



## Mrs. Ruth Jean Underwood Phillips

December 19, 1928 - October 18, 2022

Mrs. Ruth Jean Underwood Phillips (93) died peacefully, with family by her side, on October 18, 2022. Mrs. Phillips is predeceased by her husband, Robert Grant Phillips, Sr., her parents, James Alfred Underwood and Idabelle Oelkers Underwood, as well as her brother John Richard Underwood. She is survived by her children: Vicki Phillips, Robert Phillips (Erin), and Richard Phillips (Vickie) of Walhalla. She is also survived by her six grandchildren: Rob Calhoun, Meghan Henley (Ryan), Lauren Hill (Jon), Tyler Phillips (Melanie), Natalie Woodall (Zac), Caitlin Chewing (Daniel), and her six great grandchildren: Collin Henley, Aneliese Henley, Hudson Hill, Parker Hill, Willow Woodall, and Beren Chewing.

Passionate about her family, her students, her community, her German heritage, and traveling, Mrs. Phillips led a full life, filled with joy and productivity. Touching the lives of countless individuals, she ushered many students on unforgettable trips to Europe. Mrs. Phillips enjoyed Bridge Club, Garden Club, and beach trips with friends. She especially loved Sunday nights at the lake with her family.

Mrs. Phillips earned her undergraduate and master's degrees from Clemson University, continuing into a distinguished career as a high school math teacher of 32 years. As a teacher in the Walhalla schools, she received the Oconee County Achievement Award seven times. In 1975, she was honored

to be chosen as one of only 30 teachers in the United States to attend a computer workshop in Colorado to explore computer usage as an instructional tool in algebra. Serving her state, Mrs. Phillips was appointed by the State Superintendent to the Teacher Education Council to advise the State Board of Education. Mrs. Phillips was appointed Field Coordinator to implement ACT 187. Named as Teacher of the Year numerous times, Mrs. Phillips was the only classroom teacher appointed to the South Carolina Educator Improvement Task Force. She won the Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics Education and was designated Outstanding Graduate by the Education Department at Clemson University.

Mrs. Phillips, along with a group of passionate stakeholders, worked tirelessly to restore the historic Walhalla Graded School building, ultimately resulting in the formation of the Walhalla Auditorium Restoration Committee (WARC). The committee held numerous fundraisers and sought community donations, leading to the opening of the Walhalla Civic Auditorium in 2003. Today, Walhalla Performing Arts Center (WPAC) is a vibrant part of Oconee County and is a lasting legacy to those involved.

For the kindness and attention of the caregivers at The Residences at Park Place and at MSA Hospice, the family offers heartfelt gratitude and appreciation.

A memorial service will be held Sunday, October 30 at St. Luke United Methodist Church in Walhalla at 2:30. The family will receive friends from 1:30-2:30 in the church.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the St. Luke Methodist food pantry or to the Walhalla Performing Arts Center (WPAC).

# Previous Events

## Visitation

OCT **30**. 1:30 PM - 2:30 PM (ET)

St Luke United Methodist Church  
607 East Main Street  
Walhalla, SC 29691

## Memorial Service

OCT **30**. 2:30 PM (ET)

St Luke United Methodist Church  
607 East Main Street  
Walhalla, SC 29691

# Tribute Wall



“ *Christa Swafford lit a candle in memory of Ruth Phillips* ”



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**Christa Swafford** - November 24, 2025 at 09:39 AM



“ *Mrs. Ruth Jean Underwood Phillips* ”

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January 28, 2023 at 01:03 PM



“ *Chere Rankin lit a candle in memory of Ruth Phillips* ”



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**Chere Rankin** - October 30, 2022 at 12:18 PM

MK

“ Ms. Phillips was an inspirational teacher whom I had the pleasure of sitting under in high school. My favorite teacher who did her best at getting her students to understand every math concept she taught. She didn't want anyone to fall behind. A true blessing to her students. I also had the pleasure to go with her on one of her trips to Europe. I will never forget it either. I haven't ever been back to Europe due to money, but have always wanted to go again. I want to thank Ms. Phillips for everything she did for us in school. I would see her around town throughout the years and she never forgot who I was. I love you. Rest in peace my precious teacher.

