

Celebrating Her Life
ROOTED IN FAITH, GUIDED BY LOVE, AND A LEGACY OF SERVICE

Leodia Gooch



**Repast to Immediately Follow Celebration
of Life Mass**

Schaefer Hall, St Norbert

***All are welcome to join us as we continue to celebrate The Life & Legacy of
Leodia Gooch***

Cremation & Final Intermittent

Cremation handled with care by St. Louis Cremation

Final interment details will be shared with the family at a later date



11:00a.m.

January 31, 2026

St. Norbert Catholic Church

16455 New Halls Ferry Rd.

Florissant MO, 63031

05.27.1938

01.05.2026

Reflections *Of Life*

Leodia (Lee) Gooch passed away peacefully on January 5, 2026, at the age of 87. She was born on May 27, 1938, in Sumner, Mississippi, and from the earliest days of her life was shaped by faith, resilience, and an unwavering sense of purpose.

The youngest of eight children, Leodia experienced both profound loss and extraordinary love early in life. After the death of her mother at an early age, she was lovingly raised by her sisters, who surrounded her with strength, wisdom, and deep faith. From them, she learned the values that would guide her life: devotion to God, commitment to justice, love of family, and service to others.

Leodia was a devoted mother of three children, a cherished grandmother to nine grandchildren, and a proud great-grandmother to three great-grandchildren. Her family was the heartbeat of her life, and she poured into each generation with guidance, prayer, encouragement, and unconditional love.

A woman with remarkable intellect and vision. Leodia earned her Juris Doctorate (Law degree) and built a distinguished career spanning leadership, government, education, human resources, economic development, and consulting. As the author of *Dancing with the Spirit*, a reflective work that bears witness to her lifelong relationship with God, she showcased her attentiveness to the movement of the Holy Spirit, and her commitment to living a life rooted in prayer, discernment, and obedience to God's call. In 1988, she answered a profound call to place her gifts fully at the service of God and His Church, a call she embraced with humility, courage, and steadfast faith.

Leodia served in numerous leadership roles in the Archdiocese of St. Louis, MO, including Program Coordinator of the Office of Communications, Pastoral Minister of Evangelization at Ascension - St. Paul Parish, and Evangelization Coordinator for the St. Charles Lwanga Center. In 2021 she was appointed by Cardinal Justin Rigali (then Archbishop of St. Louis), to Director of the Office of Human Rights. In every role, her work reflected an unwavering commitment to justice, evangelization, and the sacred dignity of all human life. She was also a member of Catholic Charities Board of Directors for over 10 years. Her leadership was marked not only by excellence, but by integrity, compassion, and deep spiritual grounding.

Nationally respected and deeply influential, Leodia served as Executive Director of the National Black Catholic Congress. Additionally, she served as the 10th Most Esteemed Supreme Lady within the Knights of Peter Claver Ladies Auxiliary. She was a tireless advocate for faith centered leadership, inclusion, and the elevation of voices too often unheard, always guided by the teachings of Christ and the mission of the church.

Deeply formative to Leodia's spiritual life was her vocation as a (CSJA) associate of the Carondelet Sisters of Saint Joseph's. This commitment was a sacred expression on how she ordered her life and lived her faith. Embracing the Sisters' charism of unity, reconciliation, and love of the dear neighbor without distinction, Leodia allowed their mission to shape her prayer, her work, and her relationships. She lived this call daily, seeking to bring about right relationships, advocating for justice, and walking alongside others with compassion and courage. As an associate, she embodied the missionary spirit of the Sisters of Saint Joseph, witnessing through both actions and presence that faith is not merely professed, but lived fully, intentionally, and in service to all.

Leodia was a certified Catholic Evangelist, having completed formal studies at Franciscan University in Steubenville. Her ministry extended across a wide range of organization and initiatives including service as an Associate member of the National Black Sisters Conference, involvement with Our Lady's Inn (a shelter supporting pregnant women) and Child Care of Our Lady (a home for emotionally disturbed children), and active participation in the Charismatic Renewal. She also served on the Archdiocesan Committee on Women in The Church, The Advisory Committee for Job Corps, The Archdiocesan Ecumenical & Interreligious Commission, and The Interfaith Women's Council. Her commitment to faith in action further included engagement with Catholic Business Leaders, the New Lifestyles Center (providing women seeking freedom from prostitution a new beginning), and The Tree House Healing Ministry. In every setting Leodia brought wisdom, compassion, and a deep conviction that faith must be lived through service, advocacy, and love of neighbor.

Leodia is preceded in death by her parents, John Bishop and Ouida (Williams) Gooch. Her siblings, Leroy Gooch, Hattie Townson, Laura Sutherland, John Gooch, Edna Morris, and Evelyn Gross. She leaves to venerate her memory 1 sister; Johnnie Florence Dickerson, three children; Edward Jackson, Kathy Jackson (Richard Wilson), and Nicole (Steven) Davis, nine grandchildren; Kristopher Williams, Karmen (Martel) Woods, Joshua (Rebecca) Davis, Dwina Jackson, Jeremy Davis, Edward Jackson, Jr, John Jackson, Joseph Davis, and Jennifer (Jordan) Ullom, three great grandchildren; Khira Williams, Kiersten Woods, and Kaden Woods.

Leodia, will be remembered as a woman of wisdom, strength, and profound faith; a faithful servant of Jesus Christ whose life was a living testimony to justice, service, and love. She lived her life with humility, loved without condition, and served with compassion and obedience, always answering God's call with courage and grace. Her legacy is not only found in her accomplishments, but in the countless lives she shaped, the community she strengthened, and the church she served so faithfully. Her light, her witness, and her legacy lives on through her children, her grandchildren, her great grandchildren, and all who were blessed to know her. Having served Jesus faithfully throughout her life, she now rests in the eternal peace she so firmly believed in.

