



Patty Sue Harper

October 7, 1932 - February 11, 2026

Patty Sue “Ray” Harper, age 93, found eternal rest and joy on February 11, 2026, in her home, as “her girls” sang to her. Patty Sue was born in Portland, Tennessee, on October 7, 1932, to her loving parents, Fred and Grace Ray. She cherished her older brother, Donald, who walked backwards in rain and snow, protecting her as they walked home from their one-room schoolhouse. She graduated as valedictorian at age 16, from Portland High School. She met the love of her life, Fred Harper, at Martin College, in Pulaski, Tennessee. Their friendship began, when she heard him play the piano and sing, “Just a Closer Walk With Thee.” From this moment on, their friendship grew into a heartwarming courtship and engagement. After graduating from Martin College, she furthered her education at Scarritt College for Christian Workers and George Peabody College for Teachers, in Nashville, Tennessee, completing studies for a Bachelor of Arts degree in Christian Education. Patty Sue and Fred were married on September 11, 1954. They began their church ministry together in Durham, North Carolina, where he completed his Master of Divinity degree at Duke University. The Duke University Divinity Dames presented Patty Sue with a “Good Wife” certificate, in recognition of “her love, loyalty, and faithful devotion in the Seminary education of her husband.”

Her life in ministry, serving alongside Fred, continued when they moved to Middle Tennessee. She lived out her calling in Christian Education, as they served together in United Methodist Churches across the Tennessee

Conference. Patty Sue utilized her Christian Education degree in the local church, and at the district and conference levels. Her heart for ministry was reflected through leading children, youth, women/adult ministries, directing children's choirs, and facilitating workshops. Patty Sue's card ministry was a lifelong passion, as she sought to lift up those who were hurting, celebrate joys and birthdays, seeking to provide words of comfort and encouragement to others. As her daughters grew up, she worked part-time as a children's librarian and spent 18 years as a sales associate with Castner-Knott/Macy's (always loved a good discount!)

Patty Sue loved sewing, planning (often 6 months in advance!) and cooking for friends and family gatherings, hosting small groups for Bible study and parties. Her sense of humor kept everybody laughing. She enjoyed playing board games (favorites being Rummikub, Scrabble), word puzzles, and watching sports – especially her Duke Blue Devils, March Madness basketball tournament, and Indiana Fever games.

She has enjoyed collecting nativity scenes, Christmas ornaments, magnets, and salt/pepper shakers through the years. Patty Sue was very involved in her community, valuing the importance of cultivating friendships. Traveling with family on vacations, and with her husband, Fred, to destinations across the United States and overseas, created memories to always remember. Her love for butterflies, nature and birds brightened her days.

Patty Sue will be remembered for her devotion and sacrificial love for her family, passion for ministry, steadfast faith, integrity, strength, sense of humor, compassion, warmth and hospitality.

In addition to her loving parents and brother, Patty Sue was preceded in death by her precious husband, the Reverend C. Fred Harper. Patty Sue's legacy lives on through her beloved family. She is survived by her devoted daughters, Lydia Harper Smith (Robert), Lisa Elaine Harper, Laurie Evans Ross (Gary); her cherished granddaughters, Shelley Smith Reams (Lamar), Allison Smith Yates (Drew), Olivia Evans Turco (Kyle); her treasured great-grandchildren, Grant and Grace Reams, Sophie and Evie Yates, Henry and Ella Turco; her

caring brother-in-law, Jimmy Harper, nieces and nephews.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that any charitable donations be made to the following organizations that Patty Sue supported: Breakthrough T1D (formerly Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation), St. Jude Children's Hospital or Shriners Children's Hospital.

