



## Mary Lee Sweat

April 10, 2021

Mary Lee Sweat, age 74, passed away April 10 at University Hospital in New Orleans following a three year battle with cancer complicated by multiple strokes. Services will be held at Rhodes Funeral Home on Thursday, April 22 with visitation at 9:00 a.m. and the service at 10:00 a.m.

Mary Lee was born Sept. 25, 1946 in Indianapolis where her father was doing a residency in surgery. In 1953 the family moved to Jackson. She was graduated from Murrah High School in 1964. She then attended Southwestern at Memphis, now Rhodes College, and received a bachelor's of arts in 1968. At Southwestern she was a member of Chi Omega sorority. She also received her master's degree in library science from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and her master's in business administration from Loyola University in New Orleans. In 1966 she was presented by the Debutante Club of Mississippi.

After graduation from North Carolina, she started her career as the junior high librarian at the International School of Brussels in Belgium. In 1971 she began her 40 year association with Loyola University in New Orleans as a serial librarian. She advanced through the system becoming library director in 1981 with her title changing to Dean of Libraries in 1992. Under her leadership and vision the school's award winning Monroe Library was built. Mary Lee said the highlight of her career was being able to participate in the building of the

library. When she retired in 2011, colleagues described her as a great mentor who knew and appreciated everyone's job and work in the library and "made the library a wonderful place."

Professionally, among her memberships were the American Library Association where she served in several leadership roles and chair of the College Libraries Section of the American Association of College and Research Libraries. Mary Lee was president of both the Louisiana Library Association and the Library Section of the Conference of Louisiana Colleges and Universities and was one of the founders of the Louisiana Chapter of ACRL. She served on the board of SOLINET and was active with the AJCU Library Deans and Directors. In her more than 40 year career in librarianship, she had an excellent reputation for strong, collaborative leadership that extended regionally and nationally.

After retirement Mary Lee found her bliss volunteering as a docent at the Ogden Museum of Southern Art. She enjoyed all forms of art and cultures and, along with the Ogden, treasured visits to MOMA and the Metropolitan Museum of Art. She loved sailing with her husband in the Pacific Northwest and on Lake Ponchartrain, the annual family vacation at Pickwick Lake, and frequent trips to New York City. She also enjoyed pilates at the Jewish Community Center and was an avid swimmer and runner.

Mary Lee was a selfless, compassionate person, sensitive to and aware of all around. Her inner strength was evident throughout her life and admirably displayed during her courageous fight against cancer, never complaining. She was a soft spoken person beloved by her devoted husband, adoring family, and friends. Her footsteps were the mark of kindness. She will be deeply missed.

She was preceded in death by her parents, Dr. and Mrs. W. Andrew Sweat of Jackson, her mother-in-law, Constance I. Gault of New York, and her father-in-law, Thomas J. Gault Jr. of Clinton, CT.

Survivors include her husband, Tom Gault of New Orleans; a sister, Meredith

May and husband JD of Jackson; two brothers, Andy Sweat and wife Jimmye of Jackson, and John Sweat and wife Gail of Pickwick Lake; a sister-in-law, Andrea Gault and husband Randall S. Jones of Baltimore; nieces and nephews: Andrew and Mary Linley Sweat, Mary Elizabeth and Josh Evans, Ashley and Ben Koehler, Jennifer and Tyler Archie, Laura and Jesse Golland, Dent May, and Anna and JD Day; and several great nieces and nephews.

Special thanks to her amazing oncologists, Dr. Joan Cheng, Dr. Scott Sonnier and their nurses and caring staffs at Touro Hospital and the exceptional nurses at Touro Infusion Center.

Memorials may be made to the Greater New Orleans Foundation, Center for Philanthropy, 919 St. Charles Ave., New Orleans, LA 70130, Ogden Museum of Southern Arts, 925 Camp St., New Orleans, La. 70130, or American Cancer Society.

Relatives and friends of the family are invited to attend a funeral service honoring the life of Mrs. Mary Lee Sweat at D.W. Rhodes Funeral Home, 3933 Washington Ave., New Orleans, LA 70125 on Thursday, April 22, 2021 at 10:00 am. Visitation will begin at 9:00 am to 10:00 am. Please join us by livestream via Rhodes Facebook at [www.facebook.com/D.W.RhodesFuneralHome/live](http://www.facebook.com/D.W.RhodesFuneralHome/live). As mandated by the State of Louisiana due to the COVID-19 pandemic, attendance is limited. Everyone is required to adhere to all restrictions. You must always wear a face mask and practice social distancing. Interment: Mt. Olivet Cemetery. Arrangement by D.W. Rhodes Funeral Home, New Orleans, LA 70125. Please visit [www.rhodesfuneral.com](http://www.rhodesfuneral.com) to sign the online guestbook, share memories, and condolences for the family.

# Previous Events

## Visitation

APR 22. 9:00 AM - 10:00 AM (CT)

Rhodes Funeral Home - Washington Avenue  
3933 Washington Avenue  
New Orleans, LA 70125  
(504) 822-7162  
<https://www.rhodesfuneral.com>

## Service

APR 22. 10:00 AM (CT)

Rhodes Funeral Home - Washington Avenue  
3933 Washington Avenue  
New Orleans, LA 70125  
(504) 822-7162  
<https://www.rhodesfuneral.com>

# Tribute Wall

EI

“ *Deepest sympathies to Mary Lee's husband, Tom, as well as her family and friends. She will be missed. May your memories bring you comfort and peace.*

*Sincerely,  
Elena Irimia*

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**Elena Irimia** - April 22, 2021 at 09:00 AM

DA

“ *Mary Lee was a great Dean of the Monroe Library, boss and friend. I had the honor of working with her for over 30 years. She was a wonderful person. My condolences to her husband Tom, her family and friends. May her memory be eternal.*

*Denise and Fred Ammons*

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**Denise Ammons** - April 21, 2021 at 02:41 PM

ET

“ *Elena Irimia and the TIAA Team purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Mary Lee Sweat.*



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**Elena Irimia and the TIAA Team** - April 20, 2021 at 03:11 PM

SR

“ We share our kindest Sympathies with all who knew our precious Mary Lee, for Tom, her family, close friends, and even those who met her briefly. All of us have been touched by her kind, loving and steadfast soul. She is loved and will be missed by all of us. We express our deepest regrets at her passing. Robert and Sandra Christian.



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**Sandra Lee Russell** - April 20, 2021 at 02:20 PM

SR

“ Sandra Lee Russell purchased the Touching Tribute Spray for the family of Mary Lee Sweat.



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**Sandra Lee Russell** - April 20, 2021 at 12:06 PM