Ima Ruth Reese

January 10, 1933 - January 27, 2026

Ima Ruth Powell Reese, age 93, passed away on Tuesday, January 27, 2026. She was born
January 10, 1933 in Clarke County Mississippi. She was the third and last child born to Henry
Abner and Mary Ellen Moffett Powell. She was born eighteen years after her second sibling's
(Minnie) birth and essentially raised as an only child since her brother Carl and sister Minnie
had already moved out of the family home.

Ruth graduated from Clarkdale High School in Meridian Mississippi. After her graduation, she
rode the bus to Jackson Mississippi to attend Draughon's Business College. She lived in a
boarding house close to downtown Jackson and worked as a waitress to pay her expenses
and room rent. She often talked about sharing a bedroom with three other girls that also
attended the college. None of the women knew each other prior to them attending the
business college.

Her first job after graduation from the business college was a bookkeeper for a loan company
in downtown Jackson. It was while working at the loan company she met her husband James
Harrel Reese. James owned a jewelry store on Capital Street and their courtship started on the
sidewalk of his store as she walked to work. They married in Brandon, Mississippi, however
their first home together was in Jackson, Mississippi. They had two daughters together, Donna
Marie and Karen Rene.

Shortly after her daughters were born, Ruth decided to go Mississippi College to become a
teacher. She obtained a Master's Degree in Elementary Education and Biological Science. She
began her teaching career at Jackson Public Schools, but later the family bought a farm in
Crystal Springs, Mississippi and Ruth became a teacher for the Copiah County School System.
She taught many years in the regular elementary classroom, but later obtained her certification
to teach the gifted program. She loved all of her students. In the gifted program, she taught a
lot of the same students for several years. She carried students in her car on many overnight
field trips. She wanted her students to have many experiences. Some of those trips included
the Space Center in Huntsville, Alabama, Mud Island in Memphis and the Mississippi Aquarium
in Gulfport.

Ruth retired after thirty years of teaching. She had many talents and always believed if
someone else could do it, she could also. Her unique talents, independence and willingness to
learn new things, enabled her to draw the plans for her first home in Jackson, move and
remodel an older home to the farm in Crystal Springs and later draw plans and build her
daughter Rene's home. Nothing was impossible with hard work and determination. Ruth was
always creative. She loved drawing and painting and became an accomplished artist. She won
many awards, and her high point was becoming the featured artist at Jackson Municipal Art
Gallery. Her art reception was highlighted by having a surprise visit by Grammy Winning Artist
George Winston. He played the piano during the reception and gave Ruth a box full of his CD's
after the event.

Ruth loved gardening and doing anything outdoors. She loved her girls and sparked their
interest in horses. Ruth learned how to ride a horse and obtained riding lessons for her girls.
Many years was spent every weekend attending horse shows. Ruth even tried to ride her horse
on the Dixie National Trail Ride, but it was cut short when her horse threw her in the parking lot.
That did stop her love for horses.

Ruth had a love for life and adventure. Her true love was her husband, James. They did
everything together and they loved traveling.

Ruth is preceded in death by her parents, brother (Carl Leroy Powell), sister (Minnie Ella Powell
Terrell) and her husband (James Harrel Reese).

Ruth is survived by her daughters, Donna Short and Rene Mulligan (Dennis); grandchildren,
Josh Weems (Wendi) Jessica Weems and Reese Berry (Hailey); and eleven great grandchildren.
A private graveside service will be held at New Zion Baptist Cemetery in Crystal Springs.

In lieu of flowers and her love of animals, donations can be made to Mississippi Horse Rescue.
Mississippi Horse Rescue
184 Twelve Oaks Road
Canton Mississippi 39046
https://mississippihorses.org

Tribute Wall

PJ

Mrs. Reese was the best teacher I ever had. I always loved her. She will definitely be missed. Thoughts and prayers for all.

Patrice Phillips Johnson - January 29 at 09:33 PM

RM

1 file added to the tribute wall

Rene Mulligan - January 29 at 09:36 AM

SL

Ruth was an amazing person and wonder teacher. All her students loved her.

Susan Lee - January 29 at 01:42 PM

RM

2 files added to the tribute wall

Rene Mulligan - January 28 at 01:26 PM