

MAGNOLIA MINDS: A well-deserved welcome to Heaven

*By Lindsey Williams
Correspondent*



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Ordinary on the surface, Ruby Husbands Arehart held a mighty heritage of faith within her heart: she was a descendent of the first Baptist preacher of Mississippi, Richard Curtis Jr., and she lived up to that legacy. She was also my great-grandmother.

In little Utica, Mississippi, on September 25, 1926, Ruby was born to Dewey and Gena Allen Husbands.

She married Richard Arehart on June 15, 1946, after meeting him through the military letters she wrote to her uncle overseas. Her uncle introduced her to Richard through his letters, asking her to write his friend who needed encouragement. Richard certainly found great encouragement in Ruby's heartfelt writings.

A hard worker, Ruby received her Bachelor of Science degree from Mississippi College in Clinton and her Master of Education degree from the University of Southern Mississippi in Hattiesburg.

She worked as an elementary school teacher for Natchez Public Schools until her retirement, taking every opportunity to share the love of Christ with the children she taught.

A friend commented on her obituary posted to Facebook, "I had the privilege of teaching with her for a few years. It was so precious that Mr. Arehart always picked her up each day. She taught me to list each of my students in a day in my calendar and pray for that student of that day. Loved her sweet spirit."

More than anything else, Ruby was known for her faith. She was an active member at Parkway Church, Natchez, where she taught an adult Sunday School class and participated in Women on Mission and the Monday morning prayer group.

Even when her health impeded her activity, Ruby was faithful to pray every day for her family, her friends, and her country. The legacy she holds as a prayer warrior lives on in her family as we are living testimonies of God's faithfulness to answer Ruby's humble requests.

Ruby – or "Grandma Arehart," "Grandma Ruby," and "GG" – prayed continuously for the ministries of her missionary and pastoral

relations. Although she will be so missed on this earth, as her prayerful support was felt from afar, her family knows the fruit of her faith will continue to grow and flower, and their prayer is that they continue her legacy well.

Therefore, confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective. (James 5:16 NIV).

Since childhood, Ruby knew she was a descendant of Richard Curtis Jr. Of her Baptist heritage she said with a smile on her face, "My mother lived and breathed it." Her mother had learned of her heritage from her grandparents, and often reminded Ruby of God's faithfulness to her family.

When Ruby was older, she researched articles and family lines to confirm her heritage for herself, delighted to know it was true. From then on, she was passionate about her Baptist roots.

While earning her degrees and teaching children, she wrote a screenplay about Richard Curtis Jr. and his ministry in Mississippi and entered her work in a contest. Unsurprisingly, she did not win the contest as the blockbuster-seeking sponsors wrote back to her, "You need an E.T. [Extraterrestrial]."

Ruby, however, humbly declined to add any crowd-pleasing action. She knew an account of true faith held immeasurable value above any film Hollywood could offer.

A couple of months before her grandmother passed, she gifted Ruby with a painting honoring the legacy of Richard Curtis Jr., a copy of the same portrait which hangs in the executive director-treasurer's conference room at the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board in Jackson and which the MBCB freely gave to Ruby's granddaughter to take home and frame for Ruby Husbands Arehart, descendent of Richard Curtis Jr.

A month shy of her 97th birthday, Ruby was ready for the room Jesus had prepared for her, where we know she now joyfully laughs and sings with her Savior, her husband, and many other loved ones – including Richard Curtis, who I am sure was one of the first to embrace and welcome her home.

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