



## Melinda Waller Mangham

July 30, 1940 - April 30, 2020

Melinda Waller Mangham died peacefully on April 30, 2020, after a brief but brave battle with cancer. She is survived by her daughter, Elizabeth Morgan “Liz” Mangham of Baton Rouge; her brother, The Reverend Stephen Jay Waller of Dallas, TX; her brother-in law, George Douglass, of Metairie; her nieces, Molly Hadden and her husband, Corky, of Bay St. Louis, MS; Melissa Steiner and her husband, Jerry, of Metairie, LA; Michelle Tyler and her husband, Doug, of New Orleans, LA; several great nieces and nephews; and her dear friend and caregiver, Annie Belle Shelvin. Whether you knew her as Melinda or Mrs. M or Mrs. Mangham or Mangham or Millie, she considered so many close friends as family and cherished each of you. Melinda was preceded in death by her husband, Michael Ray “Mickey” Mangham; her sister in law, Molly Mangham Douglass; her parents, Morgan Howard Waller and Elizabeth Bowen Waller; and her in-laws, Francis Ray Mangham and Louise Ratliff Mangham.

Mrs. Mangham was an impactful educator extraordinaire, a staunch community activist, and a woman on a mission who dedicated every day to impassioned advocacy for education, teachers and her beloved students. She would tell you her teaching career spanned nine hundred ninety-nine years and was owed to a grumpy college advisor who told her “smart, nice girls become teachers.” She taught in public and private schools across Louisiana including Lee High School, Episcopal High School, Airline High School, Glen Oaks High School, Valley Park Middle School, St. James Episcopal, St. Mark’s Episcopal, Lafayette High School and Ascension Episcopal.

Her degrees, professional awards and affiliations are numerous and impressive. Mrs. Mangham was named a White House Distinguished Teacher by two Presidents, George H. Bush and, her favorite, William Jefferson Clinton. She was also named an Outstanding Educator by the University of Miami, Texas A&M, MIT, and the Illinois Institute of Technology and recognized as a Coca-Cola Educator of Distinction. Governor John Bel Edwards appointed her to the Louisiana Commission on College and Career Readiness. A proud alumnus of LSU, she served on the Advisory Counsel of LSU’s Ogden Honors College and on the Executive Board of the Tiger Athletic Foundation. She also served on

the University of Louisiana - Lafayette Center for Gifted Education Advisory Board.

Hundreds of Mrs. Mangham's former students wrote well-written, tear-jerking, grammatically correct letters of encouragement and gratitude to her in her final days. She loved hearing what her students were doing, reveled in their accomplishments, and planned to write each of them back asking, "What will you do next?" These very bright, articulate people wrote of Mrs. Mangham's selfless dedication, hard work, inspiration, unwavering support, steadfast encouragement, dignity, grace, and unyielding strength. A true teacher, mentor, co-worker, leader and friend, Mrs. Mangham marked this world indelibly with a green and red pen living each day "honor bright." She made a tremendous impact on so many as she set an example of integrity, kindness, patience, courage, and humility her students could aspire to emulate.

The family wishes to thank Dr. Charles Mitchell and his staff; Dr. Brad Gaspard and his staff; the doctors, nurses and staff of the Baton Rouge General Hospital; and the compassionate staff at The Crossing at Clarity Hospice.

With respect to the health and welfare of our communities, there will be a private burial and the family will announce a memorial service at a later date. In lieu of flowers, the family requests memorial contributions be made to Mrs. Mangham's Honors College Scholarship at the LSU Foundation "Memorial Donation - Melinda Mangham," 3796 Nicholson Drive, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, or in her name to Ascension Episcopal School, 1030 Johnston Street, Lafayette, LA 70501.

View the obituary and guestbook online at [www.mourning.com](http://www.mourning.com)

Martin & Castille-DOWNTOWN-330 St. Landry St., Lafayette, LA 70506, 337-234-2311

# Comments

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“ Let light perpetual shine upon her.

Ann Dobie

Ann Dobie - May 06 at 06:17 PM

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“ Melinda, a true and wonderful southern lady that gave us a rich path to follow as an Educator, and a friend who was always willing to share her thoughts and advice that made our lives a little easier going forward. Her passing will leave a big void in our lives  
but better for having her sharing her life with ours. God bless and rest in peace.

Phil Foster

Phillip F Foster - May 06 at 01:04 PM

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“ Melinda taught with my mother, Flo Norwood, at Lee High. Mother loved her and thought she was a wonderful teacher and person. She was also lots of fun. Even after they no longer taught together, Mother often sang her praises.  
I too enjoyed knowing her. Know you will miss her terribly. Brent Caldwell



Brent Caldwell - May 06 at 12:55 AM

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“ Dear Family & Friends::  
I extend my sincerest words of comfort to everyone during this time of sadness. Though Mrs. Mangham and I taught at the same school, we did not get to know each other very well. However, I have the greatest of respect for her because she was involved in countless school related activities and surely would have expressed a respectful interest in my "situations" had I approached her..  
REST IN PEACE, MRS. MELINDA MANGHAM!

--BARBARA SPENCER

LAFAYETTE HIGH --



**BARBARA SPENCER** - May 04 at 02:02 PM

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“ I only visited with Ms. Mangham on two occasions. During those two occasions, I knew I was in the presence of a classy and intelligent lady. She spoke proudly of her students and spoke fondly of her Mickey. May her soul Rest In Peace.

**Annie Perret** - May 04 at 09:58 AM

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“ To Liz and all who grieve the loss of an amazing woman:

My prayers are with you. May it bring you peace to know that you are part of Melinda's living legacy - one that cannot be quashed by death because you are here, an ever more visible example of her impact and work.

