



Odessa Wair Rowan

September 18, 1929 - December 16, 2023

Odessa Marie Wair Rowan was a caring wife, mother, grandmother, great-grandmother, sister and friend. She peacefully passed away, on Saturday December 16, 2023, in Toledo, Ohio, while surrounded by loving family and friends.

She was the oldest of Robert Lee Wair and Katherine Ash's six children, born on September 18, 1929, in Panola, Alabama. Odessa was an academically gifted child and she eventually moved to St. Louis, Missouri to live with family while she attended high school. She continued to excel academically and she graduated with honors. Odessa began her college career at Tougaloo College in Mississippi and graduated from Lincoln University in Jefferson City, Missouri. She continued her studies at Indiana University where she obtained her Master's Degree in Library Science. While there, she pledged and became a proud member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. She also caught the eye of a handsome medical student, Charles E. Rowan, who she eventually married. They began raising a family and settled in Toledo in 1965.

Odessa was a lifelong student who earned additional degrees in Policy and Leadership and Counseling, from The University of Toledo. She put her formal education and love of learning to good use. She held numerous leadership positions within the Toledo Public Schools and the Toledo-Lucas County Public Library. She served on multiple boards and volunteered her time to

various causes. She was also very active in numerous social and service organizations including Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., Jack and Jill of Toledo, The Links, Inc. and The Girlfriends, Inc.

Odessa also had an entrepreneurial spirit. She pursued various opportunities and what we now refer to as “side hustles.” She opened and maintained her boutique Little Luxuries. She was a frequent participant and vendor at local events such as The Old West End Festival and the Toledo International Festival.

Most of all, she had an open heart and generous spirit. She would attempt to help anyone in need. She and Charles opened their home to numerous family members and friends throughout the years. She was vibrant, outgoing and an excellent hostess who loved entertaining family and friends. She was a devout Catholic and served in many roles at Rosary Cathedral, Gesu and St Martin de Porres Parishes.

Odessa is survived by her children Michael, Brian (Teresa), Charles (Jacqueline) and Charelle and their spouses and significant others, as well as her grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Her siblings Margie, Lillie Mae and Robert Lee as well as multiple cousins, nieces, nephews and loyal friends. She was preceded in death by Her husband Charles, her parents Robert and Katherine Wair and her siblings Bernice and Samuel Lee.

Cemetery Details

Ottawa Hills Memorial Park

4210 West Central Avenue
Toledo, OH

Previous Events

Visitation

JAN 3. 4:00 PM - 7:00 PM (ET)

Dale-Riggs Funeral Home & Cremation Services
572 Nebraska Avenue
Toledo, OH 43604
(419) 248-4254
info@dalefh.com

Ceremonial Rites

JAN 3. 5:00 PM - 6:00 PM (ET)

Dale-Riggs Funeral Home & Cremation Services
572 Nebraska Avenue
Toledo, OH 43604
(419) 248-4254
info@dalefh.com

Visitation

JAN 4. 10:00 AM - 10:30 AM (ET)

Gesu Church
2049 Parkside Blvd.
Toledo, OH 43607

Funeral Service

JAN 4. 10:30 AM (ET)

Gesu Church
2049 Parkside Blvd.
Toledo, OH 43607

Tribute Wall

LK

“ Odessa was a library colleague and fellow Frogtown Story Teller who enjoyed spinning stories. So sorry to recently learn of her passing. She will always be remembered for her great smile and contagious laugh.

Linda S Kerul - February 21, 2025 at 11:59 PM

VS

“ Charelle, you and I had a couple of classes together at TU and my dad lived down the street from your parents. Please accept my condolences for the loss of your mom (and dad). Losing a parent...I have never felt a greater pain. I pray for you and your family's comfort and peace.

Vanessa Simmons-Edwards - January 28, 2025 at 09:39 PM

DS

“ Dr. Ann-Marie Stephenson planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Odessa Wair Rowan.

Dr. Ann-Marie Stephenson - January 02, 2024 at 01:58 AM



“ Divine Peace Bouquet was purchased for the family of Odessa Wair Rowan.



January 02, 2024 at 01:58 AM

CK

“ Odessa and I were friends since I joined the Toledo Public Library in 1968. Through the years she has been a kind and caring friend. I will miss her!

