



Mrs. Shirley Phelps Jones

August 6, 1941 - January 9, 2025

Then I heard a voice from heaven say, "Write this: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on." "Yes," says the Spirit, "they will rest from their labor, for their deeds will follow them." (Revelation 14:13)

SHIRLEY PHELPS JONES

Shirley Phelps Jones was a woman whose influence extends far beyond the words of this obituary. She will forever remain in the hearts of those she touched -- whether as a wife, mother, grandmother, sister, aunt, friend, teacher, neighbor, co-worker, or in the many other roles she so gracefully assumed. Indeed, her works and deeds follow her.

Shirley's life was filled with challenges, joys, hospitality, hard work, dedication, loyalty, and love. She exemplified integrity, fairness, and honesty at the highest level. With a smart and witty sense of humor, she could see the beauty in all things. Though some may have described her as "brutally honest," she had a heart of gold and an uncanny ability to temper her candor with gentleness. She was dependable and trustworthy, patient and kind, generous and caring. Shirley's sweet spirit will continue to encourage, inspire, and challenge us far beyond what we can imagine, intend, or desire.

A SWEET DAUGHTER

Shirley Ludean Phelps was born on August 6, 1941, in Henderson County,

TN, to Floyd Phelps and Isabella Edwards Phelps. As the fourth of six children, she had the good fortune to be raised in a loving home alongside her older siblings Dorothy, James, and Mattie Bell. She would later become a big sister to Vann and Dennis. From a young age, Shirley worked in the fields with her siblings and cousins, learning the value of hard work and determination – principles that would guide her throughout her life.

Shirley was cherished by her doting grandparents, Mattie Bessie Cawthon Edwards Stewart and William Neal Edwards. She was the great-granddaughter of Amanda Rice Cawthon and Peter Cawthon.

A CARING SISTER

“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another.” (John 13:34)

The depth of love shown among the Phelps/Caldwell children was a testament to the love that Jesus commands us to show toward all people. There was no limit to how far Shirley would go to support her brothers and sisters in their endeavors. Whether they needed encouragement, assistance, or simply a place to stay, she cheerfully provided it. Her home was open, and her heart was willing.

A LOYAL AND DEVOTED WIFE

“The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil. She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life.” (Proverbs 31:11-12)

Shirley Phelps and Larry Jones were united in holy matrimony in Jackson, Tennessee on June 25, 1977. They were introduced by a mutual friend, after Larry expressed interest in meeting a nice young woman, someone who would “make a good wife.”

It is often said that “opposites attract,” and their friend believed that no two people were more different than Shirley and Larry. Initially expecting their first date would be their last, the friend was proven wrong. God – and Larry – had other plans.

Shirley and Larry were partners in life, supporting each other personally and professionally. They built a home together and raised their children with dedication and love.

A LOVING MOTHER

“Her children arise up and call her blessed.” (Proverbs 31:28)

One of Shirley’s greatest joys was being a mother to Querida and Quincy. She provided for them wholeheartedly, sparing no effort to make their lives full and happy. Through both word and deed, she taught them the values of love, charity, wholesome living, and the principles of Christian faith.

She took immense pride in watching their careers blossom, celebrating Querida’s success as an on-air media talent. She was equally proud of Quincy’s accomplishments in computers, electronics, software development, and other projects that both amused and amazed her. She often joked, “I don’t know where he got those brains!”

Shirley’s role as mother extended beyond her own children, as she warmly embraced her son-in-law, Raoul, and her daughter-in-law, Sarah, spouses of Querida and Quincy.

A DOTING GRANDMOTHER

“Grandchildren are the crown of the aged, and the glory of children is their

fathers.” (Proverbs 17:6); “Only take care, and keep your soul diligently, lest you forget the things that your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life. Make them known to your children and your children’s children.” (Deuteronomy 4:9)

Shirley was a loving, doting, and endlessly excited grandmother. She delighted in sharing updates about her only grandchild, Cameron, often talking about the latest toy she had bought for him. At the same time, she would laugh and say, “I know I don’t have any business getting all of this stuff for him, but I just can’t help it.”

Cameron was a great joy in Shirley’s life, and she cherished her role as grandmother, treasuring every moment spent with him. She sometimes admitted that she was “too old to be chasing around behind him,” but insisted she would keep up with him the best she could. His birth brought her a sense of renewal – indeed, he was the apple of her eye.

