



## Paula Sue Dowling

March 29, 1960 - December 7, 2021

Special educator, Paula Sue Dowling, age 61 of Champaign, IL formerly of Charleston, IL passed away on Tuesday, December 7, 2021, at Carle Foundation Hospital in Urbana-Champaign, IL.

A funeral service in her honor will be held at 12:00 PM, Friday, December 17, 2021, at Mitchell-Jerdan Funeral Home, 1200 Wabash Avenue, Mattoon, IL 61938. Reverend Jeremy Doughty will officiate with the assistance of Father Larry Dowling. The visitation will be held the same day from 10:00 AM until the time of service at the funeral home. A private family burial will follow at a later date in Oakland Cemetery in Oakland, IL.

Paula was born on March 29, 1960, in Hammond, IN to the late Paul P. and Rosemary R. (Hall) Asbell. She married Donald J. Dowling on October 11, 2010, in Charleston, IL; he survives and resides in Champaign, IL. Paula is also survived by her three children, Steffanie Davis and wife Kate of Lemont, IL, Jesse Davis and fiancée Jenna Pohl of Dyersburg, TN, and Ashley Davis of Champaign, IL as well as step daughter Hannah Dowling of Charleston, IL, two grandsons, Kaden and Logan Davis of Lemont, IL; three brothers, Brian Asbell and wife Linda of Rockford, IL, Thomas Walker and wife Heather of Normal, IL, Scott Asbell and wife Kelly of Valparaiso, IN; one sister, Tiffany Meyers of Hammond, IN; Stepmother, Tommie Asbell of Highland, IN; and numerous nieces and nephews. She is preceded in death by her brother, Todd Asbell.

Paula received a Bachelor of Science in Education in Special Education in 2006 and a Master's in Educational Leadership from Eastern Illinois University in Charleston, IL in 2010. With great passion, Paula thrived in her teaching career and in enhancing the lives of learners with disabilities. Paula was honored in 2018 for her work with the Leadership and Service Award from Eastern's College of Education and Professional Studies. She was currently employed at Doctor Howard Elementary School in Champaign, IL. Prior to her work at Doctor Howard, Paula was instrumental in the development of Circle Academy in Rossville, IL. She served as the school principal there for seven years and, early in her

career, implemented special education programs at Mattoon High School.

Some of the things that gave her joy were ocean beaches, sunrises, and a strong cup of coffee. Paula was an avid fan of the Chicago Cubs and Bears and enjoyed playing golf with her spouse, Don. There was nothing more valuable to Paula than the times shared with her family and especially her grandchildren, Kaden and Logan, that meant more to her than life itself.

Paula's legacy of love, kind-heartedness, and generosity will be carried on through the hearts of her loved ones and the people whose lives she touched. She will be fondly remembered by all.

Memorials in her honor may be made to Developmental Services Center, 1304 W. Bradley Avenue, Champaign, IL 61821.

Please visit [www.mitchell-jerdan.com](http://www.mitchell-jerdan.com) or [www.facebook.com/mitchelljerdanfuneralhome](https://www.facebook.com/mitchelljerdanfuneralhome) to light a virtual candle in her honor or share a memory with the family.

# Previous Events

## Visitation

DEC 17. 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM (CT)

Mitchell-Jerdan Funeral Home Ltd.  
1200 Wabash Ave  
Mattoon, IL 61938  
[contact@mitchelljerdan.com](mailto:contact@mitchelljerdan.com)  
<https://www.mitchell-jerdan.com/>

## Service

DEC 17. 12:00 PM (CT)

Mitchell-Jerdan Funeral Home Ltd.  
1200 Wabash Ave  
Mattoon, IL 61938  
[contact@mitchelljerdan.com](mailto:contact@mitchelljerdan.com)  
<https://www.mitchell-jerdan.com/>

# Tribute Wall

 Susan Bane

“ I just learned of Paula's passing yesterday. She was an amazing woman. I worked with her at Gerber School, Circle Academy and the Pavilion. I concur with all the memories that I have read. Paula was fiercely dedicated to her students and family. She had a great sense of humor and always extremely genuine. I enjoyed working with her immensely. She will be missed.

