



Leah Marie Sims

October 9, 1930 - November 24, 2024

IN MEMORY OF:

Leah Marie Sims

Serving Location:

CRAIN PLEASANT GROVE-MURDALE FUNERAL HOME

31 Memorial Drive, Murphysboro, Illinois

Leah Marie Sims, age 94, of Murphysboro, passed away Sunday, November 24, 2024 at her home surrounded by her family.

She was born on October 9, 1930 to Troy Shannon and Myrtle Elizabeth (Harper) Bradley in Franklin County, Illinois. On December 20, 1951, she married Eugene T. Sims, Jr. and they spent over 59 years together until his passing in 2011.

Leah received a Bachelor's Degree in Music Performance from Southern Illinois University, and a Master's Degree from Florida State University in Music Education. She taught elementary through high school music and choir in Florida and Murphysboro for 30 years, where she also directed concerts, madrigal dinners, and musicals. She directed the Murphysboro Community Choir in seasonal performances of The Messiah. She was a very active

member of First Baptist Church where for many years she played piano, directed the choir, and taught Sunday school.

Survivors include her son, Michael Bradley Sims; daughters, Kerry Lee (Patrick) Brockhagen, Jeanne Marie (Michael) Wikete; two grandsons, Evan Sims, Timothy (Kimberly) Sims; two granddaughters, Jessie Sims, Laura Lee (Mitchel) Bowen; one great-granddaughter, Hannah Sims; one great-grandson, Leo Bowen; one great great-grandson, Silas Sims; and sister-in-law, Virginia Sims.

She was preceded in death by her infant brother, her parents, and her husband.

The family wishes to thank her two caregivers, Tammy Boucher and Marcy Thomas, and the staff of Residential Hospice for their kindness and compassion.

Visitation will be held Friday, November 29, 2024 from 4:00 PM until 7:00 PM at Crain Pleasant Grove-Murdale Funeral Home.

Funeral services will be held Saturday, November 30, 2024 at 11:00 AM at the First Baptist Church in Murphysboro. Interment will follow the funeral service at Pleasant Grove Memorial Park. Friends may gather directly at graveside following the 11:00 AM service at the church.

Memorial donations may be made to First Baptist Church in Murphysboro and/or Residential Hospice and/or Murphysboro Student Productions (Memo: Leah Sims Memorial and turned in at the Visitation or at the Funeral or at the Murphysboro High School Office).

Crain Pleasant Grove-Murdale Funeral Home is in charge of arrangements.

Cemetery Details

Pleasant Grove Memorial Park

31 Memorial Dr.
Murphysboro, IL 62966
(618) 687-1145
crain@crainsonline.com

Previous Events

Visitation

NOV **29**. 4:00 PM - 7:00 PM (cst)

Crain Pleasant Grove-Murdale Funeral Home - Old 13
31 Memorial Dr.
Murphysboro, IL 62966
(618) 687-2500
crain@crainsonline.com

Funeral Service

NOV **30**. 11:00 AM - 11:30 AM (cst)

First Baptist Church
401 N. 15th St.
Murphysboro
Murphysboro, IL 62966

Interment

NOV **30**. 12:00 PM - 12:30 PM (cst)

Pleasant Grove Memorial Park
31 Memorial Dr.
Murphysboro, IL 62966
(618) 687-1145
crain@crainsonline.com

Tribute Wall

LB

“ My sympathies to the Sim’s’ Family. The only consolation is how her spirit lives on in the many she touched, including me. She “talked and listened” to me into being a well- adjusted young woman. She let me share my secrets and my joys. I was always welcome in her heart and home. When you are loved by Leah Sims, you never doubt it. In Jeanne, Kerry and Brad, I see parts of her—lights of her soul.It was a great joy of my life to be her friend.



Laura Kilby Blaes - December 12, 2024 at 08:34 AM

GH

“ Leah Sims was my music teacher in grade and junior high school. She was the best teacher EVER. While she was playing the piano and trying to turn her sheet music, the pages would fall. I asked her if I could turn the pages for her and she said I could. Years later she told me that I was one of her students she’d never forget... she said I was so little when she met me. In 1998, I was planning my wedding and asked her if she would play the music for me. Of course, she said yes. That was the last time I saw her but I think of her all the time.

Georgia Hefler - December 09, 2024 at 10:55 PM

KB

“ Karen & Guy Braswell purchased the Ultimate Go Iden Ghirardelli Gift Tower for the family of Leah Marie Sims.



Karen & Guy Braswell - November 30, 2024 at 12:32 PM

DD

“ *Dr. Kenneth D Davis purchased the Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum for the family of Leah Marie Sims.*



Dr. Kenneth D Davis - November 29, 2024 at 04:06 PM

S1

“ As a high school teacher, I aspire to be the teacher Mrs. Sims was to me: encouraging, inspiring, dependable. Her passion for music and her desire to see students grow has left us an incredible legacy.

I was one such student who grew under her direction. She saw my potential and casted me as Harold Hill in THE MUSIC MAN during my senior year, much to the chagrin of many. Tuning out the noise, she focused on me and the task at hand. I lacked the self-confidence and remember going into her office and telling her I was "quitting."

That went over like a lead balloon.

She refused to accept my excuses, and by doing so, taught me a valuable lesson of perseverance and following through with a commitment. I still have the note she wrote me after the performances and in it she stated, "Don't let small things cloud your vision."

Years later, I was a minister of music in Medford, Oregon and had the privilege of directing a large church choir and orchestra. She and Mr. Sims sat in my rehearsal ... there are no words to express what that moment meant to me.

Thank you, Mrs. Sims, for following your heart and for investing in me and others.