A COMMITTED STUDENT

“If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him.” (James 1:5)

Shirley attended elementary school in Luray, TN and later graduated as Salutatorian from Montgomery High in Lexington (Henderson County), TN, in 1959. She then enrolled at Tennessee A&I State University (now Tennessee State University) in Nashville, where she earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration in 1963. She also pursued post-graduate studies at the University of Tennessee at Martin.

When Shirley moved into her freshman residence hall at A&I, she was paired with Querida McClendon as her roommate. Their bond grew into a lifelong friendship so dear that Shirley later named her only daughter “Querida” in her

honor.

THE CONSUMMATE EDUCATOR AND SOCIAL WORKER

“Show yourself in all respects to be a model of good works, and in your teaching show integrity, dignity, and sound speech that cannot be condemned, so that an opponent may be put to shame, having nothing evil to say about us.” (Titus 2:7-8)

Inspiring Teacher

As a proud and well-prepared alumna of Tennessee A&I State University, Shirley entered the field of education as a schoolteacher, joining Montgomery High in Lexington, TN in 1963-64 as the Business Teacher and Secretary to the Principal, Professor A.L. Robinson. She taught shorthand and typing, modeling excellence for her students during a time when schools remained completely segregated. Many of her former students later reflected on how her diligent instruction in typing helped them become more proficient with modern computers and electronic devices.

Shirley taught at Montgomery until the school closed in 1967, following the integration of Henderson County schools. She was a dedicated and compassionate teacher, always encouraging her students to pursue higher education and believe in their potential. She led not just through words but through the example of her own life. She saw her students not merely as who they were but as who they could become.

Beyond the classroom, Shirley played an integral role in school activities. She served as both the cafeteria cashier and the athletics games cashier -- no one got into a basketball game without going through Shirley! Once admissions were handled, she took her place as the scorekeeper for the school's digital scoreboard, one of the first of its kind at the time. Montgomery High was known for its modern and well-equipped facilities, including state-of-the-art

gymnasium and bleachers, and Shirley contributed significantly to its thriving school spirit.

Legacy in Social Work

After transitioning from teaching, Shirley joined the Tennessee Department of Welfare (later renamed the Tennessee Department of Human Services) in Jackson, TN, in 1968. She dedicated the remainder of her career to serving others, beginning as an Eligibility Worker where she changed and redirected lives.

Shirley advanced quickly due to her exceptional skills and commitment. She was promoted to Administrative Review Officer and later rose through increasingly senior positions as Program Supervisor I, II, and III.

She eventually led the public assistance program for Region VIII, overseeing operations across eleven west Tennessee counties: Madison, Haywood, Fayette, Hardeman, Lauderdale, Tipton, Hardin, McNairy, Decatur, Henderson, and Hardin. The program provided essential services, including Aid to Families with Dependent Children and Medically Assistance for the Needy. At that time, it was the only TN state agency with an office in every county.

She was among the first group of trainees invited to Nashville for training, a milestone recognized by the state's first African American Assistant Commissioner under then Tennessee Commissioner of Welfare Horace Bass. Shirley's tenure coincided with the agency's transformation into the Tennessee Department of Human Services, a name that better reflected its mission to serve and uplift those in need.

As the first African American to hold a supervisory role in the department, Shirley's leadership was a testament to her work ethic, integrity, and

competence. She was known for her fairness, sound judgment, and deep commitment to helping families in need. She ensured that benefits were assigned appropriately, always maintaining the highest standards of professionalism and compassion. Her role extended beyond administration—she was a mentor, a motivator, and a source of inspiration to both her colleagues and those she served.

Shirley was a role model for many young black women who were employed with the agency and throughout Region VIII. She carried herself with dignity and poise, always dressed professionally, and spoke articulately and with distinction. She had no tolerance for half-hearted efforts or carelessness in any aspect of her work. Those who worked with her and those who depended on her assessments knew that her evaluations would always be thorough, honest, and conducted with both compassion and consideration of the whole person.

She gave generously of her time, talent, and treasures, serving with an open heart and a deep sense of purpose.

A VIRTUOUS WOMAN

“She selects wool and flax and works with eager hands. She is like the merchant ships, bringing her food from afar. She gets up while it is still night; she provides food for her family and portions for her female servants. She considers a field and buys it; out of her earnings she plants a vineyard. She sets about her work vigorously; her arms are strong for her tasks. She sees that her trading is profitable, and her lamp does not go out at night.” (Proverbs 31:13-18)

Shirley had a radiant countenance. She laughed heartily and often. Even during her illness, she could find humor, offer critiques, and ask “why in the world would...?” (fill in the blank) when discussing politicians, movie stars, and

others. She could make no sense of foolishness and would give no rationale for stupidity. Though kind and accepting, she firmly believed that everyone should think for themselves, exercise wise judgment, give sound counsel, and live truly. Shirley worked hard, and she found it despicable that others found time to be persistently idle.

