



LaFern McLain Cissell Stiver

May 15, 1928 - December 24, 2025

LaFern "Mick" McLain Cissell Stiver passed away peacefully in her home, surrounded by loved ones, on December 24, 2025, at the age of 97. She was a remarkable woman, whose warm spirit, keen sense of humor, and boundless love for her family, friends, and students touched the lives of everyone she met.

Born on May 15, 1928, in Oriole, Missouri, to Lawrence J. and Pearl Noland McLain, LaFern grew up in a lively country setting. Her parents ran an all-merchandise store until 1940, and LaFern attended Indian Creek rural school before the family moved to Jackson. She started high school there, but the events of WWII led the family to relocate to St. Louis, where her parents worked in small arms production for our armed forces. LaFern graduated from Soldan High School in St. Louis and went on to Harris Teacher's College for two years.

In 1947, LaFern married Robert Cissell, and they welcomed their son, Mike, in 1949. After relocating to Perryville, Missouri, in 1957, she began teaching at the rural Duggins School and later Wilhelm School. With determination, she continued her education at SEMO while teaching full time, completing her degree during nights and summers.

LaFern became a beloved teacher in Cape Girardeau schools in 1964, shortly

after the passing of her first husband. It was at Franklin School that she met and married Charles Stiver. She was deeply passionate about her work, and her students held a special place in her heart. She had a unique way of making learning fun and meaningful, leaving an indelible mark on all who were lucky enough to be in her classroom.

Outside of teaching, LaFern's life was full of joy, laughter, and hobbies that enriched her soul. She was an avid reader, talented knitter, and devoted card player-her Bridge group was a highlight of her social life. She also had a deep love of travel, having visited 32 countries and collecting memories along the way. LaFern was a proud member of the Nancy Hunter Chapter of the D.A.R. and dedicated years to researching her genealogy, even writing a history of the McLain Clan. In recent years, she enjoyed "friendly" games of dominoes with friends, the birds outside her window, DQ Blizzards, and writing her memoir.

Her faith was central to her life, and she was an active member of Old St. Vincent's Catholic Church, where she worked tirelessly and proudly to save the old church, and to preserve its rich history. LaFern co-authored the book *Old St. Vincent Church: A Pictorial and Historical Sketch of Catholicism in Cape Girardeau*. She also founded the Perpetual Care Fund for several rural cemeteries, including McLain's Chapel and Iona Cemeteries.

LaFern was preceded in death by her parents, her son, Michael Joseph Cissell, her daughter-in-law, Sherry Seabaugh Cissell, and her daughter, Shari Stiver. Her legacy lives on in her stepson, Charles (Skip) Stiver; her three grandsons, Chris (Heather) Cissell, Ben (Rhondi) Cissell, and Ellwood Stiver; her two granddaughters, Tara (Cliff) Marvin and Christy (Steven) Rankin; as well as many great-grandchildren, great-great-grandchildren, and a circle of friends who cared for her dearly, including Janet & Blake Esicar, Jan Halter, Bill Osburn, Sebrina Crossett, Ken Steinhoff, and Mary Jo Stiver.

Visitation will be 4:00 pm to 8:00 pm Monday, December 29, 2025 at Ford & Sons Mt. Auburn Chapel in Cape Girardeau, with Parish Prayer and Rosary at 4:00 pm.

Funeral Mass will be 10:00 am Tuesday, December 30, 2025 at Old St. Vincent's Catholic Church in Cape Girardeau

Burial will be at Cape County Memorial Park Cemetery in Cape Girardeau.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be sent to Old St. Vincent's Church at 131 S. Main St., Cape Girardeau, MO 63703. Visit [OldStVincents.org](http://oldstvincents.org) (<http://oldstvincents.org/>) for more information.

LaFern's impact on this world was profound, and her memory will live on in the hearts of all who knew her.

Online condolences may be made at www.fordandsonsfuneralhome.com.