Susan Bane - March 30 at 09:27 AM

 MM

“ I was so sorry and shocked to learn of this wonderful woman suddenly passing away. I thoroughly enjoyed working with her while she was the principal at Circle Academy in Rossville. It was a pleasure to know her and work with her. Her laugh was loud and infectious to match her big heart. I enjoyed talking Cubs baseball and Bears football with her as well as educational issues. She was a hard worker that took her job seriously and cared deeply for the kids and families that she served while she was at Circle Academy. She loved her family and talked about them often. She was always kind and good to me and I will miss her. I am so sorry for your loss and may God bring you peace and strength in this time of mourning.



Sincerely,

Mark McCusker

Mark McCusker - December 18, 2021 at 04:01 PM



“ Paula was an energetic and caring person and special educator. Her warmth and gentle nature will be missed. Rick Brackmann

Rick Brackmann - December 17, 2021 at 10:41 AM



“ Divine Peace Bouquet was purchased for the family of Paula Sue Dowling.



December 16, 2021 at 07:56 AM

JB

“ My wife, Kathie, and I were so sad to hear of Paula's passing. We send our thoughts and prayers out to her family. Paula and I worked many years together at Mattoon TLC and were friends as well as co-workers. She was a dynamic and strong woman, who had great compassion for our students. Paula was tenacious in her holistic teaching of her students, not only focusing on academics but also life skills. I was so pleased when she went further with her education and excelled as a teacher and administrator. So proud of you Paula! We were friends outside of school and enjoyed many talks about life and she was my karaoke partner at parties! May you rest in peace, dear friend, you made your mark on me and on the world. Well done, good and faithful servant! love, Jim Bossert

James Bossert - December 15, 2021 at 07:49 PM

CV

“ Circle Academy - Vermilion purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Paula Sue Dowling.



Circle Academy - Vermilion - December 15, 2021 at 09:20 AM



“ Enchanted Cottage was purchased for the family of Paula Sue Dowling.



December 14, 2021 at 10:33 PM



“ 56 files added to the album LifeTributes



Mitchell-Jerdan Funeral Home - December 14, 2021 at 08:46 PM



“ *Large Basket Garden was purchased for the family of Paula Sue Dowling.*



December 14, 2021 at 12:26 PM

SD

“ *The family is asking for a memorial in her honor to go to DSC in lieu of flowers. Development Services Center is at the bottom of the obituary.*

**Steffanie Davis** - December 13, 2021 at 04:36 PM



“ *Emerald Garden Basket was purchased for the family of Paula Sue Dowling.*



December 13, 2021 at 10:27 AM



“ *Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Paula Sue Dowling.*



December 12, 2021 at 03:06 AM

BM

“ *She was a very nice lady and funny and fun and I will also miss seeing her smile and I always remember her at the CUSR bowling with her daughter Ashley*

**Benjamin Mendenhall** - December 12, 2021 at 02:53 AM

BM

“ I have known Paula ever since I was a teacher at Circle Academy in Urbana and she was the LEA who appeared at meetings for students from Urbana. She became the Principal of the second Circle Academy, in Rossville, sister school to Urbana Circle, I became the Academic Coordinator there and we worked side by side. I will never forget her love and dedication for our students. She was a tireless advocate for good. She left Circle and we remained friends professionally and personally. Her loss is great to our community and to me personally. Don, Ashley, and Jim. I grieve with you, and remember all the times spent celebrating life with Paula. I love her dearly and she will always be in my heart. Last summer, as we prepared to return to our respective positions educating children, we watched the movie: " Love Them First" at Paula's suggestion, about at risk students and their principal who built a culture of love and acceptance that produced amazing learning and self awareness.. This is truly what Paula did, she always loved them first. I will miss you and all the times we shared knowledge together. ❤️



Barbara Miller - December 12, 2021 at 12:15 AM



“ Serene Retreat was purchased for the family of Paula Sue Dowling.