Shirley was a devoted sports fan, cheering for the Tennessee Titans and the Memphis Grizzlies, but her greatest loyalty was to the Golden State Warriors, particularly Steph Curry. After games, she and her son Quincy would call each other to celebrate Warriors' victories – especially when it meant a defeat for his team, and even more so for LeBron James. Their playful banter was a reflection of the Steph Curry-LeBron James rivalry itself.

Beyond sports, Shirley loved attending church at East Jackson Church of Christ, where she found joy in worship and cherished the fellowship of family and friends.

A TRUSTING SERVANT

I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. (Philippians 4:13)

As a young child, Shirley accepted Christ as her Savior. She became a member of Oak Grove Church of Christ in Henderson, Tennessee, where she maintained her membership until she relocated to Jackson. As a college student, she attended Jefferson Street Church of Christ (later named Schrader Lane Church of Christ) in Nashville.

Upon moving to Jackson, Shirley became a devoted and faithful member of East Jackson Church of Christ. She worshiped each Sunday until her health no longer allowed her to attend in person, at which point she watched services via livestream. She served willingly, gave generously, and actively participated in various church activities and programs.

Throughout her life, Shirley served God faithfully, always believing that His promises were true, no matter life's circumstances and challenges.

WE REMEMBER SHIRLEY

“Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.”

(Colossians 3:12, 14)

On the afternoon of Thursday, January 9, 2025, at Jackson General Hospital in Jackson, TN, in the presence of her daughter and pastor, Shirley – fully confident of God's promise – quietly and gently returned to the God she loved and served. On her own terms, when no one was looking, she peacefully passed, knowing in her heart that “It is well with my soul.”

Her light in this world will never dim so long as those who love her continue to be inspired by her life. Whenever her name is called, her memory will be honored. Though her voice and laughter may be stilled on this side of heaven, they will continue to resonate in the lives of those who cherished her – through her teachings, her guidance, her friendship, and her love.

We mourn deeply, but not as those without hope. Our hope is in God.

Shirley was predeceased by her precious and beloved son, Quincy Jones, in February 2024; her parents, Floyd Phelps and Isabella Edwards Phelps; her sisters, Mattie Bell Brasher and Dorothy Caldwell, and her brother, James Phelps.

She leaves behind a legacy of love and cherished memories with her husband

of forty-seven years, Larry Jones; their daughter, Querida Jones Maso de Moya and son-in-law Raoul Maso de Moya, of Charlotte, North Carolina; her daughter-in-law, Sarah Filus Jones, of Nashville, TN; and her grandson, Cameron Blaise Jones, also of Nashville; brothers Van David Caldwell (Audry), of Maryland, and Dennis Earl Caldwell, of California; stepson Larry Ed, and stepdaughters Shelia and Sandra; as well as a host of nieces, nephews, cousins too numerous to name, and a vast community of friends, neighbors, colleagues, and former students.

With deep gratitude for her life and love, we hold fast to the abiding hope that we shall see her again.

Previous Events

Family Hour

FEB 7. 4:00 PM - 6:00 PM (CT)

Stephenson-Shaw Funeral Home, Inc.
807 N. Hays Avenue
Jackson, TN 38301
(731) 427-7411
info@stephenson-shaw.com
<https://www.stephenson-shaw.com>

Celebration of Life

FEB 8. 1:00 PM (CT)

East Jackson Church of Christ
1461 East Chester Street
Jackson, TN 38301

Tribute Wall

SY

“ Sylvia lit a candle in memory of Shirley Jones



Sylvia - March 29 at 11:53 AM

GM

“ Gayle Morgan lit a candle in memory of Shirley Jones



Gayle Morgan - February 22, 2025 at 01:26 AM

DM

“ To the family of Shirley Phelps Jones, Shirley and I were friends for 14 years, it was full of love, laughter, caring for each other and a spiritual bond we attended the same church she been there for years I was gently added these 14 years, we cried together we both loss our sons about a year apart,I did see the pictures of his Beautiful wedding ❤️ !!! 🙏🙏🙏🙏🙏🙏 I love you all and will miss her, to Larry, Rita,Michele Larry's niece Sarah the daughter in law and the precious little child,Shirley adored Love Ms.Jean Morris,hugs and kisses to all the family and friends God bless you all, and in my thoughts and prayers ❤️ !!! 🙏🙏🙏🙏🙏🙏

Delois J Morris - February 18, 2025 at 08:04 PM

JP

“ Mrs. Shirley was a beautiful person and sister in Christ. We worked together but for different agencies to serve individuals and assist with getting jobs. She tried to convince me to work for the State. I declined. I respected her and would make sure to speak to her at Church when I was in town. She will definitely be missed. She made a great impact in the lives of many. Sleep peacefully with God. Well done.



