Birth
October 6, 1942

Baptism
October 18, 1942

Profession
July 30, 1962

Death
March 28, 2026

Burial
Chatawa Cemetery

Precious and blessed is the death of the faithful before God . . . for they die in union with their dear Jesus, in the grace of God, in peace.

Blessed Theresa of Jesus Gerhardinger
Foundress of the School Sisters of Notre Dame
Letter 11, September 10, 1831

In Loving Memory

Sister Floretta Williams

Sister M. Floretta Williams, 83, passed away peacefully at Trinity Trace Community Care Center, Covington, Louisiana, in the early morning of March 28, 2026.

The eighth of 10 children was born to Elina (Waguespack) and Walter Williams on October 6, 1942, in Marrero, Louisiana. She was baptized on October 18, 1942, at Immaculate Conception Church and named Bertha Marie. Two of her older siblings died in infancy and the eight living children (five girls, three boys), their parents, grandmother and uncle lived together in a three-bedroom home in Marrero. The close-knit family bonded together by praying the rosary daily. The family home was also a gathering place for the neighborhood children and friends. An older sister, deceased Sister Marie (Walter Marie), entered School Sisters of Notre Dame (SSND).

Bertha attended Marrero Public School for the first four grades. She transferred to Immaculate Conception Catholic School, staffed by SSND, for her remaining years of elementary education. She was greatly influenced by the smile and cheerfulness of one of her teachers and desired to experience that same kind of happiness. In the eighth grade, she visited the aspiranture at St. Mary of the Pines, Chatawa, Mississippi. Impressed with the school, she asked her parents if she could enroll for her high school education.

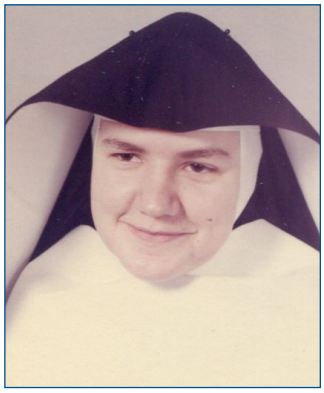
Bertha received the candidate veil at her home parish on August 22, 1960, and entered at Sancta Maria in Ripa, St. Louis. She was received into the novitiate on July 29, 1961, and given the name Mary Floretta. She professed first vows on July 30, 1962, in St. Louis and final vows on July 30, 1967, at the then recently established motherhouse in Dallas.

Sister Floretta was granted a bachelor's degree in elementary education in 1973 from Texas Women's University, Denton, Texas, and a master's degree in reading education from Texas Women's University in 1979.

Following profession, she was missioned to St. Gerard Majella, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, as housekeeper and cook for a community of 30 sisters. During her fourth year in this ministry, the first-grade teacher became seriously ill and Sister Floretta was asked to substitute in the classroom. This began her 35 years of service in elementary education. She taught throughout the South at Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Houston; St. Gerard Majella, San Antonio, Texas; St. Francis Xavier, Albuquerque, New Mexico; Our Lady of Prompt Succor, Chalmette, Louisiana and Visitation of Our Lady, Marrero.

continued

In Loving Memory



Sister Floretta Williams

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School Sisters of Notre Dame
Central Pacific Province

Transforming the world through education

In the mid-1980s, her father became seriously ill and her mother was in need of support as his caretaker. With the consent of the provincial council, she and her birth sister, Sister Marie, were permitted to live together to help their parents. They both continued in their official ministries while also assisting in the care of their father and support of their mother.

In 1986, she began teaching at St. Maria Goretti, Lake Arthur, Louisiana. When the school closed, she taught at Holy Name of Mary, Gretna, Louisiana. During this time, her father died. She then taught at Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Belle Chasse, Louisiana. Following her mother's death, she taught at Holy Savior, Lockport, Louisiana and then at St. Bernadette, Houma, Louisiana.

In 2011, she spent a year as a driver for the sisters at St. Mary of the Pines, Chatawa, Mississippi. This was followed by a sabbatical in Orange, California. Her final years of teaching brought her back to her home state of Louisiana, serving at St. Alphonsus, McComb. In 2014, she retired and participated in community service work at St. Mary of the Pines. With other SSND, she moved to St. Anthony's Gardens, Covington, in 2019. As her health declined, she was transferred to Trinity Trace Community Care Center, Covington, in February 2026. She died peacefully in her sleep in the early morning of March 28, 2026. She chose to be cremated.

Funeral services for Sister Floretta were held at St. Anthony's Gardens on April 9, 2026. A prayer service, the reading of her biography and sharing of memories preceded the celebration of a memorial Mass with Rev. Dean Robin as presider. Family members, School Sisters of Notre Dame, SSND associates and friends attended the funeral. Her cremains were buried in the SSND cemetery at Chatawa, Mississippi.

Sister Floretta was preceded in death by her parents, Elina and Walter Wiliams; her sisters Sister Marie, SSND and Shirley (Edward) St. Pierre; and her brothers Ray and Walter Williams. She is survived by her sisters Nell (Gerald) Samanie and Vera Reasor and her brother Paul Williams, sisters in community and SSND associates.

Sister Floretta was an excellent primary teacher for many years. One of her greatest joys was to prepare the children for the reception of the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist. She used her creativity and enthusiasm to make learning exciting, especially opening them to the larger world through reading. Her love for teaching never diminished. May she now rest in God's loving arms as she enters eternal life and receives the reward promised by God to those who teach the little ones.

By Sister Carol Marie Wildt, SSND