the University's 12th president. After retiring in 1975, she became a member of the Association for the Preservation of Tennessee Antiquities and a docent and guide at the Fontaine House. She was a group leader in Community Fellowship Bible Study. She was also active in the Brooks League at Memphis Brooks Museum of Art and was named the Volunteer of the year for the Brooks League in 1997. During her long life, she was a member of and active in St. John's United Methodist Church, Bellevue Baptist Church and Trinity United Methodist Church. Flocene will be remembered by many for her "chalk talk" presentations at local churches, where she drew a scene from the Bible in fluorescent chalk while quoting scripture. When complete, the room was darkened and her drawing was brought to life by black light, allowing the colors of the fluorescent chalk to glow. She was preceded in death by her husband, T. Velmer Murphy, whom she married in 1937 and by her sisters, Evelyn Hawkins, Lorraine Starr, Dollye Smith and her brother, Leslie Strickland. She is survived by her two children, Donna Murphy Meeks (Rev. Gerald E. Meeks, Sr.) of Little Rock and J. Michael Murphy (Sherry DuBose Murphy) of Memphis; two grandchildren, Margie Meeks Lickert (Doug Lickert) and Gerald "Jed" Meeks (Laura Meeks); four great-grandchildren, Shelby Held, Connor Meeks, Bradshaw Held and Hannah Meeks, her brother, Bill Strickland, her sister, June Hester, and a host of nephews and nieces. The family is grateful to Flocene's good friend, Bobbye Fletcher, for her love and attention through the years and grateful to all of the wonderful staff who cared for Flocene at Carriage Court and the Memphis Jewish Home & Rehab. Visitation will be held from 5:30 to 7:30 PM at Memorial Park Funeral Home at 5668 Poplar Avenue on Thursday. There will be a private family service the next day at 11:30 AM. In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be made to Trinity United Methodist Church, the Brooks League at the Memphis Brooks Museum of Art or a charity of the donor's choice. Funeral arrangements have been entrusted to Memorial Park



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Funeral Home and Cemetery, 5668 Poplar Ave. Memphis, TN 38119, "Behind the Stone Wall"



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