



Vallie Jo Witmer Bell

JUL 16, 1933 - MAR 10, 2022



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MEMORIAL PARK
Funeral Home & Cemetery

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Vallie Jo Witmer Bell

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Vallie Jo Witmer Bell, 88, passed away peacefully at home on March 10, 2022 after a long and full life.

Vallie Jo was born on July 16, 1933 in Memphis, Tennessee to the late Vallie Jo Jackson and Wallace Van Metre Witmer.

She graduated from The Hutchison School and then attended Randolph Macon and Southwestern, now Rhodes College before marrying William Milton Bell (Bill) in 1959. Vallie Jo had an incomparable joie de vivre, possessing a magnetic personality drawing people to her, and she to them. She loved the joyful gatherings with her “Lunch Bunch” and laughed uproariously with her bridge group. Beyond this, she was blessed with many social graces and was the quintessential hostess. Vallie Jo and Bill served as Co-Chairman, along with John and Blanche Millard, of the Memphis Symphony League Ball. They hosted the enormous fundraising ball at the Bell family home, complete with a band and large dance floor.

Vallie Jo was a lifelong member of Idlewild Presbyterian Church, The Memphis Country Club and a former member of the Memphis Ikebana International, Heart Association, and Junior League organizations. When Vallie Jo lost her beloved husband in 1978, she took up the helm of his commercial real estate and development business, a bold move in an industry with very few women. She took night classes in real estate and leaned closely on trusted family attorney John Dunlap to learn the ropes. With no professional work experience, and in an industry dominated by men, she single handedly began managing a portfolio of properties all while raising five young children. Thanks to her, the business continues to flourish today under the leadership of her sons. Vallie Jo unabashedly lived life on her own terms. She was a great adventurer and instilled that in her family, whether it was taking her children to ride mules up the cliffs of Mykonos in Greece, ride camels in front of the great pyramids of Egypt, ride elephants in the jungles of Chiang Mai in Thailand, or parasail over the beaches in Acapulco, Mexico—she was not afraid to live life on the edge. In the last forty years of her life she cherished the beloved companionship of her partner,



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Burke Cranford. Together they shared further explorations, including exotic cruises, but spent much of their quieter time together in Hillsboro, Florida.

Vallie Jo Witmer Bell was predeceased by her husband, William Milton Bell, and is survived by her brother and sister-in-law, Wallace and Nora Witmer, and her five doting children, Bill Bell (Betsy), Vallie Jo Bell, Lelia Bell Green (Albert), Courtney Bell and Wallace Bell (Jennifer); eight grandchildren, Bill Bell (Virginia), Carter Bell and Katherine Bell, Michael, Sophie and GiGi Frankowski, Wallace Bell and Caroline Bell; and great grandson Wiley.

She will be remembered for living her life voraciously, with a deep passion for life, and a great love of people—particularly her loving children, grandchildren, and beloved friends. The family would especially like to thank Cheryl Williams who shared a kindred spirit, and for her devoted and loving care that she provided during the past thirteen years.

The visitation is Tuesday, March 22nd from 5:00 p.m. until 7:00 p.m. and the funeral service will be held on Wednesday, March 23rd at 11:30 am all in the Fireside Chapel at Memorial Park Funeral Home.

Memorials may be sent to: JDRE, Juvenile Diabetes Foundation, www.JDRF.org Franklin Graham's Samaritan's Purse, P.O. Box 3000, Boone, NC 28607



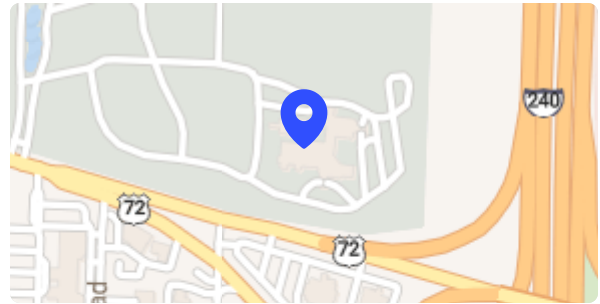
Events

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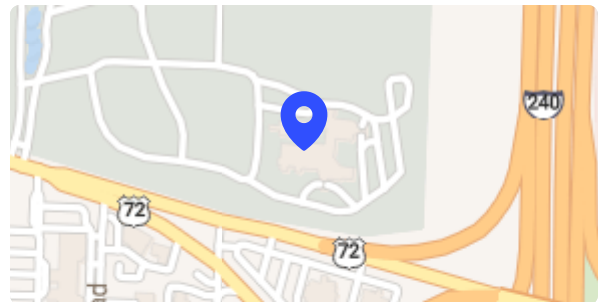
Visitation

- Tuesday**, March 22, 2022
- 5:00 PM - 7:00 PM CT
- Memorial Park Fireside Chapel**
5668 Poplar Avenue, Memphis TN 38119



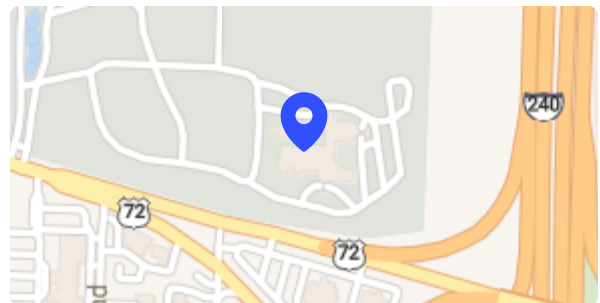
Funeral

- Wednesday**, March 23, 2022
- 11:30 AM CT
- Memorial Park Fireside Chapel**
5668 Poplar Avenue, Memphis TN 38119



Cemetery Details

- Memorial Park Funeral Home and Cemetery**
5668 Poplar Avenue, Memphis TN 38119





Tribute Wall

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Anonymous sent a Fairest of All to the Bell family.

March 20 at 5:14 AM



Anonymous sent an A New Sunrise Spray to the Bell family.

March 16 at 7:18 PM





Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Vallie by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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