



## Mia Lena Etchberger

July 22, 1953 - March 18, 2025

Mia Lena Etchberger joined her Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ in Heaven on Tuesday, March 18, 2025.

Born July 22, 1953, in Tuscaloosa, Alabama to Sara Ruth (Hoge) Smith and Grover Cecil Smith, she was raised in Silver Spring, MD, graduated from Wheaton High School in 1971. She moved to Panama City in 1972 and worked at Captain Anderson's as a set-up girl, and was a room cleaner at her mom's motel, Lookout Apts., while attending Gulf Coast College for an AA in Business. In 1974, she joyfully asked Jesus to be her Savior and went to Southeastern Bible College in Lakeland, FL, graduating with a B.S. in Bible/Christian Education. She then served as a missionary assistant in Athens, Greece, at the Ministerial Training Center for Greece, the Middle East, and North Africa. Upon her return, she attended Florida State University and received a B.S. in Elementary Education and taught at Waller and Lucille Moore Elementary Schools. In 1991, she received her Master's Degree in Education from FSU/PC. During her teaching career, she received both Elementary Teacher of the Year (Waller), and Bay District Science Council's Outstanding Elementary Science Teacher of the Year.

She taught Sunday School for many years, and also volunteered with the Clothing Closet Ministry at First Baptist Church-P.C. The most influential and life-changing experience she ever had was "Experiencing God: Knowing and

Doing the Will of God” by Henry Blackaby.

She is preceded in death by her father, Grover C. Smith; her mother, Sara Ruth; and her brother Mitchell Smith.

She is survived by her faithful and dear husband Russell; daughter Jessica (Cliff) Sweet and their daughter, Emma Jane Sweet; son Henry (Christina) Etchberger and their sons David and Benjamin serving in the U.S.Army; sister-in-law Martha Smith and family of Houston, TX, nieces Marleeta Escobar and Marlaina Smith; sister Marqueta (Tom), nephew Ford (Melissa) Seeuws and their children Satya and Rohan.

Mia’s greatest loves were Jesus, her family, autumn in the mountains, a cool breeze, a brisk walk, and all encounters with God. She loved the life she had here and looked forward to the one she has now; being in Heaven and seeing Jesus at last!

The family will receive friends from 9:00 until 10:00 AM on Saturday, March 22, 2025, at Heritage Funeral Home, Panama City. A service will follow with Pastor David Flatt.

Services will also be conducted at 2:00 PM Sunday, March 23, 2025, at White Hall United Methodist Church, 34387 US Hwy 11, Valley Head, AL 35989 with Pastor Will Ramage officiating. Interment will follow immediately following the service in White Hall Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to the White Hall cemetery, 5114 Greenhill Blvd, NW, Fort Payne, AL 35968.

Online condolence can be sent to the family via our website at [www.heritagefhllc.com](http://www.heritagefhllc.com)

Heritage Funeral Home, Panama City, Florida is honored to serve the family of Mia Lena Etchberger.

Wilson Funeral Home and Crematory of Fort Payne is making announcement on behalf of Heritage Funeral Home, Panama City, Florida.

# Cemetery Details

## Whitehall Cemetery

1602 Whitehall Lane NW  
Fort Payne, AL 35967

# Previous Events

## Funeral Service

MAR 23. 2:00 PM (CT)

White Hall Methodist Church  
Highway 11 North  
Hammondville, AL 35989

# Tribute Wall

CL

“ Cheryl Little sent a virtual gift in memory of Mia Lena Etchberger



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**Cheryl Little** - April 15, 2025 at 01:44 PM

PP

“ So many fond memories of Mia, we were so close in primary school. So grateful to see her at a reunion, and when we visited her in Panama City.  
She was a wonderful, generous person and her absence will be felt by all who knew her.



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**Pamela Ryder Prindle** - April 07, 2025 at 07:35 PM

MF

“ Michael Flaherty lit a candle in memory of Mia Lena Etchberger



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**Michael Flaherty** - March 22, 2025 at 02:54 PM

JS

“ *Jeb and Jane Smith purchased the Divine Peace Bouquet for the family of Mia Lena Etchberger.*



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**Jeb and Jane Smith** - March 22, 2025 at 10:46 AM

JS

“ *Jeb and Jane Smith planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Mia Lena Etchberger.*

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**Jeb and Jane Smith** - March 22, 2025 at 10:46 AM