



Norma Jean Bridges

April 18, 1926 - September 1, 2020

Norma Jean Bridges, of Stewardson, Illinois, passed away on Sept. 1, 2020 in Columbia. She lived a full 94 year life. Though she suffered from advanced Parkinson's disease, it was God who called her home.

Norma Jean was born to Leonard and Stella Phelps on April 18, 1926 in Mattoon, Illinois. During her senior year of high school she worked on the World War II rationing board. After high school graduation, she took a job at the First National Bank. She married Dwight Verl Bridges on June 21, 1947. They lived happily on their farm in rural Stewardson for many years. She loved being a farm wife. She gave birth to two daughters, Brenda and Sally. Together, she and Verl served faithfully at the Ash Grove Christian Church, where she taught Sunday School and Vacation Bible School.

Following Verl's passing in 2009, she enjoyed traveling with Sally and her husband Doug Phillips to Colorado, the Smoky Mountains, Branson, Mount Rushmore, and Niagara Falls. Without a doubt, the most memorable vacation for her was to North Carolina to the Billy Graham Conference Center. In celebration of Norma Jean's 90th birthday, Billy Graham's eldest daughter, Gigi, invited her to be the guest of honor at a banquet. And, to top it all off, she was given a front row seat at a live performance by Christian artist Fernando Ortega, who honored her by leading all 300 concert attendees in singing Happy Birthday. The last few years of her life she lived with Doug and Sally Phillips in Columbia. She loved her CenterPoint Church family and they loved her.

Norma Jean is survived by her daughter, Sally Phillips (Doug) of Columbia; grandsons: Jon Phillips (Redelle) of St. Louis, Andy Hickman (Annie) of Windsor, Illinois and Joe Hickman (Suzanne) of Sullivan, Illinois; four great-grandchildren: Emma Hickman, Nathan Hickman, Leo Hickman of Windsor and LiLi Phillips of St. Louis.

She was preceded in death by her husband of nearly 62 years, Verl Bridges; daughter, Brenda Hickman (survived by Dennis Hickman); and granddaughter, Charis Phillips Gohil.

What an amazing wife, mother, grandmother, and great grandmother! What an amazing heavenly reunion must be taking place! Her favorite scripture "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?" John 11:25-26.

Due to the current COVID-19 pandemic, Norma Jean will be buried privately at Lower Ash Grove Cemetery in rural Stewardson. The family encourages you to visit her gravesite shared with her beloved Verl Bridges, sometime this fall.

Any remembrances should be sent to Sally Phillips, 5350 N. Liddell Ln, Columbia, MO 65202. Any monetary gifts should be directed towards the Billy Graham Foundation (billygraham.org).

Arrangements are under the direction of Nilson Funeral Home, 5611 E. St. Charles Rd.; Columbia, MO 65202. (573) 474-8443. Online condolences may be left for the family at www.nilsonfuneralhome.com

Cemetery

Lower Ash Grove Cemetery

Stewardson, IL,