



Sarah Lou Harkey

July 15, 1925 - November 30, 2025

Sarah Lou Harkey died November 30, 2025, in Orlando, Florida. She was born Sarah Louisa Dickerson on July 15, 1925, in China Grove, North Carolina, the sixth of seven children. Her mother, Mary Eckard Dickerson, was a bookkeeper before becoming a full-time homemaker, and her father, Floyd Clark Dickerson worked for the Southern Railroad, serving as the yardmaster at Spencer, N.C.

When Sarah Lou entered first grade at the one-room Harris Chapel School in Rowan County, NC, she was such a quick learner that her teacher—who was responsible for the whole school—asked Sarah Lou to help her classmates with their reading. Her love of reading and writing continued life-long. She kept up with her friends and family through letters and cards, writing appreciative notes in her 2025 Christmas cards just weeks before her death.

After graduating from China Grove High School in 1941, she joined her parents who had retired in Florida, and she enrolled in the newly established Orlando Junior College. After graduating from OJC in 1943, she returned to North Carolina to study in the nursing program at Presbyterian Hospital in Charlotte. In her final year of nurses' training, she met Mack Harkey who had returned to Charlotte after serving four years in the Marine Corps in the Pacific during WW II. They were married in December 1946 and lived in Charlotte where Sarah Lou worked as a pediatric nurse and Mack worked as a plumber.

Their children Linda, David and Sam were born, and they lived in a lovely brick house that Mack built.

In 1954, they moved to Taft, Florida to live with Sarah Lou's mother and help her with daily activities in her later years. Sarah Lou cared for her mother until Mrs. Dickerson's death in 1958. She then became the school nurse at Pine Castle Elementary School from 1958 to 1971, and she spoke about her time as the school nurse on Orlando Memory <http://orlandomemory.info/people/oral-history-interview-with-sarah-lou-harkey/>

In 1971, she went to work at the Florida Manor Nursing Home. In her career, she cared for the very young and the very old in settings where she helped them in their daily lives.

Sarah Lou was community minded, and she took the initiative when she saw a way to make a positive difference. Seeing that there were no scout troops in Taft, she started a Brownie troop, a Girl Scout troop, and a Cub Scout troop and recruited other parents to serve as leaders. The scout troops provided educational and social opportunities for children in Taft over a number of years. She delivered food and toys to families at Christmas, delivered Meals on Wheels, and sang in the Golden Tones group that provided concerts in nursing homes. After Mack died in 1997, Sarah Lou found community in the Taft Senior Center. She was active in the Taft Historical Society, helping to gather information and find photographs for the history books produced by the society.

She loved to travel, and Alaska was one of her favorite places. She and Mack took their children to Alaska in 1959, driving across the United States and over the gravel-covered Alaska Highway to arrive in Seward for the first celebration of Alaskan statehood. She kept a log of that trip, describing every day's activities and discoveries. She took her grandson, David, on tours of

historic sites and natural beauty in the U.S. She was always moving, whether traveling, homemaking, or being engaged in her community.

A lifelong Methodist, Sarah Lou was baptized as an infant and joined the Methodist church as a teenager. With a beautiful alto voice, she was an excellent harmony singer, and she sang duets in church from her teenage years onward. Her faith in God and her gratitude for all of her blessings saw her through life's trials and helped her negotiate the ever-changing demands that accompany living to an advanced age.

Sarah Lou was predeceased by her parents, her husband Mack, her son David, her brothers, Floyd, Eckard, and Andy Dickerson, and her sisters, Rebecca Pate, Juanita Peaden, and Eleanor Richards. She is survived by her daughter Linda Harkey, her son Sam Harkey, her grandson, David Harkey, and many loving nieces and nephews.

Cemetery Details

Mount Pleasant Methodist Church Cemetery

Sherrills Ford, NC

Previous Events

Funeral Service

DEC 9. 1:00 PM (ET)

A Community Funeral Home & Sunset Cremations

910 W. Michigan Street

Orlando, FL 32805

(407) 841-4424

<https://www.acommunityfuneralhome.com/>

Tribute Wall



“ *KARA MCDANIEL lit a candle in memory of Sarah Lou Harkey* ”



KARA MCDANIEL - December 03, 2025 at 06:53 PM