



Dr. Claudia M. Nelson

August 13, 1936 - February 12, 2026

Born on August 13, 1936, in Kitchner Ontario, Canada, Claudia was the oldest of two girls. Early in her life, Claudia's parents Ray and Blanche Fetzner moved to Northlake, Illinois, near Chicago.

From early in her life Claudia wanted to be a teacher. She would gather the neighborhood kids together and play school. It was her favorite game, and it shaped her future.

She attended Northern Illinois University to get her Bachelor's Degree in Education. While at Northern, she met Paul Nelson and they would marry in 1959.

Both had teaching jobs in the Chicago area, but would move to Greenwich, CN in 1963 and in 1964, their son, Michael was born.

They would then move to Champaign-Urbana, Ill. where Paul would earn his Doctorate in Education and Claudia would earn her Master's in Education.

After a short stay in Athens, OH, Paul was hired at Florida State University and the family moved to Tallahassee in 1969.

Soon after arriving in Florida, Wendy, an infant born in Pensacola was

adopted and the family continued to flourish.

Wendy was diagnosed with a brain tumor and for the next few years, she fought it with treatments, long hospital stays and lots of love and support from her family. However, at the age of four, Wendy passed away and left a huge hole in our lives.

Claudia opened a new chapter in her life, returning to education as a reading teacher at Sealy Elementary School and that started a very long and varied career with Leon County Schools. She served as a reading specialist, a Title I reading supervisor and the first assistant principal at Springwood Elementary School among other positions. Along with all of her work, she also managed to finish her Doctorate degree in Education at Florida State University.

Even after retiring from Leon County, she continued working in education as a supervisor of interning student teachers and being a mentor to many teachers, including her son, Michael.

Even with her dedication to education, Claudia found time for many other interests. Travelling around the country and the world, often on cruises was one of her favorite activities. She also enjoyed ballroom dancing, poetry, gardening, watching her dogs and supporting the people around her.

Claudia suffered a stroke in July of 2024, and further medical complications kept her assisted living for the next year and a half. On February 12, 2026, Claudia left this world to reunite with all who went before her. Her zest for life, her helpfulness and her love will be missed.

Kelly Barber of Bevis Funeral Home (850-385-2193 or www.bevisfh.com) is assisting the Nelson family with their arrangements.

Previous Events

Inurnment

APR 10. 1:00 PM (ET)

Faith Presbyterian Church
2200 North Meridian Rd.
Tallahassee, FL 32303

Memorial Service

APR 10. 2:00 PM (ET)

Faith Presbyterian Church
2200 North Meridian Rd.
Tallahassee, FL 32303

Reception immediately following the service

APR 10. 3:00 PM (ET)

Faith Presbyterian Church
2200 North Meridian Rd.
Tallahassee, FL 32303

Tribute Wall

DR

“ Claudia supervised students in FSU Elementary Education Program for many years after her retirement from Leon County Schools. Everyone, students and faculty loved working with her. She shared her extensive knowledge, sweet personality, and dedication to education with all. All of us are lucky to have known her. Diana Rice

Diana Rice - April 10 at 10:45 AM

CD

“ She was like a grandma to me and has been a part of my life since I was 7 years old. I spent so many wonderful years with her, including being there through her last. She taught me to keep pursuing education and to explore the world through travel. I regret that in the last couple of months we couldn't have our phone calls and that I didn't live closer.

I find comfort in knowing she is reunited with my Grampy and at peace. I love you, Grandma Nelson ❤️ I've planted a tree in remembrance of you.

Caitlin Dunn - April 05 at 12:17 PM

MN

I know she loved you, too. Thank you for your beautiful words and thoughts.

Michael Nelson - April 07 at 08:58 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Dr. Claudia M. Nelson.

April 05 at 12:08 PM

PS

“ *Ms. Nelson and I worked at Springwood Elementary in the late 80s. She was the Assistant Principal. Very sweet, soft spoken and caring person. I remember visiting her in the hospital last year. Rest in Peace Ms. Nelson*

Pamela Strange - March 20 at 10:02 PM

MN

Thank you, I appreciate your kind words.

Michael C Nelson - April 02 at 01:26 PM