



## Odessa Davis Sims

January 15, 1950 - June 3, 2025

On Tuesday, June 3, 2025, God called one of His most loving, sassy, funny, well-dressed, divas—Mrs. Odessa Davis Sims—to come home.

She was preceded in death by her loving husband, James “Butch” Edward Sims, Sr.; parents, Ollie and Marie “Rye” Davis of Whitakers, NC; and sisters and brothers, Bessie Davis Dickens, Oliver Davis, William Henry Davis, Nathaniel Davis, Queen Davis Sutton, and Clifton Davis.

Mrs. Sims is survived by her daughter, April Sims; sons, James Wright (Monica) and Talmadge Sims (Lisa Marie); brother, Dennis Nicholson; sisters-in-law, Annie Ruth Sims Howard,

Elaine Davis, Pearline Davis, and Beulah Davis; one brother-in-law, Willie B. Sims; a host of cherished nieces, including Rolanda Davis Lowery (Eric), Kimberly Howard, Crystal

Davis, and Sylvia Newman (Cordell); a host of devoted nephews, including Tommy Howard (Paula), Tallus Horton, Larry

Dickens (Lisa), and James Dickens (Gwen); greatly beloved great-nieces and nephews, including Jurnee Lowery, Ke’Tonna Howard,

and Clayton Green, Jr. (CJ); special great-great-niece, Ta'Leah Givens; bestie, Brenda Butler; goddaughter, Tiffany Lovette; godson, Geoffrey Turner (Nakela); and handyman, Don Able. Known to those closest to her as "O. D.," "Aunt O. D.,"

"Dessa," or "Mama," Mrs. Sims will be remembered by her spunkiness, sassiness, laugh, playful sense of humor, lively vocabulary,

realistic outlook, style, and lovingness. She was truly one of one and reveled in being so. Always one to sport sunglasses and a hat, she was never afraid of being different or over-dressed. Her nieces described her as the "Fly Auntie." She often stated that were it not for her love of education, she would have pursued theater acting and attended the North Carolina School of the Arts.

Born and raised in Whitakers, North Carolina, Mrs. Sims grew up the youngest in her household as a sharecropper, who mainly farmed tobacco and cotton. This upbringing, along with

her passionately caring family, embedded in her a need to pursue a career where she could aid others in poverty with tools

to help escape it and extend the greatest gift of all, love. When her parents passed on in her early 20s, it was her brothers and

sisters who guided her and provided for her university education. Mrs. Sims told anyone and everyone that while she grew

up financially poor, she was raised rich in love. She never forgot where she came from.

While receiving a formal education as an undergrad student at WSSU, she also found a romantic love. A set-up from dorm

friends for a ride to the store and an All the Way hot dog resulted in the marriage to her husband, James “Butch” Sims, Sr. They loved each other from young adulthood up until his death in 2017. It was beautiful to witness their love mature and blossom throughout the years. Butch often could be heard referring to his wife as, “My girl.” He also could be found shaking his head and calling his girl “crazy,” upon hearing her mischievous cackle and observing her colorful humor. Their union resulted in the birth of their daughter, April.

As a mother, Odessa was exceptionally excellent. She thrived as a mother to many, with her nieces, nephews, April’s friends (their children), and godchildren calling her to share the tea, receive advice, get a listening ear, or partake in some humor that resorted in hearing that famous laugh. She was a caring,

fiercely protective and spirited mom who would give her opinion—both bluntly and realistically. Around the house, she could

be seen dancing and twirling to music—any artist from Aretha

Franklin, to Rihanna, to Lil Jon—but she especially loved anything Motown. Those who knew her best also know that she

enjoyed resting, watching an action-packed movie, or reading a good novel when at home. In her retirement years, she enjoyed travel with family and friends, shopping, and going out to eat with her dearest girlfriends to—what else?—laugh and cut up!