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**Marchelle Kinsey** - October 29, 2022 at 06:47 PM

DH

“ I was not a fan of Math when I was in school but this woman helped, she cared and made sure it clicked and was a master of her craft! I would not be the engineer I am today without her honesty! Greatly missed

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**Danielle Harbin** - October 27, 2022 at 01:25 PM

DO

“ Doireann O'Draeda lit a candle in memory of Ruth Phillips



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**Doireann L O'Draeda** - October 27, 2022 at 12:25 PM

BZ

“ Bobby Zetwick lit a candle in memory of Ruth Phillips



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**Bobby Zetwick** - October 26, 2022 at 09:21 PM

LB

“ Lynn Bates lit a candle in memory of Ruth Phillips



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**Lynn Bates** - October 26, 2022 at 08:14 PM

JK

“ My deepest condolences to Vicki, Robert, Richard and the entire Phillips family. Mrs. Phillips was brilliant and a brilliant teacher. For the three years that I sat in her algebra, trigonometry, and math analysis classes, she explained clearly and with the expectation that her students would understand the material, often working individually with us. She cared about each student. If one of us was going through a hard time, she would acknowledge it and tell the student to not worry about math that day. That is kindness and consideration. She knew the student would return to work when ready. Years after I had been privileged to have been a student in her class, my late husband and I would run into her at the Steak House, where she would ask about how I was doing. I am so glad that I told her that much of my teaching was modeled after her. She had a profound influence, especially her compassion. That she was awarded so many professional accolades hardly surprises me. And I will forever be grateful that she decided that our class should have a senior class play which she directed -- in the very theatre that later she would help save for the community. Terrific memories. Thank God that Mrs. Phillips was a part of my life. She could have done so many other things, and we were very, very fortunate to have her as a teacher at Walhalla High School. May God grant her peace, and may her memory be a blessing. -- Janet Keys

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**Janet Keys** - October 26, 2022 at 04:32 PM

BT

“ Brian Rhonda Tippett lit a candle in memory of Ruth Phillips



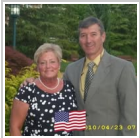
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**Brian & Rhonda Tippett** - October 26, 2022 at 02:52 PM

BB

“ As so many have said, she was a wonderful math teacher. Her teaching went far beyond math though. Whenever something important was going on in the world around us, she made sure we knew about it and understood its importance. I remember the Monday after the Duke Power Oconee Nuclear project was announced we talked about what it meant for our area and us individually. None of us had a clue but she did. Several people in that class worked their entire careers there. Fortunately for me I was friends with Robert through college so I continued to benefit from being around her. She had a huge impact on how I view the world.

Bill Barker - October 26, 2022 at 11:58 AM



“ Jeanette Hamor lit a candle in memory of Ruth Phillips



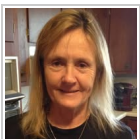
Jeanette Hamor - October 26, 2022 at 10:37 AM

LS

“ Lillie Smith lit a candle in memory of Ruth Phillips

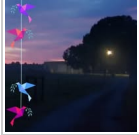


Lillie Smith - October 26, 2022 at 10:10 AM



“ We shall not look upon [her] like again.