- Mary-Patricia Wray

**Mary-Patricia Wray** - May 04 at 08:45 AM

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“ So sorry for your loss! What an incredible woman. I wish I had known her.

**gloria carter** - May 04 at 12:27 AM

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“ Liz, I am so sorry for your loss. Your parents were such good friends to the Judge and so welcoming to me. Love to you.

**Mary Catherine Roberson** - May 03 at 11:50 AM

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“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Melinda Waller Mangham.



May 03 at 09:14 AM

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“ Melinda was a great influence on a lot of her students at Robert E Lee HS. I was one of her earlier moldings that she honed her educational skills on. Thanks Ms. Waller...

**Robert Loudon** - May 03 at 05:22 AM



“ My favorite class at Lee High was Miss Waller's third hour junior-level American literature class during the 1963-64 school year. Never a dull moment.

**David Simpson** - May 03 at 08:39 PM

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“ I'm so very sorry for your loss, Elizabeth and family! Melinda was (clearly) a gifted and impassioned educator: we were lucky to have her at Ascension again in her later years. She was also an unexpected and touchingly kind source of strength for my daughter, and even for myself, during the first year or so after my husband passed away. She had a gift for making you feel accountable and accepted with one warm look. I am so very grateful to have had her in our lives, even for just a short time.  
-Ann Bean

**Ann Coffey Bean** - May 03 at 02:16 AM

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“ For so many of us, Mrs. Mangham was THAT teacher. The one who challenged and inspired you, who held you to a higher standard and believed you were capable of anything. Beyond that she was a tireless advocate for students, teachers, and public education (especially the gifted program). She was a truly remarkable, one-of-a-kind force of nature that left an indelible mark on everyone she knew. She may not be with us physically, but I know she will live on in the hearts and memories of us all.

**Julie Gauthier** - May 02 at 05:56 PM

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“ She was the teacher who had the biggest impact in my life! She believed in me more than I did when she was my high school Gifted English teacher in my Junior and Senior years. She was passionate about education, but even more so about pushing her students to achieve and make the most of their gifts! I don't think I would have ended up in Boston for college if not for her influence, and I would not be the person I am today if not for my time in Boston! I feel so blessed that I was able to reconnect with her after so many years at my recent baby shower in Lafayette in January! There are some people -giants- in your life who you just can't imagine dying. She was one of them. However, her influence will live on for many, many years in the lives of all of the students she taught and all that they continue to accomplish!

**Christine (Songy) Sutherland** - May 02 at 05:54 PM

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“ Melinda was always an advocate for my boys. I cannot express enough gratitude for the encouragement and support she gave. We only knew her a short time, but she had a huge impact on my middle child in particular. I JUST saw her before the quarantine, and we were laughing because she said he is so smart but likes to keep people in the dark about it. He's sneaky, but she loves his spirit. She was usually the one to read his tests to him, and he will miss her greatly. May you have peace and joy in remembering her life and knowing she is with the Lord.

**Carrie Leonard** - May 02 at 12:56 PM

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“ Liz, Melinda's obituary tells a great story so many need to read and emulate. We got to know her better later in life; but that did not limit her brilliance. Everyone was a friend- her legacy in education was a saintly calling and she did it perfectly.

We will miss you Melinda.

Mark & Rae Gremillion

**Mark Gremillion** - May 02 at 12:13 PM

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“ Liz, I'm so sorry for your loss.

**Donald Price** - May 02 at 11:39 AM

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“ A brilliant mind; a woman of integrity, and great wit and charm; one of the few people that my husband shared a common bond as a visionary for education. Her uncanny love for students, educators, and self-less acts for the community, near and afar, are unmatched. To say she was a friend is an honor.

You will be missed more than you know. Walk with Jesus, dear friend.

Paul and Dawn Quick



Dawn Quick - May 02 at 11:29 AM

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“ Mrs. Mangham was a strong and incredibly intelligent woman who challenged me to be me and stand out if necessary. She modeled supporting what you believe in, and she was such a caring educator. My husband was a student of hers in high school and later was able to work with her at Ascension. As he was running for a local political seat, Mrs. Mangham even continued encouraging him by giving us the newspapers with his name on them. We will greatly miss her.

Kelly Carlson - May 02 at 09:01 AM

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“ Mrs. Melinda was so much like my mother, I loved to be around her. She was so kind to my family. I will be sure to honor her memory by watching over Liz, not taking crap off of anyone and enjoying life on my own terms!



Deidra Jackson - May 01 at 11:35 PM

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“ Miss Melinda was such an extraordinary woman in so many ways. She enveloped me from the moment I met her and I will always be grateful for that. A more genuine, stronger woman is hard to find. I always admired her strength and honesty. This is the type of woman I aspire to be every day.

**Jennifer Marusak** - May 01 at 11:23 PM

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“ My heart goes out to you, Elizabeth, on the loss of your wonderful mother. I had gotten to know her better in our Delta Kappa Gamma meetings and was always so impressed by her fearlessness in pursuing what she knew to be the moral and just course of action. I know you will miss her terribly. Sending prayers for you and your family.

**Julie Landry** - May 01 at 09:11 PM

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“ When I first met Melinda I knew I had met someone extraordinary. Her devotion and dedication to promoting the education field and those involved was obvious from the start. When my mother became and then passed Melinda and Mickey were very helpful while we negotiated through the legal system. Melinda made me a better teacher, a better leader and a better person. She will be sorely missed.  
Regina Bourgeois

**Regina Bourgeois** - May 01 at 07:07 PM