Odessa Jane Martin

December 15, 1957 - October 9, 2025

Obituary for Mrs. Odessa Jane Starnes Martin
Odessa Jane Starnes Martin was born on December 15, 1957, in Winston-Salem, North Carolina,
to the late Ada Mae Carelock Starnes and Willie James Starnes. She was the fourth of six
children born to this loving union and was named after her grandmother, Odessa, a name she
carried with grace, laughter, and strength.

Odessa grew up in a home filled with faith, family, and music. She was baptized at Union Baptist
Church under the leadership of Rev. A. H. McDaniel, later worshipping under the late Rev. B. F.
Daniels. Her spiritual roots ran deep, and throughout her life, she remained a woman of quiet but
steadfast faith. In her later years, she found a church home at Main Street United Methodist
Church, where she continued to walk closely with God.

A proud product of Winston-Salem and a beloved resident of Kernersville, North Carolina,
Odessa graduated from Parkland Senior High School in 1976, where she

made history as the first
female drum major in the school’s marching band. Her love for music was undeniable, she
played both the flute and the piccolo, leading her bandmates with precision and pride. After high
school, she attended Winston-Salem State University, majoring in Business Administration and
continuing her musicianship as a proud member of the Red Sea of Sound Marching Band. She
worked summers at R. J. Reynolds Tobacco Company and was known for her strong work ethic
and bright spirit. Upon graduation in 1980, she enlisted in the United States Army, completing
basic training that same year, a testament to her courage, discipline, and determination.

Odessa pursued a professional career in the restaurant industry, beginning at T. J. 's Deli and later
at Belk’s Department Store Café in Hanes Mall, before food courts were ever a thing. It was
there, among the smell of coffee and conversation, that she met the love of her life, Mr. Bruce
Wayne Martin. Their friendship blossomed into a beautiful love story, and after years of
courtship, they were united in holy matrimony in 1995. To this union, God blessed them with
their beloved daughter, Joy Bruiana Nevada Martin, the pride and light of her life. The Martins
purchased their first home together and built a family grounded in love, laughter, and
unwavering devotion. After a successful career in the restaurant industry,

Odessa was a proud
homemaker for her family.

Odessa lived a full and rich life. She was an avid reader, a talented knitter, and a lifelong lover of
music. She adored her longtime dog Honeybee, a Mother's Day gift from Joy and her faithful
companion for over a decade. She also enjoyed collecting stuffed animals, browsing her favorite
store Goodie-Goodie, and never started her day without her morning cup of hot coffee, always
made just right. She found joy in simple pleasures: spending time at the park, relaxing, and
catching her favorite Westerns like Gunsmoke on MeTV.

To know Odessa, affectionately known to many as "Dessa" and lovingly called "Aunt Duck" by
her nieces and nephews, was to experience kindness, humor, and heart all at once. She was
strong-willed and unapologetically herself, humble yet wise, and had a warmth that drew people
in. Her laughter was contagious, her smile comforting, and her presence grounding. She loved

deeply, cared unconditionally, and always found a way to make those around her feel seen and
loved. Her faith anchored her, and her family was her heart.

In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by her brother Woody Starnes, and her

sister Trudy Wormwood.
She leaves to cherish her memory: her devoted husband Bruce Wayne Martin; her loving
daughter Joy Martin; bonus children Calvin Martin and LaTasha Sharpe (Ebony); grandchildren
Alex Martin and Ashton Sharpe; brothers Curtis Starnes and Glenn Starnes, Sr. (Sendra); sister
Lisa Ellison (Bobby); nieces and nephews Shaun Starnes (Darlene), Christian "Nikki" Perry
(Kenneth), Chrishna "Janae" Lyles (Robert), Glenn Starnes II (Terence), David Moore, Eric
Moore, and Brandon Starnes; along with a host of great-nieces, great-nephews, great-great nieces
and nephews, and special friends who became family.

The family would like to express heartfelt thanks to the doctors, nurses, and caregivers who
provided compassionate care and support to Odessa throughout the years. Your kindness and
professionalism brought comfort and peace, and for that, we are forever grateful.
Odessa's life was one of love, laughter, and legacy, a reflection of the faith she carried and the
light she shared. Though our hearts ache, we rejoice in knowing that she is now at peace,
reunited with loved ones gone before, and resting in the arms of her Heavenly Father.

Cemetery Details

Salisbury National Cemetery

202 Government Rd
Salisbury, NC 28144

Events

Details are pending.

Tribute Wall

MI

PHS ALUMNI CLASS OF 83 expresses their deepest condolences and prayers to Glenn Starnes and the entire family.

MONICA IMES - October 14, 2025 at 06:31 PM

JM

JACQUELINE MCKOY lit a candle in memory of Odessa Jane Martin

JACQUELINE MCKOY - October 14, 2025 at 12:22 PM

SC

Sylvia Clardy lit a candle in memory of Odessa Jane Martin

Sylvia Clardy - October 14, 2025 at 11:58 AM

GC

In this difficult time, may peace and love surround you. May God grant you strength for today and the kind of comfort that only He can give.

With prayers and sympathy,

Dr. Berry
GMBC
Bereavement Ministry

Galilee Missionary Baptist Church - October 13, 2025 at 07:57 PM