



# Melba Ross Tanner

OCT 15, 1934 - JUN 8, 2021



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MEMORIAL PARK  
Funeral Home & Cemetery

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## **Melba Ross Tanner**

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**T**he Greek philosopher Plato once wrote, “Music gives a soul to the universe, wings to the mind, flight to the imagination, and life to everything.” Melba Ross Tanner understood the power of music to touch hearts and soothe spirits. A self-taught pianist with a clear alto voice, she brought beauty into this world—not only through her music and her gardening skills, but through her passion for fairness, her ability to love with an exceptional ferocity, and her determination to raise a strong and independent daughter.

Born October 15, 1934, in Corinth, Mississippi, to Willie Austin Ross and Mary Elizabeth Smith Ross, Melba embraced music at an early age. As a young girl, on Saturday mornings, she and a friend sang and Melba played guitar on a local radio show. On August 16, 1952, she married Bobby Tate Tanner on the front porch of his parents’ house in Corinth. They moved to Memphis, Tennessee, where they performed duets in their church choir and created a home that reverberated with song. Her most prized possession was the piano Bobby surprised her with one evening, which she then proceeded to stay up all night learning to play.

Melba had a heart for things that were broken—whether it was refinishing furniture or nurturing many dogs throughout her life, most recently a brain-damaged canine named Nicholas. Her commitment to those she loved was remarkable, as exemplified by her service as a dedicated caregiver to her mother. Melba loved contemplative activities, such as gardening and growing African violets, but she also had a competitive streak that emerged during cutthroat badminton games, which she invariably won. An avid reader, she bequeathed to her child an affinity for books, a creative spirit and a quirky sense of humor—but not the ability to play the piano by ear.

Predeceased by her husband and five siblings, Melba is survived by her daughter, Leigh Tanner Dorsey (Kevin), her brother Wilbur O. Ross (Judy), and many nieces and nephews.



## Obituary

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There will be a graveside service on Monday, June 14 at 2:30 pm at Memorial Park Cemetery, 5668 Poplar Avenue in Memphis.





# Events

**Melba Ross Tanner**

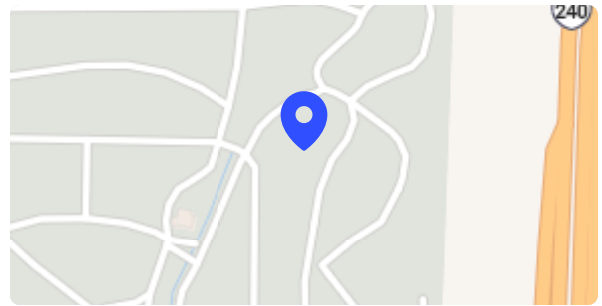
OCT 15, 1934 - JUN 8, 2021

## Graveside Service

 **Monday**, June 14, 2021

 2:30 PM CT

 **Memorial Park Cemetery**  
5668 Poplar Ave, Memphis TN 38119





## Tribute Wall

**Melba Ross Tanner**

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**T. Key Tanner** posted:

I was sorry to learn of the passing of my dear sister-in-law, Melba Ross Tanner. My deepest sympathy to her daughter Leigh and friends. Many years ago "Gene and I had dinners with Melba and Bobby. Melba was good at preparing cornish hens. I would say I had a big chicken dinner last night and ate a whole hen. Our loveKey, "Gene" and Richard Tanner

June 13 at 2:02 PM



**Katy And Bill Dorsey** lit a candle in honor of Melba.



June 11 at 12:43 PM



## **Memories only last if you share them**

Join us in honoring Melba by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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