



Joyce Shirley Sellers

July 30, 1933 - February 27, 2017

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Revelation 21:4 "And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away."

Born on a modest farm during the Great Depression in Ranburne, Alabama, to Essie Laney and Quitman Rivers Sellers, who grew cotton and raised chickens to make a living and support a large family. Joyce arrived late in Essie's life and was far younger than her nine siblings (two others died in infancy). She was transformed into a Southern belle by her doting mother, much to the irritation of the children who were still at home. Essie was a happy, sincere, religious, church-going woman and she raised her daughter to love the Lord and God's Word.

Joyce was a popular student and worked in the school office to earn money for necessities, including going to the movies at every chance to moon over the latest stars. Van Johnson was her lifelong crush. She picked cotton on her parent's farm, which served to make her both strong and strong-willed, so she could afford an upright grand piano. After graduating Ranburne High School in a class of less than 30 students, she moved to Florida to seek a less bucolic

life, briefly lived with her sister, Edith, and moved to a boarding house for women. Joyce worked as a bank clerk routing checks and paydays were spent shopping for new clothes. On her small salary, she managed to hire a maid to pick up after her, as she was very busy dating almost every evening and weekend.

After meeting a handsome sailor with bright blue eyes in a Jacksonville, Florida diner, Joyce married Roland L. Dufresne, a Navy petty officer. He carted her off to chilly Connecticut and into his large, French Canadian family. Early on, they moved from their apartment near Hartford to Southington, a serene, Colonial era town. Nine months after their wedding day, they began a family starting with, Victoria, closely followed by Yvette, who were close companions and grew up with a standard poodle, Napoleon, a cat, Midnight, and two cockatiels named Suzie Q and Junior. Joyce was closest to her husband's youngest siblings, "Kitten," Arthur and George.

Every Spring or Summer was spent back in Joyce's hometown, where her daughters frolicked with their cousins through fields, moseyed along red clay back roads, picked vegetables, ate berries in the bottoms, enjoyed down-home cooking, chased and were chased by cows, scratched at chigger bites, swam in creeks, tried not to encounter snakes or get lost in the kudzu, and generally got into various forms of country-style mischief. At Joyce's insistence, she traveled around the area with her two girls as a trio singing Gospel music at picturesque country churches.

After her daughters grew older, Joyce became politically active, and earned her place as a well-respected, highly-knowledgeable Clerk of Probate Court in both Southington and Bristol. She later worked for the general manager of a TV station in Hartford before moving to Virginia. After re-marrying, she did not have to work and made several missionary trips to Taiwan, taught English in Taiwan, volunteered regularly for various Christian television programs and

helped with the care of her grandson, Nicholas. Later, she moved to the Atlanta area and lovingly nursed her ailing mother, who passed away at the age of 98. In 1996, Joyce moved to California after she was diagnosed with various health problems including breast cancer, and was a survivor of 21 years with no reoccurrence.

Joyce is now at rest in the loving arms of her Lord, having joined Him on the evening of February 27, 2017. Joyce quietly passed away peacefully and in no pain, while gently embraced by Yvette, after a brief, sudden illness. A cremation was held in Vista, California, attended by Yvette's family.

Joyce was a beautiful, intelligent and vivacious woman who possessed many talents, including sewing, cooking, singing, dancing, playing the piano and decorating. She loved going to church and reading the Bible. She always celebrated the holidays with style and made all occasions special. Her daughters have carried on many of her traditions for the enjoyment of their children and grandchildren.

Joyce will always be deeply cherished by her two daughters, Victoria and Yvette, and their spouses, David and Timothy, and dearly loved by Nicholas, her grandson, his spouse, Karisha, Yvette's children, Cody, Chelsea, and Jeremy, and by Victoria's grandchildren, Ivy, Johnathan and Kami.

Most of Joyce's family and friends reside in Georgia, Alabama, Florida, Connecticut, and California. She is preceded in death by her siblings Bernice Evelyn, Rena Ozell, Byron Walter, Gertrude Carrie, Cornelius Crittenden, Edith Lyals, Khafre Harry, Willie Dean and Lin Sellers. Her surviving family in the South includes Harriett Cole, Joann Hanson, Jimmie and Arlene Smith, Rachel Fisher, David Pendar, and others -- plus a host of next generation relatives, as well as their children and grandchildren.

Joyce will be buried at the family church, Union Hill Baptist, 13621 County Road 10, Ranburne, Alabama, by the grave of her mother and father on Saturday, April 22, at 11:00 a.m. Central Time, with Rev. Steve Galloway officiating. All who knew her are more than welcome to attend. Please wear bright colors in Joyce's remembrance. Lunch will be served in the church fellowship hall after the service and burial.

Cemetery Details

Union Hill Baptist Cemetery

13621 County Road 10
Ranburne, AL 36273