



## Ms. Rose Lee Echols

May 16, 1931 - September 10, 2023

"A good name is better than precious ointment; and the day of death than the day of one's birth." Ecclesiastes 7:1 KJV.

On Monday September 5th, while being bathed by her daughter, Rose Lee slowly lifted her frail right arm, grasping her daughter's hand and gently placing it against her cheek. Then, with her head tilted, she raised her tired eyes. Focusing on her daughter's face, she whispered, Veeca, I Love You. Can I go now?" Six days later she was gone. On Sunday, September 10th, at about 5:45 pm, Rose Lee Echols quietly fell asleep in death in the presence of family and friends. (John 11:11-14 and 25).

They called her Lil' Babe, but her name was Rose Lee Meriwether.

She was born in Kenosha, Wisconsin, on May 16, 1931. Her father and mother, Detrick

and Roxanna Meriwether, would always travel to Kenosha to receive birthing assistance

from a local midwife. Rose was the youngest of all of their children. Detrick had two sons

who were a few years older: Willie Dee and Willard The three girls were younger. First

Ether Lee (Ethel), then George Ella (Georgia), and finally Rose Lee.

On April 28, 1951, Rose married a tall, handsome working man. His name was Elvin (Duck)

Jackson. They were both 19 years old. In 1952, their first child, Gloria Machel, was born.

Five years later, Elvceeca Bernice joined the family. Rose was very proud of both of her

daughters; Gloria became a Doctor, and Elveeca became a Master Teacher. Her legacy

continued with her granddaughter Crystal Rose Henderson, a college graduate from

Mount Mary College, who knew Rose Lee loved roses and filled her apartment with 90 of

them; Rose wanted to see and smell them while she was alive. Crystal, Olga, June, and

Veeca ensured she could do that. As a child, Christopher, her great-grandson, spent much

time with Rose after school. He could learn by watching her negotiating skills while

tagging along with her to estate sales and antique shows. Later, Christopher graduated

from Emerson College in Boston. Rose Lee was proud of the fact that all of her children

had achieved higher education. Yet, her family was so small that they could have a family

reunion in an SUV.

Rose loved learning and teaching. She graduated from Washington Park High School in

1949. Later, she briefly attended night school at Gateway Technical College with the goal

of becoming a realtor. Rose Lee had a strong desire for social justice. While raising her

girls during the stormy segregated 1960's, Rose Lee was a civil rights activist. She

orchestrated events that eventually led to integrating the silently segregated sides of Racine.

She also had a strong work ethic. Rose held many positions: housekeeper to transistor

soderer; rental car return driver to mortuary makeup artist; teacher of macrame, knitting,

and crocheting to Antique Store owner/Dealer and Appraiser. In fact, Rose was the 1st

Black business owner in Wauwatosa, WI. Her store added value to the area due to her

museum-quality antiques. Yet Rose was not all work and no play. She participated in the

Karenga club, social event balls, and enjoyed traveling.

Throughout her lifetime, Rose was always spiritually active. She was baptized at St. Paul

Missionary Baptist Church in Racine. She joined her two sisters, and they became the

Meriwether Gospel Trio, known for singing "We are our Heavenly Father's Children." As a

teen, she performed with the Corbinettes, a traveling Gospel group made up of Rose and

four of her dearest friends. As an older adult, she attended New Hope Missionary Baptist

Church in Milwaukee. While there, she was a Deaconess, involved in the Mission and

Prison ministry, on the Mother's Board, and in the Gospel choir. Even when she could no

longer attend church in person, Rose would regularly and eagerly read, research, and

discuss Bible passages and topics with her youngest daughter, Elvceeca. Throughout her 92 years of life, Rose Lee Meriwether worked diligently to build a good reputation with those in Heaven and on Earth. Though her short-term memory was weakening, her faith in Jehovah God and his son Jesus Christ remained firm. Until she could no longer speak, she would often be heard repeating these words, "Thank you, Lord!" "Yes, I thank you: She will be remembered as a strong, faithful, hardworking woman who loved life, loved her family, and tried to enrich the lives of others. Those who preceded her in death: Parents: Detrick and Roxanna Meriwether Siblings: Willie Dee; Willard; Ether Lee and George Ella Ex-Husbands: Elvin Jackson and Sanford Echols, Jr. Those left to reflect and smile when thinking about Rose: Daughters: Gloria M. Jackson, M.D. and Elveeca B. Otto, M.Ed. Grand Daughter: Crystal Rose Henderson Great Grandson: Christopher Jordan Henderson-West Son-in-law: Eliot Otto Spiritual Family: Goddaughter Maya Thomas and the Hickman family Blood relatives: Cousins, nieces, nephews Friends: Surviving Corbinettes, and other friends from church, work and Alexian Village.

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# Cemetery Details

## Graceland Cemetery

1147 West Blvd  
Racine, WI

# Previous Events

## Visitation

SEP **19**. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (CT)

New Hope Baptist Church  
2433 N. Roosevelt Drive  
Milwaukee, WI

## Funeral Service

SEP **19**. 11:00 AM (CT)

New Hope Baptist Church  
2433 N. Roosevelt Drive  
Milwaukee, WI

# Tribute Wall

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“ *Connie Pirtle and I knew Rose from her stay at Alexian Village. Rose brightened our day with her sunny attitude, her inclusivity, her kindness.  
May her memory be a blessing—it is to us.*

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**Kit Hammer** - February 23, 2024 at 05:20 PM