Mrs. Sims served in elementary education for over three decades. She graduated from Winston-Salem State University with a teaching degree and later went on to earn Masters’ degrees

from both WSSU and NC A&T in reading and educational administration. Mrs. Sims first worked in Danville, Virginia, and then primarily in the Winston-Salem, Forsyth County school system. Her most cherished years in education were spent serving as a 3rd and 4th grade teacher at Clemmons Elementary School and leading at, “The greatest elementary school ever,” Rural Hall Elementary School, as an assistant principal. During her teaching years, Mrs. Sims taught curriculum in a way that was, as she put it, “Made learning relevant to the real world.” Additionally, she honed in on “Critical thinking skills,” for each child that she taught, both in and out of the classroom. She believed in the ability to think independently and intelligently with a goal of doing one’s best. She advocated for each student under her loving and supportive care as an assistant principal. She believed that, “Education gives you access and options,” and that each child—regardless of circumstance—deserved the best education and school environment possible.

Spiritually, Mrs. Sims believed that we are all God’s children. She wholeheartedly believed that everyone had a direct line to the Creator and that God lives in us all. She believed in church outside of a building and cherished her relationship with the Lord. She felt that we all have a story to tell and are worthy of love and patience. She was a member of Mars Hill Missionary Baptist Church, where both she and her husband, Butch, served. Odessa will be missed by many. She touched numerous lives as an educator, leader, auntie, sister, and friend. Her presence as a mother will be missed so very, very much. Whenever she was asked what she wanted for a special occasion, her answer was always the same—world peace. She wanted to simply be a good person and to help others. She fulfilled that goal—many times over!



# Previous Events

## Visitation

JUN 6. 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM (ET)

Mars Hill Baptist Church  
1331 East 4th Street  
Winston Salem Nc, NC 27101

## Celebration of Life

JUN 6. 12:00 PM (ET)

Mars Hill Baptist Church  
1331 East 4th Street  
Winston Salem Nc, NC 27101

# Tribute Wall

TB

“ Mrs.Sims was my favorite 4th Grade Teacher at Clemmons Elementary a Long time ago . I'll always remember her love for teaching me & always telling us make sure you Listen for you will understand your Lesson!

She was a Special Teacher with a Big heart , & Loved Educating the Children . You will be miss dearly & forever in my heart Rest in Peace Angel , I Love you Terri Byers



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**Terri Byers** - August 03, 2025 at 09:41 AM

AM

“ April, I am so deeply sorry to hear about the passing of your mother. I remember her kindness from the times we were growing up. Please know that I am thinking of you during this difficult time. ❤️

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**April McDowell** - June 11, 2025 at 10:52 AM

DO

“ Dottie lit a candle in memory of Odessa Davis Sims



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**Dottie** - June 06, 2025 at 10:50 AM

TE

“ *Tressie Ellis lit a candle in memory of Odessa Davis Sims*



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**Tressie Ellis** - June 05, 2025 at 09:20 PM

DB

“ *Denise D Barr lit a candle in memory of Odessa Davis Sims*



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**Denise D Barr** - June 05, 2025 at 11:23 AM

JC

“ *Janelle Carr lit a candle in memory of Odessa Davis Sims*



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**Janelle Carr** - June 04, 2025 at 12:01 PM

JC

*My Sincere Condolences to the Sims family. I will forever cherish the memories We have together. You will be truly missed. Our talks and laughs. She was a Women of great Faith and sweet spirit. Praying for strength for her girls in the days to come.*

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**Janelle Carr** - June 04, 2025 at 12:21 PM

FH

“ April, I am so sorry to hear of your mom’s passing. Odessa was a dedicated coworker and a wonderful friend. I treasure many good memories of working with her. Please know that you are in our prayers during this most difficult time.

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**Frank Holcomb** - June 04, 2025 at 08:35 AM

CD

*Deepest sympathy for your loss. Praying for strength and peace for the family and friends.*

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**Carrie Umstead Davis** - June 05, 2025 at 05:02 PM