Cemetery Details

Cape County Memorial Park Cemetery

2315 Highway 61 North
Cape Girardeau, MO 63701
(573) 334-1909
<https://www.fordandsonsfuneralhome.com/>

Previous Events

Visitation

DEC **29**. 4:00 PM - 8:00 PM (CT)

Ford and Sons Mt. Auburn Chapel
1001 N. Mt. Auburn Rd.
Cape Girardeau, MO 63701

Funeral Mass

DEC **30**. 10:00 AM (CT)

Old St. Vincent's Catholic Church
C/O St. Mary Cathedral
Cape Girardeau, MO 63703

Tribute Wall

AA

“ Sorry we weren't able to attend the visitation. Ms. Mick is such a great friend and neighbor. She was always incredibly kind and joyful to see our kids when we walked the dogs and we will miss having her in the neighborhood. I remember she wrote me a kind, heartfelt note of thanks for throwing her paper in for her and she was always deeply welcoming to us. The neighborhood is not the same without her.

Aaron - December 31, 2025 at 09:43 PM

NZ

“ I visited LaFern this past summer. I'm so glad I did. We had a great talk. She is a distant McLain cousin. My mother, Elsie McLain Reynolds, and she were also good friends as well as cousins and worked together on their applications to join DAR and on the marking of our ancestors grave, Alexander McLain. My mother designed the marker and LaFern presented the program on Alexander at the dedication of the marker almost 40 years ago. She was a lovely lady and cousin.

Nora Reynolds Zimmer

Nora Reynolds Zimmer

stant McLain cousin. My mother, Elsie McLain Reynolds, and she were also good friends as well as cousins and worked together on the marking of our ancestors grave... Alexander McLain.

I'll try to come to the funeral.

Nora Reynolds Zimmer

Nora Reynolds Zimmer - December 30, 2025 at 08:02 AM

CW

“ Fern was a valued thirty-five year member of the Nancy Hunter Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution. We remember her as being so kind and always smiling, She was a joy and performed many acts of service in the years she was able to attend. Her last position was presenting the American History Award to eighth graders for the top history student at local schools.

Carolyn Walthall Webb - December 29, 2025 at 01:29 PM



“ Truly a lovely person. One I never forgot. She cared for every student she taught and will be truly missed—my condolences to her family and friends. Franklin School was blessed to have her.

Al Rawlins - December 28, 2025 at 02:48 PM

AN

“ I am a physician, no longer live in Cape, but grew up there. Mrs. Stiver was my 4th grade teacher and she truly instilled the love of learning in me as well as all her students. I'm sure she inspired several future professionals. I was one.

anonymous - December 27, 2025 at 07:14 PM



“ Rose Remembrance was purchased for the family of LaFern McLain Cissell Stiver.



December 27, 2025 at 04:29 PM

BV

“ *She was one of the finest ladies I ever met she will be missed.
Rest in peace.*

Brad Verhines - December 27, 2025 at 12:04 PM

PM

She was my cousin she will be miss

Patricia moll - December 31, 2025 at 02:13 PM

PM

She was a great woman

Patricia moll - December 31, 2025 at 02:13 PM

PM

So sorry for your loss

Patricia moll - December 31, 2025 at 02:13 PM

AW

“ *Mrs. Stiver loved all the children she taught. We kept in contact all these years and she had a memory for every student. She never forgot me or anyone else. She was so patient and caring and truly was the kindest person I ever knew. She never gave up hope for me or any of her students. I loved her very much.*

Amy Welker - December 27, 2025 at 10:50 AM

JW

“ *We will miss having Mick as a neighbor and our condolences go out to her family and friends. She took such joy in seeing our little boy grow over the last few years and we enjoyed sharing him with her. She was a very special lady indeed!
The Woolf family*

Jennifer Woolf - December 26, 2025 at 02:49 PM

MG

“ I was one of the many children impacted by Mrs. Stiver. She was a favorite, whose love of children and teaching shown through her work with us. Of all my years of schooling in Cape Girardeau, I think I remember my fourth grade year with her most. I am 67 years old now, and I can still remember lessons learned in her class, including the classic building an Igloo with sugar cubes. I remember trick-or-treating at her house across from Franklin School and being greeted by her two standard poodles. I hope she knew how much she mattered, how much positive impact she had on the children lucky enough to have called her their teacher.

Michelle Griggs - December 25, 2025 at 01:08 PM

JP

“ 6 files added to the tribute wall



Jessica Powell - December 24, 2025 at 06:42 PM