



Theresa M. Barnes

April 16, 2026

Theresa Marie Ratleff Barnes, age 96, of New Orleans, Louisiana, was called home to be with God on April 16, 2026. She passed on peacefully, surrounded by her loving family.

She was born March 22, 1930, in New Orleans, a daughter of the late Sidonia Marie Amand Ratleff and the late Henri Arostile Ratleff.

Theresa radiated elegance and vitality, embracing every moment and cherishing her family with a boundless, heartfelt devotion.

Her passion for the arts blossomed at Delgado Community College, where she explored photography and painted with pastels and oils. Theresa's creative spirit filled her home and the lives of others with her artwork, which she generously shared with family, friends, and community groups. She delighted in treasure hunts through thrift and antique stores, curating a collection of cherished finds proudly displayed in her home that told the story of her life.

Dancing brought Theresa immense joy from her earliest years, having studied dance in her youth, and she continued to move gracefully through life, sharing her love of dance with everyone around her—family, friends, and her wider community.

Theresa was a longtime participant in the People Program, founded by The Sisters of St. Joseph, and an active member of their Senior Dance Company, participating in numerous performances throughout the city and volunteering to entertain senior citizens at centers across the New Orleans metropolitan area.

Theresa's guiding principle was to stay engaged in her community, a value she embodied every day. Beyond her involvement in the People Program, she led and energized the Mothers Club at Saint Leo the Great school and was a familiar, helpful presence at countless school events. Her dedication extended to the political arena, where she played a key role in the campaign to elect former governor Dave Treen, traveling between New Orleans and Baton Rouge and welcoming the candidate into her home for receptions that she organized and hosted to connect him with neighbors, family, and friends.

Theresa's adventurous spirit took her across the United States, from childhood trips to Kentucky with her brother Henri, who was in the horse industry, to numerous memorable visits to cities like New York, San Francisco, Aspen, Dallas, and Orlando. Yet, it was her journeys through Europe, guided by her dear friend Monsignor Clinton Doskey, pastor of St Leo the Great Church at the time, that she cherished most. She loved to share stories of these travels, especially her private audience with Pope Paul VI and her pilgrimage to Lourdes.

Theresa was a beloved presence at Joe Brown Park, where she joined walking, tennis, and tai chi groups with enthusiasm. Her energy also enlivened the Creole Fiesta social club, where she inspired family involvement and community spirit. Later in life, through the PACE program of the Catholic Charities Archdiocese of New Orleans, she was crowned Queen of Mardi Gras, celebrated as a Tai Chi Master, and affectionately recognized as "Most

Likely to Teach You to Dance.”

In her earlier life, she also brought her joyful spirit to many other social and community clubs, including The Harlequins, Les Bon Temps, and The Bunch.

In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by her beloved former husband, Rudolph James Barnes. She was also preceded in death by her grandson, Jimmy J. Rouzan; son-in-law, Ralph Luke Montegut; granddaughter, Amy Michelle Montegut; great-great-granddaughter Eliana Drew Hess, and her siblings Henri, Cécile, Claude, Lester, Rita, Joseph, and Ronald Rattleff.

She is survived by Daughters: Cheryl Marie Barnes, Dell Marie Barnes (the late Ralph Luke) Montegut, Lana Ann Barnes (Thomas Anthony) Rouzan, Bobbie Theresa Barnes (Eugene Matthew) Coates, Dr. Tracy Monica Barnes (Dr. William Joseph) Curran; Grandchildren: Kellie A. Rouzan, Tammy L. Rouzan, Rudolph J.B. Rouzan, Hollie E. Barnes (Troy J., Sr.) Cloud, Christopher M. Barnes (Tamara), Michael David Montegut, Teri Ann Rouzan (Patrick Hubert) Pannia, Thomas Anthony Rouzan, Jr., Don Anthony Rouzan (Ashelie), Laci Ann Rouzan (Sean) Blondell, Dominique Ann Rouzan, Lance Anthony Rouzan, Megan Theresa Coates (Jonathan) Rawls, Dr. Emily Coates Davis, Gordan Coates, William John Sejour Borne Curran, Cécile Valentine Rose Borne Curran, Camille Rosalie Evangeline Borne Curran, and the late Jimmy J. Rouzan and Amy Michelle Montegut ; Great-Grandchildren: Glenn R. Brooks, Rudi A. Rouzan, Paige E. Locke, Autumn E. West (Reynold D. Jr) Ray, Dylan Isaiah Rouzan, Taylar T. Thomas, Troy J. Cloud, Jr, Savannah F. Rouzan, Tajih Y. Phelps, Israel D.J. Rouzan, Antonio J. Godinez, Sinai T. Godinez, Lyanna M. Barnes, Samuel L. Barnes, Dorian T. Barnes, Ryanel P. Robin, Randal P. Robin, China T. Mohamed, Toria R. Rhone, Donald Roy Hess, IV (Joni), Sarah Rebecca Pannia, Patrick Hubert Pannia, Jr., Adam-

John Blazio, Jr., Thomas Anthony Rouzan, III., Isaiah Ali Rouzan, Sean André Blondell, Amina Ali Rouzan, Lena Spring Blondell, Laila Saige Blondell, Elijah Ali Rouzan, Lance Anthony Rouzan, II, Sophia Lily Blondell, Riley Alexis Smith, Zack Anthony Rouzan, Demi Joelle Rouzan, Sydni Elise Rouzan, Natalia Juliette Williams, Saint Anthony Rouzan, Kennedi Elizabeth Davis, Emersyn Theresa Denise Davis, Indigo River Rawls, Juniper Moon Aimée Rawls; 27 Great, Great-Grandchildren: Lily Rita Hess, Saige Leilani Allen, Tyler Ruelle Hess, Harley Rain Hess, Adam-John Blazio,III, and the late Eliana Drew Hess. Theresa is also survived by a host of nieces, nephews, godchildren, other relatives, and friends.

Relatives and friends of the family are invited to attend the Mass of Christian Burial at Saint Leo the Great Catholic Church, 2916 Paris Ave., New Orleans, La on Wednesday, April 29 at 10:00 am. Visitation will begin at 9:00am. Interment to follow at Saint Louis Cemetery Number 3. Arrangements entrusted by D.W. Rhodes Funeral Home, 3933 Washington Ave. New Orleans, La 70125. Please visit www.rhodesfuneral.com to sign the online guestbook, share memories and condolences with the family.

In Lieu of flowers, the family requests that memorial contributions be made in Theresa's name to the People Program and Catholic Charities for the PACE program.

Cemetery Details

St. Louis #3 Cemetery

3421 Esplanade Ave
New Orleans, LA 70119

Previous Events

Visitation

APR 29. 9:00 AM - 10:00 AM (CT)

St. Leo/St Raymond Catholic Church
2916 Paris Ave
New Orleans, LA 70119
(504) 945-8750

Funeral Mass

APR 29. 10:00 AM (CT)

St. Leo/St Raymond Catholic Church
2916 Paris Ave
New Orleans, LA 70119
(504) 945-8750