December 11, 2021 at 08:11 PM



“ Memorial Trees was purchased for the family of Paula Sue Dowling.



December 11, 2021 at 11:16 AM



“ Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Paula Sue Dowling.



December 10, 2021 at 08:10 PM

BT

“ Bob and the Illinois Feeder team purchased the Full Of Love Bouquet for the family of Paula Sue Dowling.



Bob and the Illinois Feeder team - December 10, 2021 at 12:42 PM



“ Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Paula Sue Dowling.



December 10, 2021 at 09:24 AM

MH

“ Prayers for comfort and strength for the whole family and deepest sympathy. Paula was a beautiful person inside and out, an outstanding educator and a wonderful mom and grandma. My heart goes out especially to Ashley at this time. The last time I saw Paula was when our daughters rode horses at Paradise Equestrian Therapy in Charleston. She always had a kind word for everyone.

Marjorie Hanft - December 10, 2021 at 09:05 AM

LJ

My heart goes out to Paula's family. She was a strong, loving and caring woman. I was fortunate to have worked with her in the same class room at The Treatment and Learning Center for Behavior Disordered Children in Mattoon. Paula was a natural in the class room. Her high energy and compassion for the students was contagious. I often would comment to her about going back to school and becoming a certified teacher. I was so happy when that's exactly what she did and she didn't stop there. Paula got her Master's and became a principal. I am so proud of her and how hard she worked to obtain her degrees. Paula and I became good friends and she would invite me to spend time with her family. That was such a blessing for me. Her daughter Stephanie was an outstanding basketball player and I watched many games with Paula from Junior High through High School. Paula was an incredible mom to her daughter Ashley who had Autism. I learned more about autism by watching Paula and her interactions with Ashley than I ever could reading a book. It was "Beautiful!" I enjoyed my visits with her family and became quite close to them. I am so blessed to have gotten to know Paula over the years. I am shocked and saddened by her sudden death. It cut deep into my heart. She was a beautiful soul with a heart full of love, Compassion and empathy. I will miss her, but never forget the fond memories of times I spent with her and her family. Rest In Peace my friend and thank you! I love you ❤️  
Leroy Johnson

Leroy Johnson - December 11, 2021 at 09:16 AM

FF

“ From your UPS Franklin Park Family purchased the Pink Tribute Spray for the family of Paula Sue Dowling.



From your UPS Franklin Park Family - December 10, 2021 at 07:40 AM



“ Lavender Reflections Spray was purchased for the family of Paula Sue Dowling.



December 09, 2021 at 10:14 PM

KQ

“ I am a current teacher who worked with Paula. I was having a hard time last Friday and felt done. I asked her to talk to a couple of the 1st and 2nd graders in line bc I wasn't feeling kind enough at the moment. Paula jumped in to help me. She was amazing!

Kristen Quattrocchi - December 09, 2021 at 08:57 PM

MG

“ Don, you and your family are in my thoughts and prayers. Marilyn Crist Good

Marilyn Good - December 09, 2021 at 08:30 PM

JS

“ There are so many wonderful memories ,I met the Asbell family through my Husband Calvin Smith , When Calvin and I got married in 1988 Paula was my matron of honor and When Paula and Don got married my husband gave her away , so many memories over our lifetime , she will be so missed by so many .

Judy A Smith - December 09, 2021 at 06:14 PM



“ Basket of Memories was purchased for the family of Paula Sue Dowling.



December 09, 2021 at 03:44 PM

AD

“ *Paula was a great leader and always put others before her own needs. She is going to be greatly missed. I am forever grateful to know her and have had her as my principal at circle academy Rossville for so many years. I’m very sorry for the family’s loss. Ashley (Lithgow) Dukes*



Ashley Dukes - December 09, 2021 at 03:19 PM



“ *Rose Remembrance was purchased for the family of Paula Sue Dowling.*



December 09, 2021 at 03:16 PM