Janice Pearson

Janice Pearson - February 13, 2025 at 01:01 AM

DT

“ Don and Kay Thomson purchased the Divine Peace Bouquet for the family of Mrs. Shirley Phelps Jones.



Don and Kay Thomson - February 07, 2025 at 10:09 AM

DT

“ Don and Kay Thomson planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Mrs. Shirley Phelps Jones.

Don and Kay Thomson - February 07, 2025 at 10:09 AM

LB

“ *Linda McCullough Bowers lit a candle in memory of Shirley Jones*



Linda McCullough Bowers - February 03, 2025 at 10:27 PM

SC

“ *Shirley Grimes Carter lit a candle in memory of Shirley Jones*



Shirley Grimes Carter - January 21, 2025 at 05:44 PM

VJ

“ *Velma Johnson lit a candle in memory of Shirley Jones*



Velma Johnson - January 21, 2025 at 03:24 PM

EG

“ *Elnor Gray lit a candle in memory of Shirley Jones*



Elnor Gray - January 20, 2025 at 06:38 AM

JM

“ Shirley was one of my best friends. We shared good memories and bad memories together.

One of my fondest memories was when she met Larry and we planned the wedding. As her maid of honor, we had so much fun decorating the wide brimmed straw hats for the wedding party. It was quite the task.

Over the years, we talked often and I listened to how much she loved and cherished her family. May the Lord wrap his comforting arms around them during this difficult time.

Shirley, may you rest in God's eternal peace and joy. I will miss you and I will always remember you as the kind and gentle person that you were.

Love Janice McCullough

Janice McCullough - January 18, 2025 at 09:54 PM



JC

Our sincere condolences to Larry and family.
Evans & Jessie Chatman & family

Jessie Chatman - January 24, 2025 at 08:09 PM

JN

“ Johnetta Newson lit a candle in memory of Shirley Jones



Johnetta Newson - January 17, 2025 at 01:26 PM

VB

“ Virginia Bonds lit a candle in memory of Shirley Jones



Virginia Bonds - January 17, 2025 at 01:22 PM

RN

“ Rosco Newsom lit a candle in memory of Shirley Jones



Rosco Newsom - January 17, 2025 at 12:20 AM

LG

“ Leana Johnson Gordon lit a candle in memory of Shirley Jones



Leana Johnson Gordon - January 16, 2025 at 06:52 PM

SG

“ Miss Shirley, as I've called her since I was a little girl, was always one of my mom's (Francine) best friends.

I remember when I used to spend the night at her house, when she and Mr. Larry started dating, then got married and when she gave birth to both Querida and Quincy and beyond. So as you can see, she's been just like family my entire life.

She's played a huge role in our lives and she will certainly and sorely be missed. She was beautiful inside and out and I loved her dearly.

I know you're resting well with our Heavenly Father, Miss Shirley, and you're no longer in pain.

May God bless and comfort Mr. Larry, Querida, other family members, loved ones, and friends. Your memory will live on. 💜

Sheila Giles,
Daughter of Dr. Francine Madrey



Sheila Giles - January 16, 2025 at 05:04 PM

SC

“ Shirley Grimes Carter lit a candle in memory of Shirley Jones



Shirley Grimes Carter - January 15, 2025 at 03:21 PM

BC

“ *Barbara Cockrell lit a candle in memory of Shirley Jones*



Barbara Cockrell - January 14, 2025 at 04:08 PM

GM

“ *Gladys McKinney lit a candle in memory of Shirley Jones*



Gladys McKinney - January 14, 2025 at 09:02 AM

FS

“ *Francine Snowden lit a candle in memory of Shirley Jones*



Francine Snowden - January 13, 2025 at 07:52 PM

CE

“ *Sis. Jones was a very friendly person. She was a friend to my mother. I remember when she lost her sister in Gary. When she arrived in Gary, she called me. Thanks to my mom Sis. Mamie Barksdale. We had a good conversation. I missed seeing her at church. RIP.*



Carolyn Ewing - January 13, 2025 at 06:28 PM

BE

Shirley was a dear cousin we talked and prayed together May god bless and comfort her family

Bettie - February 07, 2025 at 09:33 AM