Visitation

Austin-Bell Funeral Home, 533 TN-76, White House, TN 37188 4-7 pm,
Friday, February 20, 2026

Visitation and Celebration of Life Service

Connell Memorial United Methodist Church, 113 Church St., Goodlettsville, TN
37072

1-2 pm visitation, Saturday, February 21, 2026

2:00 pm Celebration of Life Service, Saturday, February 21, 2026

Burial and Committal following at White House Memorial Gardens, 3039 Hwy
31W, White House, TN 37188

Cemetery Details

White House Memorial Gardens

3629 Hwy 31 W
White House, TN 37188

Previous Events

Visitation

FEB 20. 4:00 PM - 7:00 PM (CT)

Austin & Bell Funeral Home White House
533 TN-76
White House, TN 37188
(615) 672-5000
<https://austinandbell.com>

Visitation

FEB 21. 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM (CT)

Connell United Methodist Church
113 Church St.
Goodlettsville, TN

Funeral Service

FEB 21. 2:00 PM (CT)

Connell United Methodist Church
113 Church St.
Goodlettsville, TN

Tribute Wall

FB

“ Family of Dr. Charles Edward Blackburn.
purchased the Lavender Reflections Spray for
the family of Patty Sue Harper.



Family of Dr. Charles Edward Blackburn. - February 20 at
01:18 PM

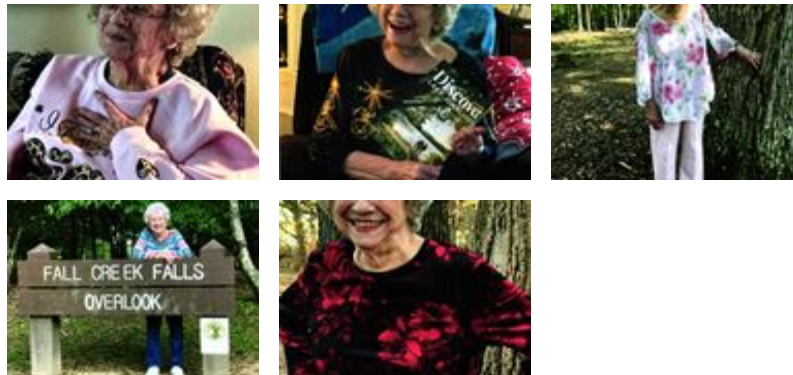
NR

“ Michelle and I are very sorry to hear about the passing of your
mother, Lisa. Prayers for you all. Niles and Michelle Reddick

Niles Reddick - February 19 at 10:23 AM



“ 128 files added to the album LifeTributes



Austin & Bell Funeral Home - February 18 at 03:03 PM

CG

Miss Patty Sue and I were friends over the years. She was always kind and even though in these later years, we didn't see each other often, it was as if it was just yesterday. She wanted a job, so I did my best to get her one, and she was there 18 years. She just fit in. So sorry for the loss and know she will be greatly missed ❤️❤️❤️

Cathy Garshnick - February 19 at 08:56 AM

LS

“*Laurie and David Spicer purchased the Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum for the family of Patty Sue Harper.*”



Laurie and David Spicer - February 17 at 06:25 PM

KM

“*My condolences to her “twins” and the rest of the family. God’s love and peace to you all. Kent McNish Port St Joe,FL*”

Kent McNish - February 15 at 01:43 PM

FT

“*Patty Sue was a Blessing and the purest presence of Joy for anyone who met her. I was honored to know her and love her. We met while I was serving as children’s director at White House FUMC. She was an encourager and amazing supporter of ministry and I loved her smile. I actually came across a picture not very long ago of a work day the church had when we showed up at her house to clean up around the house... she was so overjoyed to have us there... yes to help clean up some , but I think more so because almost all stopped to visit and chat it up with her from the teens to the adults, you could see the love and joy all over her face. I’m sure Love and Joy is in abundance just a little more in Heaven today. Much love, and prayers for the family, Francie A. Trostle-Hagewood*”

Francie Trostle-Hagewood - February 15 at 08:17 AM

RG

“ *Russell Gallimore lit a candle in memory of
Patty Sue Harper*



Russell Gallimore - February 14 at 09:56 PM