Françoise Fussell - October 26, 2022 at 09:43 AM



“ *Sandra Wald Tippett lit a candle in memory of Ruth Phillips*



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**Sandra Wald Tippett** - October 25, 2022 at 11:31 PM



“ *jess&marcella langston lit a candle in memory of Ruth Phillips*



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**jess&marcella langston** - October 24, 2022 at 08:47 PM



“ *Don Darlene Albertson lit a candle in memory of Ruth Phillips*



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**Don & Darlene Albertson** - October 24, 2022 at 05:50 PM



“ *Howard Janie Wilbanks lit a candle in memory of Ruth Phillips*



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**Howard & Janie Wilbanks** - October 24, 2022 at 04:01 PM

JM

“ Johnny Mize lit a candle in memory of Ruth Phillips



Johnny Mize - October 24, 2022 at 02:57 PM

KA

“ Kathy Addis lit a candle in memory of Ruth Phillips



kathy Addis - October 24, 2022 at 12:51 PM

LH

“ Larry Wanda Laye Harden lit a candle in memory of Ruth Phillips



Larry and Wanda Laye Harden - October 24, 2022 at 12:21 PM

LC

“ I enjoyed having Mrs. Phillips as a math teacher at WHS. I will cherish the memories. I will be praying for the family during this difficult time.

Louis Carver - October 24, 2022 at 10:12 AM

JT

“ Julie Thompson sent a virtual gift in memory of Ruth Phillips



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**Julie Thompson** - October 24, 2022 at 09:20 AM

AW

“ One of the greatest teachers I've ever had the pleasure of knowing! She will be truly missed!



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**Angelia Winn** - October 24, 2022 at 05:54 AM

JB

“ Richard, Robert, and Vicki, I am saddened to hear about Mrs. Jean. Your mom was one of the best ladies I have ever known. I may not have been in her classes but I still learned much from her. Anytime I saw her out and about she would always ask how my girls were doing. I loved her and your grandmother like my own. I have missed both more than I have words to say.



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**Jean Bruce** - October 23, 2022 at 04:26 PM

BL

“ *Bobbie Ledford lit a candle in memory of Ruth Phillips*



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**Bobbie Jean Ledford** - October 23, 2022 at 02:07 PM

BD

“ *Bobbie Duncan lit a candle in memory of Ruth Phillips*



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**Bobbie Duncan** - October 23, 2022 at 12:58 PM

JV

“ *John Vissage lit a candle in memory of Ruth Phillips*



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**John Vissage** - October 23, 2022 at 12:37 PM

AD

“ *Beautiful lady..always smiling.. remember seeing and talking to her at the Octoberfest one year..she will be missed. ❤️*

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**Anna Sue Dyer Duncan** - October 23, 2022 at 11:26 AM

JF

“ Jackie fowler lit a candle in memory of Ruth Phillips



Jackie Collins fowler - October 23, 2022 at 11:20 AM

WS

“ Walt Judy Deal Stephens lit a candle in memory of Ruth Phillips



Walt & Judy Deal Stephens - October 23, 2022 at 10:32 AM

RS

“ Ray Smith lit a candle in memory of Ruth Phillips



Ray T Smith - October 23, 2022 at 09:05 AM

DL

“ Dennis. Lusk sent a virtual gift in memory of Ruth Phillips



Dennis. Lusk - October 23, 2022 at 12:29 AM

TM

“ Tom Mary Mann lit a candle in memory of Ruth Phillips



Tom & Mary Mann - October 22, 2022 at 06:44 PM

LJ

“ Lynette Jankowy lit a candle in memory of Ruth Phillips



Lynette Jankowy - October 22, 2022 at 05:57 PM

DA

“ Our condolences to Ms. Jean's family from all of us at Tamassee DAR thrift store. Ms. Jean and Ms Suzanne help us sort through jewelry and put it out for sale. They were always both a treasure and I am glad I met them. May you Rest In Peace.

dawn - October 22, 2022 at 04:05 PM

KM

“ I am imagining those Walhalla girls Ruth Jean, Flossie, and Vivian once again reunited in heaven through their common faith in Jesus Christ - what a lovely reunion it was! God bless - Kay Owens Moxley

