



Mrs. Ronda Wilkes McElveen

April 10, 1969 - April 9, 2026

Ronda Michelle Wilkes McElveen, of Hartsville, passed away peacefully on April 9, 2026, just one day shy of her 57th birthday.

Born on April 10, 1969, Ronda lived a life rooted in faith, family, and a deep love of music. She attended Columbia College, where she formed lifelong friendships and nurtured her passion for learning, and later shared her musical gifts at Coker University, remaining closely connected to the Hartsville community she always called home.

Ronda faithfully served as Director of Music and Organist at First Presbyterian Church in Hartsville for more than 35 years. In this role, she led handbell and vocal ensembles of all ages and founded the beloved First Friday Concert Series. Her presence at the church was a constant, marked by quiet leadership, steady devotion, and a gift for making others feel welcomed and at ease.

A dedicated educator, Ronda taught music in both public and private schools and spent many years at Coker University as a staff accompanist. There, she accompanied ensembles, vocal students, and ballet classes, while also teaching piano and music education. Her musical talents carried her across the United States and the Caribbean, and most recently to Greyfriars Kirk in Edinburgh, Scotland.

Ronda also served as accompanist for the Coker Civic Chorale, Darlington County Choir, Hartsville-Coker Concert Series, and Hartsville Chamber Ensemble. She taught piano privately, was Chairperson of the Hartsville Chapter of the National Piano Guild, chaired the Hartsville Piano Festival, and remained active in the Presbyterian Association of Musicians.

She will be remembered for her grace, warmth, and unwavering loyalty, as well as the quiet strength and gentle humor that made life feel lighter for those around her. Ronda had a way of leaving a lasting impression, one rooted in kindness, faith, and love.

She is survived by her loving family: her husband, Greg McElveen of Hartsville; her daughter, Madeline McElveen of Hartsville; her parents, Raymond and Patricia Wilkes of Hartsville; and her brother, Ray Wilkes (Melissa) of Asheville, along with many dear friends who will continue to carry her love forward.

A service to celebrate Ronda's life will be held at 11 o'clock on Saturday, April 18, 2026, in First Presbyterian Church, with The Rev. Ashley Cheek officiating. The family will receive friends in the Fellowship Hall immediately following the service. A private family graveside service will be held at Mt. Olivet Baptist Church Cemetery. The Directors of Brown-Pennington-Atkins Funeral Home & Crematory are caring for the family.

Memorials may be made in her honor to the First Presbyterian Church Music Program, 213 W. Home Avenue, Hartsville, SC 29550.

Ronda's life was a testament to faith, love, and quiet strength, and her legacy will live on in every life she touched.

Cemetery Details

Private

Previous Events

Funeral Service

APR 18. 11:00 AM (ET)

First Presbyterian Church
213 West Home Avenue
Hartsville, SC

Tribute Wall

LL

“ *Lawrence & Cindy Lowe sent a virtual gift in memory of Mrs. Ronda Wilkes McElveen*



Lawrence & Cindy Lowe - April 19 at 09:04 AM

PS

“ *I'm really sorry about your loss. Just wanted you to know that I'm praying for your family.*

Pam Brown Smith - April 18 at 03:34 PM

ED

“ *Ronda was so encouraging to those around her. You could feel her love of music all the time. When it was my turn to chair the local piano festival, she would always ask me if I needed anything. I will esp. miss her at the National Guild piano auditions in Hartsville, which she chaired for many years. She would always do her best to accommodate any student so they could participate. Rest in peace, Ronda. In His Love, Elaine...*



Elaine Dickinson - April 18 at 07:39 AM

KC

“ We're sorry to hear of Rondas passing. Growing up we went to Antioch pool during the summer breaks. Praying for ya'll during this difficult time. Betty, Lee and Kim Bryant



Kim Bryant Clanton - April 16 at 08:19 PM

CT

“ Curtis And Pam Tyner lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Ronda Wilkes McElveen



Curtis and Pam Tyner - April 15 at 09:03 AM

AS

“ Al & Melinda Sansbury lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Ronda Wilkes McElveen



Al & Melinda Sansbury - April 14 at 12:19 AM

CD

“ My heartfelt sadness over the loss of such a young, lovely, and talented young woman. Thoughts and prayers with the family during this sorrowful time now and in the days to come.



Cora Dial - April 13 at 11:48 PM

LT

“ Greg and family, my deepest condolences for the loss of Ronda. She was simply a dear, sweet, amazing, genuine person.



Louanne Smith and Rhyon Terry - April 13 at 08:51 PM

LT

“ So sorry to hear of Ronda’s passing. We went to school together. Although she was younger than me, I remember what a sweet, kind person she was and continued to be all of her life. Praying for her family and friends. 🙏



Loretta Tiller - April 13 at 06:36 PM

RS

“ Jeff and I have so many wonderful memories of Ronda and her family. We all worshipped together for many years at Emmanuel Baptist Church and School. Jeff had the wonderful opportunity of teaching Ronda piano and he remembers how quiet and shy she was. He then introduced Ronda to the organ and he taught her organ lessons beginning her junior year at EBS. We were thrilled when she went off to Columbia College to study music. Then one day Anna Hill called Jeff to see if he knew of anyone who could become their organist or pianist at the Presbyterian Church. Jeff immediately thought of Ronda and the rest is history. She taught my niece, Megan, piano, and Megan loved her so. Throughout the years, our musical paths would cross and it was such joy to share and talk "music" with her. She will be greatly missed by all who knew her. Our love and prayers go out to Ronda's family. She will be greatly missed!

