



Joyce Leeth Willis

May 13, 2025

Joyce Leeth Willis – ‘Mom’ to her two sons and ‘Gran’ to her six grandchildren and five great grandchildren – went home to be with the Lord at 91 years of age on May 13, 2025. Joyce lived a life full of service to and education of others.

Joyce joins her beloved husband of 67 years, Robert Norman Willis who passed in October of 2022. They are survived by their two sons and families. Son Dick (wife Tricia), and grandchildren Bobby (wife Sara), Dani (husband James), and Coli and great-grandchildren Anna, Wheeler, Roxanna. Son Mike (wife Laura), and grandchildren Meggie (husband Josh), Ginny (husband Chris), and Carli and great-grandchildren Eli and Will.

Joyce is the only child of Wheeler B. Leeth and Ruth V. Leeth. Joyce’s mother was Director of Personnel for the Manatee County School System, and her father was Principal of Manatee High School. They were both graduates of the University of Alabama. Her father was a multi-sport letterman, member of the 1941 National Championship football team and an all-SEC center on the basketball team. Her mother, Ruth, was the University Homecoming Queen and a graduate of the College of Education. Her parents married shortly just before her father deployed as a US Army Ranger to the WWII European Theater of operations participating in D-Day, Market Garden and the Battle of the Bulge.

Joyce met Bob while attending the University of Florida. Bob was the first person in his family to attend college and funded his education through working in the dormitory cafeteria. While working the breakfast shift one morning he met Joyce, a cute coed and the woman he married at the First Baptist Church in Bradenton Florida in September of 1955. Joyce graduated with a bachelor's degree from the University of Florida College of Education and subsequently earned a master's degree in education from the University of South Florida.

After their marriage, Bob and Joyce lived in Charleston, South Carolina where Bob completed his active-duty Navy service. They moved to Sarasota County in 1958 and joined the First Baptist Church of Sarasota where they served in various capacities including Sunday School Teachers, Royal Ambassador Leaders, and numerous church committees.

Joyce served as President of the Delta Kappa Gamma International Honor Society for Women Educators and was President and Treasurer of the Sarasota Chapter of the International Reading Association. She was an active member of the American Association of University Women, the Florida Council of English Teachers, and the Florida Speech Association.

She taught elementary school and was a reading resource teacher retiring as the Sarasota County Early Childhood Reading Specialist. She loved to instill in others a life-long love of reading.

Memorial Services will be held at the chapel at the Toale Brothers Funeral Home (40 North Orange Avenue, Sarasota) on the 29th of May at 11am with viewing and visitation from 10 am to 11am.

The interment will be held at the Sarasota National Cemetery (9810 State

Road 72, Sarasota Florida) on the 29th of May at 1pm. Her final resting place at the National Cemetery is Section 4, Grave 2455 along with her husband, Robert Norman Willis.

Previous Events

Visitation

MAY **29**. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (ET)

Toale Brothers Funeral Home & Crematory - Colonial Chapel
40 N. Orange Avenue
Sarasota, FL 34236
(941) 955-4171
info@toalebrothers.com
<https://www.toalebrothers.com/>

Memorial Service

MAY **29**. 11:00 AM (ET)

Toale Brothers Funeral Home & Crematory - Colonial Chapel
40 N. Orange Avenue
Sarasota, FL 34236
(941) 955-4171
info@toalebrothers.com
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Interment

MAY **29**. 1:00 PM (ET)

Sarasota National Cemetery
9810 State Rd 72
Sarasota, FL 34241
(941) 922-7200

Tribute Wall



“ *Enchanted Cottage was purchased for the family of Joyce Leeth Willis.*



May 28, 2025 at 05:12 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Joyce Leeth Willis.

May 28, 2025 at 05:12 PM



“ *Divine Peace Bouquet was purchased for the family of Joyce Leeth Willis.*



May 27, 2025 at 02:04 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Joyce Leeth Willis.

May 27, 2025 at 02:04 PM



“ 6 files added to the album Memories Album



Toale Brothers Funeral Home & Crematory - May 21, 2025 at 03:08 PM