Kay Moxley - October 22, 2022 at 02:36 PM

HA

“ *Harold Alexander lit a candle in memory of Ruth Phillips*



Harold Alexander - October 22, 2022 at 02:29 PM

CN

“ *cyntia neal lit a candle in memory of Ruth Phillips*



cyntia neal - October 22, 2022 at 01:50 PM

RS

“ *Ray Smith lit a candle in memory of Ruth Phillips*



Ray T Smith - October 22, 2022 at 11:28 AM

JF

“ *Jackie fowler lit a candle in memory of Ruth Phillips*



Jackie Collins fowler - October 22, 2022 at 10:53 AM

JR

“ *John Reid lit a candle in memory of Ruth Phillips*



John Reid - October 22, 2022 at 08:38 AM

IH

“ *Irene Haley lit a candle in memory of Ruth Phillips*



Irene Cape Haley - October 22, 2022 at 07:58 AM

KS

“ *Kaye Smith lit a candle in memory of Ruth Phillips*



Kaye Morton Smith - October 22, 2022 at 01:09 AM

FC

“ *Frieda Cobb lit a candle in memory of Ruth Phillips*



Frieda Sloan Cobb - October 22, 2022 at 01:06 AM

VW

“ *virginia weeks(Hall) lit a candle in memory of Ruth Phillips*



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**virginia Hall weeks(Hall)** - October 21, 2022 at 11:56 PM

BL

“ *Vicki, Robert, Richard and Family, I am so sorry for your loss. You are in my thoughts and prayers. May God's Love and Promise give you comfort in the days ahead.*

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**Burgess (Bird) Laye** - October 21, 2022 at 11:50 PM

KL

“ *Mrs Phillips was absolutely the best teacher I ever had. Her devotion to her students was evident in everything she did at WHS. A beautiful and inspiring lady who will be greatly missed.*

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**Keith LeCroy** - October 21, 2022 at 10:50 PM



“ *Jeanette Hamor lit a candle in memory of Ruth Phillips*



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**Jeanette Hamor** - October 21, 2022 at 10:08 PM

DS

“ *Dave Donna Stephens lit a candle in memory of Ruth Phillips*



**Dave & Donna Stephens** - October 21, 2022 at 10:03 PM

SP

“ *Scott Rachel Parris lit a candle in memory of Ruth Phillips*



**Scott & Rachel Parris** - October 21, 2022 at 09:58 PM

LB

“ *Lynn Bates sent a virtual gift in memory of Ruth Phillips*



**Lynn Bates** - October 21, 2022 at 09:51 PM

TS

“ *She was a special lady, for sure, who impacted the lives of many students, faculty, administrators and all who witnessed her unique and charismatic style. Love and prayers to all the family.*



**Terry & Kay Sanders** - October 21, 2022 at 09:27 PM

WS

“ Warren Smith lit a candle in memory of Ruth Phillips



Warren Smith - October 21, 2022 at 08:55 PM

JL

“ Joyce Clyde Lusk lit a candle in memory of Ruth Phillips



Joyce & Clyde Lusk - October 21, 2022 at 08:30 PM

GD

“ My thoughts and prayers are with all the family and friends. Mrs. Phillips will always have a special place in my heart. She was such an inspiration in my life. I will see you again in heaven.



Glenda Mcjunkins Dillard - October 21, 2022 at 08:29 PM

WH

“ What a wonderful life lived! Thoughts and prayers for the family!



Walt Harris - October 21, 2022 at 07:50 PM

JM

“ *Jim Becky Manley lit a candle in memory of Ruth Phillips*



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**Jim & Becky Manley** - October 21, 2022 at 07:10 PM



“ *Wayne F Barton lit a candle in memory of Ruth Phillips*



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**Wayne F Barton** - October 21, 2022 at 06:41 PM

SG

“ *Shirley Gibson lit a candle in memory of Ruth Phillips*



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**Shirley Gibson** - October 21, 2022 at 06:24 PM

CH

“ *Chris Hamor lit a candle in memory of Ruth Phillips*



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**Chris Hamor** - October 21, 2022 at 05:46 PM

RA

“ Randy Abbott lit a candle in memory of Ruth Phillips



Randy Abbott - October 21, 2022 at 05:44 PM

SA

“ Sherry, & Matthew Abbott lit a candle in memory of Ruth Phillips



Sherry, Randy & Matthew Abbott - October 21, 2022 at 05:42 PM

DA

“ My best friends mom. My teacher for 6 straight years. Many beach trips and tours throughout Europe. The comfort of our God be with you all.

