

"COME WITH ME"

*God saw you getting tired, and a cure was not to be,
So, He put His arms around you and whispered 'Come with Me.'
With tearful eyes we watched you suffer and saw you fade away,
Although we loved you dearly we could not make you stay.
A golden heart stopped beating, hard working hands at rest,
God broke our hearts to prove He only takes the best.
It's lonesome here without you,, we miss you more each day,
Life doesn't seem the same since you've gone away.
When days are sad and lonely and everything goes wrong,
We seem to hear you whisper, 'Cheer up and carry on.'
Each time we see your picture, you seem to smile and say
'Don't cry, I'm in God's keeping, we'll meet again someday.'
In life we loved you dearly, in death we love you still ,
In our hearts you hold a place, that no one could ever fill.
It broke our hearts to lose you, but you didn't go alone,
For part of us went with you, the day God took you home.*

PALLBEARERS

Family and Friends

A WORD OF THANKS

The family of **DR. NICOLE MCDONALD** wishes to extend our heartfelt gratitude for the love and support in various ways during our time of deep sorrow. We would also like to thank Longleaf and Palliative Care, whose love and unwavering dedication brought comfort and dignity in life's final chapter. We are truly blessed to have such wonderful family and friends by our side. May God Bless each of you.

Warmly Submitted by the Family



MARLAN GARY
FUNERAL HOME

1 FUNERAL HOME | 5 LOCATIONS

MINISTRY OF COMFORT ENTRUSTED TO:

NORTH CHAPEL
2500 CLEVELAND AVE.,
COLUMBUS, OH 43211
614-267-8310

EAST CHAPEL
5456 LIVINGSTON AVE.,
COLUMBUS, OH 43232
614-604-8774

MANSFIELD CHAPEL
753 MCPHERSON ST.,
MANSFIELD, OH 44903
419-524-6999

SPRINGFIELD CHAPEL
823 SOUTH YELLOW SPRINGS ST.,
SPRINGFIELD, OHIO 45506
937-325-1447

CINCINNATI CHAPEL
674 FOREST AVE.,
CINCINNATI OH 45229
513-221-4812

WWW.THECHAPELOFPEACE.COM



A CELEBRATION
OF LIFE
FOR

Dr. Nicole
MCDONALD

JANUARY 10, 1972 - JULY 19, 2026

Friday, August 7, 2026
10AM – Visitation
11AM – Celebration of Life

Marlan Gary Funeral Home
The Chapel Of Peace, East
5456 E. Livingston Ave.
Columbus, Ohio 43232

OBITUARY

Dr. Nicole L. McDonald was born on January 10, 1972, and departed this life peacefully at home on July 19, 2026, at 7:55 in the morning, with her mother by her side, after a courageous two-year battle with cancer. She lived a life marked by excellence, purpose, grace, and an unwavering commitment to helping others succeed.

She was the only child of Frances McDonald and was deeply loved throughout her life. Dr. McDonald was baptized at an early age and grew steadily in her faith throughout her life. Although her professional travels often prevented her from serving in a formal church role, she remained spiritually grounded and maintained close relationships with several pastors and ministerial sisters who became part of her extended family.

Dr. McDonald was a visionary leader in higher education whose career spanned more than 20 years of service at the institution, system, state, and national levels. She believed deeply that every student deserved a high-quality education and a clear pathway to opportunity, and she devoted her life’s work to removing barriers, building systems of support, and creating new possibilities for others.

She earned her Ph.D. in Leadership and Policy Studies and her M.Ed. in Higher Education Administration from Vanderbilt University’s Peabody College in Nashville, Tennessee, and her B.A. in Political Science from Wright State University in Dayton, Ohio. Her gifts of intellect, leadership, and strategy allowed her to leave a lasting mark on every institution and community she served.

At the time of her passing, Dr. McDonald served as Assistant Dean of Perimeter College at Georgia State University in Atlanta, Georgia. In that role, she continued her lifelong mission of advancing student success, institutional excellence, and educational opportunity.

Prior to that appointment, she served as Senior Vice President for Transformation Initiatives at Johnson C. Smith University in Charlotte, North Carolina; Assistant Vice Provost for Student Success Strategies at the University of Houston in Houston, Texas; Strategy Officer at the Lumina Foundation in Indianapolis, Indiana; System Director for Transfer and Retention for the Kentucky Community and Technical College System in Versailles, Kentucky; Academic Affairs Associate for the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education in Frankfort, Kentucky; Consultant in the Division of Educational and Psychological Studies at Dillard University in New Orleans, Louisiana; and Area Coordinator in the Office of Residence Life at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia.

Dr. McDonald’s professional influence reached far beyond administration. She managed more than \$44 million in grants, convened diverse stakeholder groups, published scholarly articles, and became a respected national speaker and presenter. She was also co-author of Becoming a Student-Ready College: A New Culture of Leadership for Student Success (2022), a work that reflected her enduring commitment to equity, innovation, and student-centered transformation.

Those who knew Dr. McDonald remember her as thoughtful, principled, and deeply compassionate. At times, her passion was not always fully understood, but it flowed from a heart filled with love, guided by purpose, and devoted to the quiet and steady work of service and excellence. She was a woman of vision and conviction, yet also of gentleness and care. She inspired colleagues, encouraged students, and challenged institutions to live up to their highest calling.

Dr. McDonald’s life stands as a testimony of faithful service, professional excellence, and loving devotion to the work she was called to do. Her legacy will continue through the many students she championed, the institutions she strengthened, the pastors and ministerial sisters who loved her, and the lives she touched with wisdom, strength, and grace.

She leaves to cherish her memory her devoted mother, Frances McDonald; god parents Cathy and Kenneth Lamar; aunts Linda Fairbanks and Linda Washington; special grandmother, Dr. Roberta F. Turner; special cousins Rodney and Lonnie Merritt; along with a host of relatives, colleagues, loved ones, friends, and all who were blessed to know her and witness her remarkable life.

ORDER OF SERVICE

Organ Prelude.....The Chapel of Peace Musical Ministry

Parting View.....

Scripture Reading.....
Old Testament ~ Psalm 23 Jeremiah 29:11
New Testament ~ Mathew 6:33

Prayer.....Clergy

Selection.....Minister Thomas and Sister Linda Major
“Glorious Day”

Acknowledgement/Condolences.....Clergy

Remarks.....Friends and Family
(limit 2 minutes please)

Reading of Obituary.....Read Silently

Selection.....Rev Dr. Patrice Turner
“ Yes Jesus Loves Me”

The Eulogy.....Pastor Stacy Boyd

Benediction.....Pastor Stacy Boyd

Recessional.....Clergy, Family and Friends

INTERMENT

GLEN REST MEMORIAL ESTATE
8029 East Main St.,
Reynoldsburg, Oh 43068

REPAST

WOLF PARK SHELTER HOUSE,
105 Park Dr.
Columbus , Oh 43209