Rev Jeff and Carolyn Sifford - April 13 at 03:56 PM

BM

“ I knew Ronda when we were children and had the blessing of reconnecting with her as adults once a year at our beloved Montreat Worship and Music Conference. It was our running joke to look out for one another at the first choir rehearsal of the week. It was a joy to have reconnected, however briefly, and one of the highlights of that week was to catch up with her in the Montreat shop or in the Anderson Auditorium. She will be missed and made the world a better place.

Barbara Moran-Faile, MD - April 13 at 11:58 AM

RF

“ Ron & Missy Fountain lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Ronda Wilkes McElveen



Ron & Missy Fountain - April 12 at 11:00 PM

ES

“ Effie Smith lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Ronda Wilkes McElveen



Effie Smith - April 12 at 11:02 AM

ES

Ronda is an amazing lady. Talented & beautiful , sending prayers for Greg & Madeline &n her parents .

Effie Smith - April 12 at 11:04 AM

JW

“ *Jamie Wheless lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Ronda Wilkes McElveen*



Jamie Wheless - April 11 at 10:18 PM

WM

“ *William & Kimberly Moree lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Ronda Wilkes McElveen*



William & kimberly Moree - April 11 at 09:38 PM

BA

“ *Greg & Madeline so sorry for your loss. Praying for you both. Ronda was such a sweet person.*

Bill & Derry Atkinson - April 11 at 05:44 PM

SA

“ *Sara Robbins Alexander lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Ronda Wilkes McElveen*



Sara Robbins Alexander - April 11 at 05:19 PM

JG

“ *Jewel Walters Gibson lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Ronda Wilkes McElveen*



Jewel Walters Gibson - April 11 at 04:08 PM

EB

“ *Eric Bradshaw lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Ronda Wilkes McElveen*



Eric Bradshaw - April 11 at 01:43 PM



“ *Oh my I have been friends with Rond since kindergarten she was a sweet friend with a God given gift of music that made the world a brighter place. We will all miss seeing her sweet smile and hearing the talented music that she exhibited. Praying for her family. until we meet again sweet friend*



Crystal Minnehan - April 11 at 11:30 AM

KA

“ *We attended Emmanuel together for years. She was a very kind and sweet person.*

Kimberly Anderson - April 11 at 08:14 AM

JB

“ Love and prayers to Ronda’s family and the FPC family. Rest in beautiful music dear friend. Jim and Holly Beaumier

James Beaumier - April 11 at 08:05 AM

GG

“ Gene And Teresa Gibson lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Ronda Wilkes McElveen



Gene and Teresa Gibson - April 11 at 07:35 AM

SJ

“ I’m so sorry to hear of Ronda’s passing. She taught my granddaughter, Tinsley piano lessons. She was such a sweet person. We will truly miss her. Prayers for her family.



Sheila Johnson - April 11 at 01:54 AM

SM

“ The Hartsville community is very fortunate to have enjoyed and benefited from the awesome musical talent of Rhonda for many years. She left us way too soon, but her memory and teachings will live on through all those whose lives she touched.

Susan D. Reynolds, MD

Susan D. Reynolds, MD - April 11 at 12:56 AM

LF

“ Prayers for the family during this time.



Lance an Kim Funderburk - April 10 at 10:22 PM

PW

“ Patti Kelley Williams sent a virtual gift in memory of Mrs. Ronda Wilkes McElveen



Patti Kelley Williams - April 10 at 10:03 PM

TB

“ Ronda was my daughter's piano teacher and she loved her. Prayers for the family.



Tonda Bunch - April 10 at 09:30 PM

DW

“ When I was taking piano lessons from Ronda and was nervous about playing in front of the church she told me, “Look at the title of this song. It’s Jesus Loves Me. Remember who you’re really playing for”



I believe Ronda played and lived for Jesus every day. That was evident in the way she played and the way she treated people. She was the kindest person I ever met. I am so incredibly blessed to have known her.

Thank you Ronda! You will be so missed.

Drew Walters - April 10 at 09:19 PM

BM

“ Billy And Jo-Ann Matthews lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Ronda Wilkes McElveen



Billy and Jo-Ann Matthews - April 10 at 08:47 PM

MW

“ So sorry for your loss!!



margie walker - April 10 at 08:39 PM

BR

“ I went to school with Rhonda at Emmanuel. She was several years younger but so sweet as could be. She was always so happy and kind.