Dwight Addis - October 21, 2022 at 05:27 PM

JW

“ Jeanette Wilson lit a candle in memory of Ruth Phillips



Jeanette Wilson - October 21, 2022 at 05:22 PM

JP

“ So sad to hear of Mrs. Phillips passing. My fondest days of WHS are of Mrs Phillips and her math classes, especially Trig. She always made me feel so special because I thoroughly enjoyed Math (as I'm sure she did everyone) . Her ability to teach and simplify was in my opinion one of a kind. Such a positive and inspiring lady. I was also able to be one of those who went to Europe with her my senior year, such fond memories. It is easy to say I will always remember Mrs Phillips as my favorite teacher and friend.. Prayers and thoughts with the family. ....Jeff Powell

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**Jeff Powell** - October 21, 2022 at 05:22 PM

WS

“ Wayne Peggy Sibbett lit a candle in memory of Ruth Phillips



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**Wayne and Peggy Sibbett** - October 21, 2022 at 05:18 PM

RA

“ Rod, & Kristy Albertson lit a candle in memory of Ruth Phillips



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**Rod, Katherine & Kristy Albertson** - October 21, 2022 at 05:17 PM

RS

“ *Ray Smith lit a candle in memory of Ruth Phillips*



Ray T. Smith - October 21, 2022 at 05:06 PM

SH

“ *Prayers for the family ! She was a wonderful person and asset to Walhalla Schools and the community! She will be missed by many 🙏  
Steve & Debbie*



Steve Harvey - October 21, 2022 at 04:53 PM

BJ

“ *Becky Johnson lit a candle in memory of Ruth Phillips*



Becky Johnson - October 21, 2022 at 04:52 PM

DM

“ *Richard, Robert, Vicki and Family, Many fond memories of your Mom. She and Aunt Flossie had so many wonderful stories to tell. She was a grand lady and loved each of you very much. Praying for you His comfort.*



Debbie Edwards Morehead - October 21, 2022 at 04:34 PM

SD

“ Sonya Dobson sent a virtual gift in memory of Ruth Phillips



Sonya Dobson - October 21, 2022 at 04:33 PM

SD

“ Mrs. Phillips, you will always hold a special place in my heart. Your kindness, thoughtfulness, and mentoring me my junior and senior year of high school will never be forgotten. You have always been a special lady to many students, friends, family, and even strangers you met. Love you, sweet lady.



Sonya Dobson - October 21, 2022 at 04:28 PM

CP

“ So sorry to learn of Ruth Jean’s death. She and Bob shared some special times of our younger days when they lived at Grandmother Grant’s home when they were first married. We enjoyed those special days.

Cornelia Aimar Pepper - October 21, 2022 at 04:26 PM

MB

“ When I think of Ms. Jean, I think of class, grace, and beauty. What a lovely person. I enjoyed getting to know her more during our time serving on the Walhalla Civic Auditorium Board of Directors. She will be missed, but has left behind great memories and a wonderful family to carry on her legacy. God bless you all! - Kris Butts

Merrill K. Butts - October 21, 2022 at 04:06 PM

IH

*God Bless the family of Mrs Ruth Jean Phillips.Loved her dearly .*

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**Irene Cape Haley** - October 21, 2022 at 05:52 PM

LS

*I worked for Jean for about twenty years and she was always such a wonderful person. The family all took to me as if I were family. She will always be a special lady in my heart.*

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**Lillie Smith** - October 26, 2022 at 09:51 AM