Carol Kloeb Kelley - December 31, 2023 at 11:28 AM

JP

Odessa was my neighbor, soror. Mentor, and Role model! I did not learn of her passing until months after she passed; today I had a random thought about her and when I looked for the obituary I realized this is the exact anniversary of her death. I pray that the family is well. Especially missing Cherrell as the Boys were away at school when we moved next door. Odessa and Charles have left a wonderful legacy.
Juanita and Robert Price
Washington DC. 12.16.2024

Juanita H Price - December 16, 2024 at 04:21 PM

JD

“ Johanne Delerme-Joseph planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Odessa Wair Rowan.

Johanne Delerme-Joseph - December 29, 2023 at 01:57 PM



“ Sentiments of Serenity Spray was purchased for the family of Odessa Wair Rowan.



December 29, 2023 at 01:57 PM

MQ

“ My condolences to your family sending prayers and love God bless

Marcia Quinn - December 26, 2023 at 12:04 PM

JO

“ We were greatly saddened to learn of Odessa’s passing. Odessa, unreservedly loved life and people. Her adoring rhythmic dance floor moves with her husband Carl at Christmas parties were pleasant and infectious. She spent months inviting, reminding, reserving and organizing, preparing goodie bags, and bringing people together every Memorial and Labor day to play golf, eat, chat, enjoy life and have fun. Her enduring legacy is that she was most pleased and happy when everyone around her was happy. She’s left us with this ennobling and fulfilling legacy to enjoy and share. It is our hope that these and other fun memories the family shared with her will bring solace and joy and strengthen the family at this difficult time.

Dr Jason & Comfort Ofori

Jason Ofori - December 24, 2023 at 01:42 PM

MF

“ We have celebrated and loved a dear friend these many year. Now, we say good bye to a good and faithful servant. Because of Mrs. Rowan's love for Christ, we are a better family! It was our honor to help out when and where we could and provide some delicious sweet foods along the way. It is our privilege to say 'thank you' to the Rowan family for allowing us to know and love Mrs. Rowan. Blessings to all.

Mr. and Mrs. Edd J. Mays and family - December 23, 2023 at 07:33 PM

MB

Hats of to gracious lady who was selflessly dedicated to her family,church and community. It was an honor to know Mrs. Rowan.

Marlon k. Barbour - January 03, 2024 at 01:41 AM

HH

“ Harper Henry lit a candle in memory of Odessa Rowan



Harper Henry - December 21, 2023 at 07:33 PM

JL

“ My dearest and most precious friend, Odessa...you were a classy and vibrant woman with lots of dreams for what you still wanted to accomplish in your life. What an inspiration you were to me to keep living, learning, and enjoying life no matter your age! I will greatly miss our art sessions, Friday night scrabble, Dollar Tree shopping, Bible study, and trips to Handel's ice cream. Your beautiful smile is forever etched on my heart. What a magnificent blessing it was the day the Lord brought us together through a little black dog, Sadie. Parker and I will sorely miss you and the friendship we shared! But, I am comforted in knowing that you are now dancing on the streets of gold with our Lord and Savior! We will keep all of you in Odessa's family in our prayers as you mourn and adjust to life without such a wonderful lady.

Judy and Parker Lambert - December 21, 2023 at 01:20 AM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Odessa Wair Rowan.



December 20, 2023 at 11:56 PM

GJ

“ *May your heart find comfort knowing that your love one is at home with the Lord
Love Gwendolyn E.March Jones and Family*



Gwendolyn E.March Jones - December 18, 2023 at 10:15 PM

DA

“ *1 file added to the tribute wall*



Dale - December 18, 2023 at 06:36 PM

DA

“ *1 file added to the tribute wall*



Dale - December 18, 2023 at 06:35 PM

IW

“ *Aunt, you taught us how to be a family. You taught us the best way to lead an authentic and decent life. Your lessons will carry on for years to come. May God award you in Heaven.
Isuan Donavin Watkins*



Isuan Watkins - December 18, 2023 at 01:21 PM



“ *To the family: You had the greatest mom. She will be missed. She helped so many people and she had a heart of gold. Mrs Rowan and your dear Dad were both a blessing to the former Lighthouse Community Center. She spent time training staff, writing grants, and giving workshops. My deepest condolences and prayers for the loss of this wonderful servant of God.*

Lottie Sherife-Kekulah - December 18, 2023 at 12:13 PM

AM

“ *Dear Rowan Family,
I offer my deepest sympathy and prayers for your family. My late sister Wanda Brown and Odessa were good friends. Wanda and I were in Girl Friends and Study Hour with Odessa.
Angeline E. Murry and family*

Angeline Murry - December 18, 2023 at 10:44 AM

DW

“ *True legend and trailblazer will be missed but not forgotten...Joy shared Love your niece Dale*



Dale Watkins - December 18, 2023 at 06:49 AM