Steve Hopper (Class of 1981) - November 29, 2024 at 12:10 PM

LO

“ *Love from Tom & Carla / Heather & Oscarr purchased the Fiery Lily and Rose for the family of Leah Marie Sims.*



Love from Tom & Carla / Heather & Oscarr - November 28, 2024 at 04:19 PM

JM

“ *Julie, Ron, Linda, Theo, Jax, and Micah purchased the Sweet Sincerity for the family of Leah Marie Sims.*



Julie, Ron, Linda, Theo, Jax, and Micah - November 28, 2024 at 02:46 PM

TG

“ I was new to Murphysboro, in 8th grade, when I took in choir for the first time. Leah saw that I had some talent, and nurtured that. She went so far as to give me rides home after weekly extracurricular rehearsals of a small ensemble.... and I lived 25 minutes from school! That meant SO much to me!

I was also fortunate to be at MHS when Leah moved up to the high school. There she affirmed my natural instinct for a positive outlook and irreverent humor: I remember someone asking her, during a busy rehearsal for a musical, “Mrs. Sims, are you free to answer a few questions?” To which she responded, “Well, I’m not free, but I am cheap!”

At this point, 42 years later, I sing in two choirs... and it brings me a great deal of joy. Leah Sims was one of the most important people in my life, and I was blessed to know her.

Tony Goodin, MHS Class or 1982

Tony Goodin - November 27, 2024 at 10:16 PM

MM

“ I signed up for Leah's chorus class Freshman year. I'd been in chorus all through school. I absolutely loved to sing. She could tell by my enthusiasm that I would sing anything she put in front of me, even though I was faking sight reading.

And when I took my place amongst the Altos, where I'd always sang, and Angie (a Senior, and the most beautiful voice!!) took me by the arm back up to the piano, I had no idea what was about to happen. Angie informed Leah that even though I was standing in the Altos section, but next to her in the First Soprano section, somehow, I was singing in key with her.

And Leah asked me to run the scales. I thought it was a bit of fun, to see how high I could go. After her tests, she looked at me and asked what voice part I sang. I told her I'd always sang Alto. Leah, exasperated, shook her head and exclaimed, "What a tragedy!" and gave me the biggest hug. She told me from that day forward, I was a First Soprano, and would be training with Angie.

After that, she and I had a special connection. We would sometimes meet early before class and go over music pieces. And sometimes she would listen to me sing pieces that I was working on for contests or shows. She supported me, encouraged me, loved me.

I was small, not a child, but a young woman in a small frame, and Leah gave me a dress that once belonged to her daughter. It was long, and ruffled, with white eyelet lace that tied at the waist in the back. It was my very first formal dress. It went to the floor and was beautiful.

Leah gave it to me because she said I reminded her of her daughter, a tiny Barbie doll, a slip whisp of a thing, she said. She said it was so troublesome finding things tiny enough to fit her, and she bet my mom had the same problem finding things to fit me as well. Leah was right, of course.

She was always doing things like that. She was like a second mom to me. Leah listened when I needed a little extra support. Especially whenever things at home weren't going so well.

I know I wasn't the only one. She was the Grande Dame of the Music Room. Several of us claimed her as our own. And she claimed us back. She talked WITH us, not at us, helping us to see the rights and wrongs of our decisions.

I will remember Leah like a John Hughes movie, with love, fondness, and sadness too. I can't believe she is gone, and I didn't get to say goodbye. I will always carry her in my soul, and when I sing out, I'll hit the high note through my breathing just for you, Mrs. Leah Sims, because that's what you taught me to do. ❤️

MeLissa Obermiller (Missy Morefield) - November 27, 2024 at 08:38 PM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Leah Marie Sims.*



November 27, 2024 at 11:05 AM



“ *Mrs. Sims was the absolute best. I just loved her and Mr. Sims. He was my principal in elementary school and she was my music teacher. Always such a beautiful lady inside and out. Those two wonderful souls left such an everlasting impression on me. I'm grateful to have known them both. Thank you Mrs Sims for being a wonderful person. I can also remember going to their house on Halloween and they gave the full size candy bars. Just so thoughtful and fun loving. She will be greatly missed. RIP Mrs Sims.*

jen - November 26, 2024 at 07:24 PM

JT

“ *Our deepest condolences to all of her family. Leah was such a wonderful woman inside and out. Prayers for you all.*

Janet Terry - November 26, 2024 at 05:37 PM

DF

“ *I have so many cherished memories of Leah growing up with Jeanne and singing in the chorus and later the choir. Leah and Gene were like second parents to me and I will always be thankful for having known them. I'm sure she already has that choir of angels in heaven sounding better than ever. My thoughts and prayers are with the family. Love you all. ❤️❤️*

Donna Fager - November 26, 2024 at 05:06 PM



“ *Country Basket Blooms was purchased for the family of Leah Marie Sims.*



November 26, 2024 at 03:08 PM

DA

“ *I have so many fond memories of my dear Aunt Leah. She was a very special lady to me and I'll miss her. Knowing she has been reunited with Uncle Gene and her family is comforting. Heartfelt condolences to my cousins Brad, Kerry, Jeanne and their families. Love always, Deb.*

Deb Ashby - November 26, 2024 at 02:31 PM

VS

“ Virginia S. purchased the *Arrive in Style* for the family of Leah Marie Sims.



Virginia S. - November 26, 2024 at 01:08 PM

DA

“ Deb and Jim Ashby purchased the *Pink Potpourri Bouquet* for the family of Leah Marie Sims.



Deb and Jim Ashby - November 26, 2024 at 12:51 PM