



## Virginia Gail Bentley

February 13, 1935 - June 21, 2016

Virginia Gail Bentley or Jeanie, as she preferred to be called, of Perryville, passed away Tuesday, June 21, 2016 at the age of 81. She was born February 13, 1935 in Harmony, Arkansas. She is the daughter of James Fuller Hawkins and Bessie Beatrice (Williams) Hawkins. Jeanie was one of nine siblings, five brothers and four sisters of which she was the youngest girl. Survivors include her three children, sons; John Bentley III and Ted Bentley, his wife Mary, daughter Gay Shaloski and her husband Michael, all of Harmony; sister Marcelle Montgomery, brothers; Clifton, Roland, Clayton and Jimmy Hawkins; seven grandchildren and two great grandchildren. Other than her parents, she was preceded in death by her husband of nearly 64 years, John M. Bentley, Jr.; sisters Vollie Clark and Allie Wise and brother Clarence Hawkins.

Jeanie grew up during the Great Depression and her family was not wealthy. They mainly received their food from the farm and hunting, while their father Jim provided money from working various jobs, like trapping and even hitchhiking as a stowaway on trains to harvest food and send money back home. Jeanie also helped her father who worked for the government in national forest watchtowers, which he did for 17 years.

She attended school in Perryville, where she was a basketball cheerleader and football queen. Because Jeanie knew what it was like not to have much and being "creative," she tells the story of starting a school fashion trend by wearing work boots to school and how the other girls started wearing them as

well. She enjoyed singing and sang on the radio station KVOM in Morrilton every Saturday and won many of their talent shows, enough to furnish her bedroom. Her favorite song was "Would You Ride In My Little Red Wagon." In 1952 at the age of 17, she met and married John Bentley, Jr. and tells of their first meeting, when he drove up to her home at "the old rock house" in his 1947 Roadmaster Buick with her "intended" date, they and her cousin went to the popular swimming hole in Little Italy. John and Jeanie only courted 6 weeks. Over the years together, they prospered. One thing she had fancied was a nice pair of shoes and now able, would gladly state to the shoe clerk that she wore a size 6 ½ AA. She loved bright sunny days, the smell of Gardenias and any food that included coconut. After living in Texas for so many years and dreaming of moving back home to be closer to her mom and family, she finally made it back to Arkansas in 1973.

Jeanie was a faithful and founding member of Maumelle Valley Christian Center for 46 years and during those years she taught Sunday school, was the church secretary, led worship and shared her gift by singing "specials." Those who knew her personally would remember her passionate prayers, much like that of her mother Bessie "B" before her. She loved what she called "visitation" ministry and would visit those who were home-bound or not attending church and invite them. She always had a cup of coffee for anyone who would come to visit her home and give good counsel when she could. She loved giving away her homemade food, but still thought it was never good enough.

Jeanie doesn't need her earthly shoes anymore, shoes that no one else could ever fill. We know she is in heaven basking in the sun, smelling Gardenias and walking with John in her stocking bare... 6 ½ AA's.

Private graveside services will be at Harmony Cemetery. Arrangements are by Harris Funeral Home of Morrilton.

# Tribute Wall



“ *Virginia Gail Bentley*

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January 30, 2023 at 02:08 AM



“ *I will miss her smile and our talks of Jesus and the Bible. I m sorry for your loss.*

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**Jacky gentiva aide** - June 29, 2018 at 06:39 PM



“ *This valley will never be the same. Now that she has gone over the mounitian.*

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**Judy Montgomery** - June 29, 2018 at 06:39 PM