



## Elsie “Dixie” Petty

September 9, 1948 - November 8, 2019

Elsie “Dixie” Wiggins Petty, 71, peacefully completed life’s journey in her home in Collierville, TN on November 8, 2019. Following an extended illness, she was surrounded by her loving family and dear friends in her final days. Born in Meridian, MS on September 9, 1948, Dixie earned her associate degree at Meridian Junior College where she fell in love with a man named Jim Petty. Dixie and Jim were married on December 28, 1968 while attending the University of Southern Mississippi. After earning her bachelor’s degree from USM, Dixie continued with post-graduate studies at Mississippi State University, Jackson State University, and Oklahoma State University. Dixie began a 33-year education career in Meridian Public Schools where she taught speech and theater. In 1978, she and her husband Jim planted a flag in Carthage, MS where they both raised a family and served the Leake County Public Schools system. Primarily teaching sixth grade science, Dixie also served in the school’s Title I program. After retiring in 2005, Dixie expanded her genealogy hobby into full-time research. Between annual seminars at the Institute of Genealogy & Historical Research and regular trips to Sumter County, South Carolina with her sister Lydia, Dixie never exhausted her quest for knowledge. As a product of her research, Dixie was successfully inducted into the Daughters of the American Revolution in 2018. While living in Carthage, Dixie made many lifelong friends through the Carthage United Methodist Church, the Dancing Rabbit Genealogical and Historical Society, the Newton County Historical and Genealogical Society, the Family Research Association of Mississippi, as well as numerous tailgating friends on the practice field of USM’s MM Roberts Stadium. In 2015, Dixie moved to Collierville, TN where she joined the Collierville United Methodist Church as a member of the Agape Sunday School class. Among Dixie’s accomplishments, she was most proud to receive the Meridian Junior College Speech Award in 1968, the NASA Educational Workshops for Elementary School Teachers Honors Teacher Award in 1994, and was recognized as the Leake County Chamber of Commerce Woman of the Year in 2011. Preceding her in parting is a panoply of ancestors, many of which Dixie spent a lifetime tracing through genealogy. Surely, at this very moment, Dixie is plotting interviews with those ancestors to fill in the gaps of her research. Among the most immediate family, she is joyously reunited with her husband, James E. Petty; mother, Elsie M. Wiggins, and; father, Richard W. Wiggins III, as well as uncles,

aunts, and grandparents that she knew and loved in life. She is survived by her children, Alise (Scott) Davis (Germantown, TN); John (Elizabeth) Petty (Olive Branch, MS); Anne Petty (Jackson, MS), grand-children Lindsey Davis, Caroline Davis, Drew Davis, and Nathaniel Petty; her sister Lydia Medeiros (Columbus, OH), niece Kathryn (Hasan Al Masoodi) Medeiros, and grand-nephew, Abbas Al Masoodi; and her brothers-in-law Richard (Gina) Petty and Ronald Petty (Meridian, MS). Dixie's interest in genealogy was driven by enthusiasm for a good mystery, a constant curiosity that she pursued in love and faith. This is how we will remember her. In lieu of flowers, Dixie requested donations to UMCOR, the Heifer Project, Dancing Rabbit Genealogical and Historical Society, or the University of Southern Mississippi. Visitation will be held at 9:30 AM on Tuesday, November 12 with services to follow at CUMC Sanctuary on the Square in Collierville, TN. Dixie will rest next to her husband Jim at Pleasant Hill Cemetery in Rose Hill, MS.

# Comments

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“ Dixie was such a special person to me. I’m so glad I knew her.

**Kent McFarland** - December 06, 2019 at 01:46 PM

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“ I met Dixie at IGHR, in Birmingham, Ala. years ago and though the years we became friends and have discussed and wondered about our ancestors and why they left so many “unknowns” in their lifetime. I will miss our phone conversations, since we lived in different states, that was our communication, that and email. At least you are getting those questions of your ancestors answered such as “who were your parents” and “why did you not leave any records...” Thanks for being the friend you were... You will be missed — greatly!!

**Kitty** - November 12, 2019 at 09:34 AM