Benjy Radin - April 10 at 08:21 PM

JC

“ Jeri And Jim Cox And Kelly Cox Crowley lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Ronda Wilkes McElveen



Jeri and Jim Cox and Kelly Cox Crowley - April 10 at 07:37 PM

KS

“ Ronda and I had sweet Memories together making beautiful music years back. Our conversations always lifted Jesus high as she shined His love. Truly a gift to all she knew and worked with. She was a sweet encourager during my journey of health. My heart goes out to her family in every way. Prayers being lifted up on their behalf. She will be truly missed

Kristin Slaughenhaupt - April 10 at 07:17 PM

KW

“ I met Ronda when I joined the Hartsville Piano Teachers Association. She was a sweet and kind person. We will miss her smile and her gift of music. Rest on Ronda. The strife is o'er, the battle won. You will be sorely missed.



Karen and Melvin Wilkerson - April 10 at 06:18 PM



“ Ronda was the sweetest, kindest, most talented person I knew. She was always such a joy to be around. She was extremely sharp and witty, smart, and generous, and one of the most amazing musicians I have ever met. She gave so much of herself to her students and to this community. We were certainly blessed to have her, and we will miss her immensely. Ronda made the world a little bit better of a place to live in.

Dustin Thomas - April 10 at 06:12 PM



“ Prayers and thoughts with the family.



Mitchell and Judy Turner - April 10 at 06:03 PM



“ Such a bright and beautiful soul. She will be deeply missed.



Tiffany - April 10 at 04:32 PM



“ Devin Raines lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Ronda Wilkes McElveen



Devin Raines - April 10 at 04:15 PM

SC

“ *Such a sweet lady , family I am sorry for your loss Prayers*



Sharon Catoe - April 10 at 03:48 PM

VC

“ *Van Chapman lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Ronda Wilkes McElveen*



Van Chapman - April 10 at 03:42 PM



“ *Kodi Griggs lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Ronda Wilkes McElveen*



Kodi Griggs - April 10 at 03:38 PM

R(

“ *Rebecca Skinner (Terry) lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Ronda Wilkes McElveen*



Rebecca Skinner (Terry) - April 10 at 03:35 PM

TR

“ Greg and family, I am sorry to see this notice. I have such fond memories of the children’s choir and the many Christmas plays at First Pres. I had the pleasure of helping her for several years and she made those experiences fun, as well as instructive. Rhonda truly was a bright light and a lovely, lovely lady. Sending prayers your way. Tru



Tru - April 10 at 03:23 PM

SM

“ Sheila Mullis lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Ronda Wilkes McElveen



Sheila Mullis - April 10 at 03:19 PM

CG

“ Prayers lifted for this family asking for strength and comfort during all the days ahead



Claudette B. Gainey - April 10 at 03:00 PM

ES

Greg & Madeline, my prayers are with you both. Ronda is an amazing lady. Wife, Mom & Musician !! Organist ! You are Blessed to have her . I am so sorry for your loss. ❤️❤️🙏🙏

Effie Smith - April 10 at 06:51 PM



Light a candle

Effie Smith - April 10 at 06:52 PM

RW

“ Twenty two weeks ago, my wife participated in her fourth, and sadly now her final one with Ronda, annual ALL SAINTS DAY organ concert at First Presbyterian Church of Hartsville, my parent’s church, and the church of my baptism. Ronda made sure to include my wife and her own organist gifts.

Ronda took a lot of pride in organizing these concerts for the community, and my wife was only too honored to participate in them for the glory of God; I do hope they continue in Ronda’s memory.

Rest in peace, our sister Ronda McElveen of First Presbyterian Church, one of my wife’s most beloved music ministry colleagues. Amy was always so grateful to be in your orbit, and so was her husband.

She was a true Good Samaritan here on earth, and helped me get to today and this wonderful season God has me in with my wife. She never gave up on Andy Williams. Ronda WAS the community.

The churches Amy and I serve, Elim Methodist Church (me), and Darlington Presbyterian Church (Amy), along with our families, send love to Greg, Madeline, and Mr. and Mrs. Wilkes.

Many loved her more, and she loved many, many people other than us. We are just glad she cared about us.

Her music and choir, along with the late Anna Hill, helped save my life, and led me on the path I eventually found (with His guidance) to seminary and ordained ministry.

Don’t you think we aren’t here on earth as professed Christians, to make a difference in people’s lives for Him. Kingdom works definitely matter. Amy and I were grateful to know this saint of God.

It’s rather poignant, that Ronda’s first full day in heaven is on her earthly birthday. (There is a sermon here somewhere).

Yours in Him,

Rev. Andy and Amy W. Williams, FNP-C

Rev. Andy Williams - April 10 at 02:20 PM

DB

“ *Debbie Bullard lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Ronda Wilkes McElveen*



Debbie Bullard - April 10 at 01:36 PM

LS

“ *Greg and Madeleine I am so sorry about Rhonda you both will be in my prayers. Sending my Condolences and prayers for her family. Loretta and Miranda Smith.*



Louretta Smith - April 10 at 01:14 PM

SO

Rhonda's death is a great loss to the Hartsville community. She was so beautifully talented in music. We will miss her. May her family be surrounded with the peace and comfort of our precious Lord whom she so graciously served.

Sara Smith Odom - April 10 at 01:33 PM