



Naomi Estelle May

March 20, 1919 - September 29, 2023

Naomi Estelle Maddox May (104) was born March 20, 1919, to Edgar and Addie Maddox. She died September 29, 2023. Naomi was proud to say she lived her entire life in Rose Bud, Arkansas, where she met and married the love of her life, John Robert May.

Naomi began teaching elementary students when she was only 18. During WWII and again during the Korean War, she left the classroom to assume John Robert's job as a rural letter carrier. After his return home, she resumed her role teaching, simultaneously attending college, nights and weekends, earning her Bachelor's from Arkansas State Teacher's College and her Masters from Harding University. After obtaining her library science certification, she became Rose Bud Elementary School's first librarian. Although a broken hip led to her brief retirement in her 60s, she became a popular substitute teacher. When offered the opportunity to teach ESL, she accepted, remaining in that position until she was 91. When the school could not find a replacement, she volunteered to continue (unpaid) for another two years. She held a life-time teaching certificate.

Naomi was a dedicated member of the Rose Bud United Methodist Church serving in many local and district leadership positions. She and her husband gave the land for the building and worked tirelessly in all areas of the church. Until her move to the Crossings in Searcy at the age of 99, Naomi taught

Sunday School to children and adults. Naomi and John Robert were committed to improving Rose Bud. They constructed the “new’ Post Office building, donated land for the Rose Bud Fire Department, Rose Bud Town Hall, and Rose Bud Community Center. She was an award-winning quilter, creating completely hand-sewn works of art for friends and family. She was a voracious reader and enjoyed traveling. Mrs. May was often called upon to serve as a historical resource.

She is preceded in death by her parents, her husband John Robert, her brother, John E. Maddox and her grandson, Robert Blake Fomby. Survivors are her son, Kenneth J. May of Rose Bud, her daughter, Nancy Fomby (Tom) of Dallas, Texas, her grandson, Jordan A. May (Kerri) of Searcy, her granddaughter, Elizabeth Fomby Hall (Brian) of El Paso, Texas, and great grandchildren, Maggie and Aaron May, Caleb, Joshua, and Daniel Hall.

The family would like to thank the staff of The Crossings at Riverside, with whom she shared mutual love and respect.

Visitation will be at Powell Funeral Home in Searcy on Wednesday, October 4, 2023, from 5:00pm - 7:00pm. Services will be Thursday, October 5, 2023, at 10:30am, at Rose Bud United Methodist Church. In lieu of flowers, memorials may be given to Rose Bud United Methodist Church, 5895 Hwy 36W, Rose Bud, AR 72137 or Rose Bud Public Library, 548 AR 5, Rose Bud, AR 72137.

Cemetery Details

Rose Bud Cemetery

Previous Events

Visitation

OCT 4. 5:00 PM - 7:00 PM (cst)

Powell Funeral Homes - Searcy
2602 W. Beebe-Capps Expy
Searcy, AR 72143
(501) 268-7220

Funeral Service

OCT 5. 10:30 AM - 11:30 AM (cst)

Rose Bud United Methodist Church
5895 Hwy 36
Rose Bud, AR 72137

Burial

OCT 5. 11:30 AM - 12:30 PM (cst)

Rose Bud Cemetery

Tribute Wall



“ Powell Funeral Home & Cremation Services created a Tribute Video in memory of Naomi Estelle May



Powell Funeral Home & Cremation Services - October 03, 2023 at 12:57 PM

DG

I enjoyed seeing all the photos and videos. I knew Mrs. May was an amazing person, but I greatly underestimated just how amazing she was. What has most impressed me is how giving she and Mr. May were, donating land to their church and then to the fire department. Clearly they loved the community in which they lived and were model citizens. Another thing impressing me greatly is the extent of Mrs. May's intellectual accomplishments, from high school valedictorian to librarian, to teacher and substitute teacher for almost her entire adult life, to being a voracious reader. She obviously was an intellectual force!

For me and other Hendrix alumni who roomed with her daughter, Nancy, back in the late 1960s at Hendrix College, Mrs. May has been a long-distance adopted mom, as all our parents had passed on. I'm very grateful we had that time with her. She was an inspiration to me. Thank you, Nancy, for sharing your incredible mom with your prior college dorm mates.

Dee L Graham - October 05, 2023 at 12:34 AM

JS

“ I am 74 and I have known Miss Naomi since I was old enough to know anyone. She was my fourth grade teacher. She was my Sunday school teacher. She was my next door neighbor and Nancy and Kenneth were my childhood friends and playmates. She kept in touch with me throughout my life. My respect for her and her life is unmatched. I respect that life and her memory will remain with me until I join her in this last great journey.

Jim Schnebly - October 03, 2023 at 09:49 PM

JS

“ Jim Schnebly planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Naomi Estelle May.

Jim Schnebly - October 03, 2023 at 09:38 PM

JS

“ Jim Schnebly purchased the Divine Peace Bouquet for the family of Naomi Estelle May.



Jim Schnebly - October 03, 2023 at 09:38 PM



“ Basket of Memories was purchased for the family of Naomi Estelle May.



October 03, 2023 at 01:47 PM

LB

“ Naomi was my first prayer partner when we served together on the Batesville District United Methodist Women Leadership Team. She was such an inspiration for me as a woman and as a Christian. Even years later, we continued to pray for each other. I will miss her spirit in this world.

LaDonna Busby - October 03, 2023 at 10:04 AM

PH

“ Mrs. May made such a difference in the lives of children! and families! As I began my teaching career, she was the example. I wanted to follow! I loved working in Rose Bud Schools alongside her and others! She will be missed !
Patsy Hodges

Patsy Hodges - October 03, 2023 at 07:09 AM

KC

“ I had the pleasure of taking care of miss may. Her smile brighten up a room. Fly high my sweet angel sincerely Kristina cagle

Kristina cagle - October 02, 2023 at 06:26 PM

KA

“ My thoughts and prayers are with you during this difficult time. Mrs. May touched the lives of hundreds of children and families in Rose Bud, and then when she came to live with us at The Crossing at Riverside she touched even more lives. She was a role model to all and was loved by all of us at The Crossing.
-former student and Crossing employee Kelly Ann Adcock

Kelly Adcock - October 02, 2023 at 04:55 PM

PC

“ Kenneth Joe and Nancy and families, I am very sorry to learn of your mothers passing. She touched the lives of 100's of children though out her teaching career.

Ms. Naomi was my 4th teacher. I always thought she was very elegant. She always seemed to dress the part of a teacher, when I began to teach I tried to remember how she dressed and in some way emulate her. When my mother passed away in 2018, she called to tell me she was being a pecan pie and to meet her at her van. When she pulled up, she hooked the horn and I walked out to greet and to thank her. We talked for a long time, she told me stories about my grandmother Carter and great grandmother Hannah sending herbs to various companies. She knew they sent these things because she was the mail carrier for her husband John Robert when he would be gone to serve our country during war time. Ms. Naomi was an amazing person. Heaven has received an angel.

Pamela Carter - October 01, 2023 at 08:30 PM

AW

“ So sorry for your loss, Nancy and Kenneth Joe. She was a sweet lady and always showed kindness to me. Prayers continue for you and your family.

Angie Wortham - October 01, 2023 at 03:38 PM