Order of service

Introductory Rites

Greetings

Sprinkling with Holy Water

Placing of the Pall

Processional Musical Selection,

Opening Prayer

Opening Song Musical Selection,

The Liturgy of the Word

First Reading:
Jordan Johnson, great great-niece

Responsorial Psalm:
Cantor – Cathy Grant

R/. The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.

Second Reading:
Kathy Jackson, daughter

Gospel Acclamation:
Cantor – Cathy Grant

Gospel Proclamation:
Fr. Scott Scheiderer

Homily

Prayers of Faithful

Oliver & Cathy Grant

Oliver & Cathy Grant

Wisdom 3:1-9

Psalm 23:1-3, 4, 5, 6

2 Timothy 2: 8-15

Alleluia, Alleluia

John 14: 1-6n

Fr. Scott Scheiderer

Kiersten & Kaden Woods, great grandkids

Liturgy of the Eucharist

Presentation of the Gifts
Nicole Davis, children

Musical Selection,

The Eucharistic Prayer
The Lord's Prayer (Spoken)
The Sign of Peace

Communion Rites

Communion Distribution
Meditation Hymn
Prayer After Communion

The Life and Legacy of Leodia Gooch

Silent Reading of The Reflection of Life

Word of Remembrance

Most Worthy Supreme Knight/ Chief Executive Officer,

Acknowledgements from the Family

Edward Jackson, Kathy Jackson,

Oliver & Cathy Grant

Musical Selection, Oliver & Cathy Grant
Musical Selection, Oliver & Cathy Grant

Musical Selection,
Oliver & Cathy Grant

Most Esteemed Supreme Lady,
Hilda L. Wiltz
Knights of Peter Claver Ladies Auxiliary

Dr. Christopher Pichon
Knights of Peter Claver, Incorporated.

LaTrice M. Johnson, great-niece

Final Commendation & Farwell

Invitation to Prayer

Silence

Signs of Farewell

Song of Farewell

Prayer of Commendation

Recessional Musical Selection,

Oliver & Cathy Grant

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS:

The family of Leodia (Lee) Gooch extends our deepest gratitude for every act of kindness shown during this time of sorrow. Your prayers, flowers, cards, food, messages, visits, shared memories have brought us comfort and reminded us of the impact Lee had on so many lives. Thank you for loving her, supporting her, celebrating her and for standing with us. As she would say, stay close to God and may God bless and keep you.

A special thank you to the following for their unwavering support and care for Leodia and the family.

- Progress West Hospitals
- St. Norbert Catholic Churches
- St. Louis Cremation
- The Knights of Peter Claver, Inc.
- The Knights of Peter Claver Ladies Auxiliary



A Message of Love from Lee

To my beloved children, grandchildren and great grandchildren, YOU are a constant reminder of the goodness of our Lord.

My Children: Chuck, the first true love in my life. Kathy, a reflection of my love. Nikki, an extension of my love. Because of you, I learned the giving and receiving of unconditional love. My prayer for you is to love the Lord with all your heart, body, mind and soul and to love everyone unconditionally. This is the purpose for which God created us.

My grandchildren: Each of you has shaped my heart in ways words can never fully express. I watched you grow, struggle, rise, and become who God created you to be, and I could not be more proud. Every prayer I whispered, every lesson I shared, every sacrifice I made was wrapped in love for you. Carry forward all that I poured into you with joy, faith, and confidence.

My great grandchildren: As of today, you are babies and my love for you is more than words can hold. If I cannot write to you in this life, it is because I have gone on to everlasting life. But know this always, my love is strong, my presence is near, and my prayers surround you. I will walk with you in spirit, cheering you on, guiding you gently, and loving you beyond time. Hold tightly to the stories, the faith, and the love passed down to you, and know that I am with you always.

I want you to release any pain or sorrow for me and rest in this truth:

I am exactly where I am meant to be, fully alive in everlasting life. My faith carried me here, and God welcomed me home. This is not an ending but a continuation of my faith journey. I am not gone, I am transformed. I am dancing in the Spirit, surrounded by God's promise. Hold closely every memory we shared, every word of guidance I offered, and let them carry you forward with hope and love. I walk with you still, closer than you know, and I will forever remain by your side always. This is my promise to you. To my nieces and nephews: The love I hold for each of you is deep and abundant. You have always been more than family; you are like my own children. The relationships we shared are etched into my heart and will live on forever. Hold onto the laughter we shared, the tears we shed, the guidance I offered, and the lessons we learned together. Each of you carries a piece of me, and through you my love continues.

To all the people whose lives I have touched in any way, know that every connection mattered to me. Each shared moment, conversation, prayer, and act of kindness was a gift I carried in my heart. Hold fast to those memories, live fully in love and faith, and know that you were part of my journey and always will be.

Reflecting on the rich heritage of Catholic teachings, "It is very important that we all understand what human rights are about and what the responsibilities are and how vital it is for the entire community to be educated. Everybody needs to know and honor the dignity of human life." May these words live on through each of you. Stand for what is right. Protect the vulnerable. Love boldly and without condition. Let your faith guide your actions, your compassion shape your choices, and your respect for human dignity define your legacy. As I go forth into everlasting life, I leave you with this charge: Live in love, walk in justice, and never forget that every life is sacred and worthy of dignity. Until we meet again, I remain with you in spirit, wrapped in God's promise and eternal peace.

Eternally,
Leodia "Lee" Gooch