



## Rita Ann Shackelford Rutherford

December 17, 1943 - October 2, 2025

Rita Ann Shackelford Rutherford, 81, beloved mother and grandmother, passed away while traveling in Kenya on October 2, 2025. She was surrounded by adventure, laughter, and family. She left this world living her best life - doing what she loved most.

Rita Ann was born on December 17, 1943, in Ripley, MS. She was the daughter of the late William Horace Shackelford and Willard Mauney Shackelford. She was the wife of the late Terry Rutherford, and together they built a life centered around family.

Rita Ann was the matriarch of the family, the steady hand and guiding heart who loved nothing more than being surrounded by those she cherished, especially her grandchildren. She was an avid reader of books, often reading several books a week. She also had an adventurous spirit and a lifelong love of travel, always delighting in walking through the pages of the childhood books she had read and the places she once dreamed about. Most of all, she treasured traveling with her daughters, Beth and Lanice, her brothers, her beloved aunts, Dixie White, and the late Christine Grisham. She made memories in every corner of the world.

She attended Ripley High School, moved to Sandusky, Ohio, after marrying her husband on October 31, 1959. Later, moving to Montpelier, MS, where she lived for 15 years, working alongside her husband in the school system at Clay High School. Eventually, the family moved back to their home in Falkner, MS. Here, she developed her skills and love of art and became a folk artist, traveling around the country to showcase her art.

Later, she devoted countless hours volunteering at Falkner Elementary School, pouring her heart into the lives of children. But her greatest joy was always her family.

She lived her life with joy, courage, and love. Though our hearts are broken, we take great comfort knowing her final days were filled with adventure and happiness, just as she would have wanted. Her love, laughter, and legacy will live on through her family and all who had the privilege of knowing her.

She leaves behind two daughters, Beth Rutherford Dulin (Michael) of Millington, TN, and Lanice Rutherford Gaillard (Karl) of Falkner, MS; three grandchildren, Jake McElwain, Hannah McElwain Perry (Justin) of Falkner, MS, Nathan Gaillard (Raleigh Grace) of Savannah, TN, and seven great-grandchildren, Adilyn McElwain, Jax Taylor, Rue McElwain, John Walker Perry, Emmie Gaillard, Davis Gaillard, and Lily Dulin. She is also survived by her three brothers, Wayne Shackelford (Lisa) of Georgia, Lanny Shackelford (Sue) of Oxford, MS, and Kerry Shackelford (Karen) of Virginia. She shared her final trip and many wonderful memories with Kerry and Karen in Kenya. She also leaves behind a host of beloved nieces, nephews, and a very special aunt, Dixie White, who was more like her sister.

Preceding her in death were her husband, Terry Rutherford, her parents, William Horace Shackelford and Willard Mauney Shackelford.

Pallbearers: Keith Shackelford, Nathan Shackelford, Jake McElwain, Nathan Gaillard, Justin Perry, and Mike White

Honorary Pallbearers: Her great-grandchildren; Adilyn McElwain, Jax Taylor, Rue McElwain, Emmie Gaillard, Davis Gaillard, and John Walker Perry.

# Previous Events

## Visitation

OCT 18. 9:00 AM - 11:00 AM (CT)

McBride Funeral Home, Inc.

206 N. Commerce St

Ripley, MS 38663

(662) 837-8101

[mcbriдерipley@gmail.com](mailto:mcbriдерipley@gmail.com)

<https://www.mcbridefuneralhome.com>

*Graveside to follow for family and close friends at Little Hope Cemetery.*

# Tribute Wall



“ Stephanie McClintock lit a candle in memory of Rita Ann Shackelford Rutherford



Stephanie McClintock - October 20, 2025 at 09:59 AM



“ Emerald Garden Basket was purchased for the family of Rita Ann Shackelford Rutherford.



October 17, 2025 at 12:45 PM



“ Emerald Garden Basket was purchased for the family of Rita Ann Shackelford Rutherford.



October 17, 2025 at 12:40 PM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Rita Ann Shackelford Rutherford.



October 17, 2025 at 11:12 AM



“ Treasured Lilies Spray was purchased for the family of Rita Ann Shackelford Rutherford.



October 16, 2025 at 04:34 PM

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“ The Dulin's planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Rita Ann Shackelford Rutherford.

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**The Dulin's** - October 16, 2025 at 04:34 PM