



# **Dr. Cynthia Ann Gillespie**

JUL 9, 1949 - MAR 20, 2019



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## **Dr. Cynthia Ann Gillespie**

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**F**uneral services for Dr. Cynthia Ann Gillespie, will be held at 11:00 AM on Wednesday March 27, 2019 in the Cooper Baptist Church in Leesville with Rev. Edgar Evans officiating. Burial will follow in the Cooper Cemetery under the direction of Labby Memorial Funeral Home of Leesville.

Visitation will be held on Tuesday, March 26, 2019 from 4:00PM until 9:00PM, and on Wednesday from 8:00AM until service time in the church.

Dr. Gillespie was a native of Pennsylvania but had made Vernon Parish her home since 1978. After receiving her education degree from Davis and Elkins college in Elkins, West Virginia, she taught three years in Randolph County schools in West Virginia before enlisting in the United State Army, serving her country where she was an NCO in the Signal Corp, a role that brought her to Fort Polk and Vernon Parish where she remained.

During her forty years in Vernon Parish, Dr. Gillespie continued to serve, this time serving the education system and its students and teachers as a teacher, Assistant Principal, and Principal at Pickering Elementary from 1978 to 1994. When she left Pickering Elementary, it was to serve all of Vernon Parish as a Curriculum Supervisor and Curriculum Director for seven years, and ultimately as the Superintendent of Schools for seven years. One of the most notable and outstanding accomplishments for Vernon Parish Schools under her tenure as Superintendent was the signing of a Memorandum of Agreement between Fort Polk and the Vernon Parish School Board, as Dr. Gillespie recognized the unique issues of transitioning military-connected students



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and led the district to address those issues. Vernon Parish was one of the very first school districts in the country to address the needs of this particular population of students.

Beyond serving her school district, Dr. Gillespie served on the Board of Directors for Louisiana Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Council on Accreditation and School Improvement, served on the State Advisory Council for Louisiana's School Superintendent, and served on The Rapides Foundation's Board of Trustees from 2010 through 2015, serving as Board Chair in her final year on the board. She was also a current member of The Orchard Foundation's board. The experience Cindy brought to the table provided critical insight and valuable knowledge to The Rapides Foundation's work in Education, as well as to The Orchard Foundation.

While much of Dr. Gillespie's life was dedicated to education in the formal setting of the schools, she also dedicated much time to her church and the needs of the children in particular, serving as a preschool and children's Sunday school teacher for over 20 years. She additionally led the Ladies Bible Study and ministered to local nursing homes as part of the Women's Missionary Union. She was a valued member of the Louisiana Alpha Sigma Chapter of Alpha Delta Kappa, an honorary organization of women educators, where she served as chaplain, recording secretary, and vice president. Her service also extended into the Vernon Parish community as she served on the Vernon Parish Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors and was an avid member of the Vernon Arts Council.

Whether Dr. Gillespie was working in the school system or her community or her church, she was dedicated to serving others and their needs, especially children. She was never too busy to listen to others because of her love for others. She lived the motto she developed, and the Vernon Parish School District continues to follow today: "Every Child, Every Day, Whatever It Takes!"



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She is preceded in death by her parents, Robert & Ruth Gillespie; One Brother: David Gillespie; One Niece: Rhonda Brown

Cindy is survived by her three Sisters: Roberta Brown of Elwood City, PA, Donna Kelly and husband Tim of Elwood City, PA, Amy Ferrese and her husband Joe of Mars, PA; Several Nieces, Nephews, and Great Nieces and Nephews, and a host of dear, wonderful friends.

The family has asked that in lieu of flowers, donations be made to the Cooper Baptist Church Life Center Fund.



# Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Cynthia by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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