

Memorial Book



In Loving Memory of

BILLIE CURL ABERNATHY

(May 6, 1927 - August 27, 2010)



This website is dedicated to the memory of my sweet mother, Billie Jo Abernathy who lived her life as a testament to her Christian faith. I have never doubted God's love for me because He gave me the Honor of being her daughter. My mother had a spiritual strength and wisdom that cannot be put into words. She had a peaceful, loving nature, very few times did I ever see her angry. She was a comfort and a joy to everyone who knew her. Her memory will be cherished forever.

My mother and father would have celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary in February of this year (2011). My mother was a little girl during the depression and as the youngest of six children she knew what it was like to do without. During my childhood, my mother worked full time at Pizitz Department Store in downtown Birmingham because she wanted her children to have a better life. Still, she managed to be a full time mother to her two girls. I know her work was hard and she was tired but she always had time to read and play with us. One of her few indulgencies in life was spoiling her children and grandchildren and in that she knew no limits. It was important to her just to enjoy us and she did. So much.

People were naturally drawn to my mother because of her kind and compassionate nature. When my son was little he said that his Nanny was as popular as a movie star. It was true that everywhere she went she would

"Living is death; dying is life. On this side of the grave we are exiles, on that, citizens; on this side, orphans, on that, children; on this side, captives; on that, freemen; on this side, disguised, unknown; on that, disclosed and proclaimed as the sons of God."

--Henry Ward Beecher

see many friends who would stop and talk to her. Every year on her birthday, she would get a huge stack of cards from her many friends. She was a very energetic and active person in our community, always doing for others. She loved people and always had time for them.

When I became an adult my mother would worry about me, if the weather was bad she would not rest until she had spoken to me on the phone and made sure that I was safe at home. She was the one person who I trusted for advice in any situation. Her advice and approval was very important to me. If mama said it was okay, then it was. She was my anchor in stormy weather and when there was good news, my joy wasn't complete until I had shared it with her.

My mother hated arguments and she loved to laugh. She could light up the darkest corner on earth with her kind heart and sweet smile. She blessed our family and filled our lives with laughter and joy and continued to do so until her last day on earth. Every time I saw her, her face lit up with her beautiful smile. She aged with grace and dignity. She was such a caregiver and never wanted to impose on anyone.

My mother lived a beautiful life and sadly it ended in an avoidable tragedy. It is my hope to bring awareness to others of the dangers and warning signs that I missed

In October of 2009, my mother's health began to fail and she was hospitalized and diagnosed with diabetes. We wanted her to get the best care and my sister began taking her to a geriatric specialist. This doctor was very resourceful but my mother went along with her medical recommendation only to an extent just to please us. Looking back I can see that her indifference may have been associated with the cognitive aspects of her illness, there were other signs, difficulty concentrating, unexplained mobility problems and apathy. These concerns were attributed to the diabetes and I held on to the hope that her medication would make her feel better. She had bad days and better days, but in my heart I knew that my mother was slipping away from me and that every moment with her was a treasure. I spent as much time as I could with her and made sure that she knew how much I loved her and how special she was. This precious time was much too short but I am so glad that I had it.

On August 26, 2010 she drove my dad to the VA hospital for a doctor's appointment. I had offered to take him myself but it kept getting put off and then I had to go back to my teaching job. I should have been more insistent. But my mother was an excellent driver and she had her cell phone with her.

It was about a 20 minute drive to the downtown area, mother had lived in the area all her life and driven the same route hundreds of times. I picked my dad up on the way home from work as planned. I was anxious driving dad home because mother wasn't answering her phone . I will never forget pulling in the driveway and her car not being there. She had not made it home.

It was one of those moments suspended in time when you know your life will never be the same again. Nothing seemed real after that, not at the time and not thinking back on it now. I called my sister and the police and then began calling all the hospitals. It was getting dark and we couldn't find her. We endured an unspeakable nightmare of not knowing where she was for the entire night and most of the next day. We were in denial and I think that prevented us from being as proactive as we should have been. If a public announcement had been issued immediately things may have turned out differently.

A public announcement was not made until the next afternoon. Within 30 minutes of this TV news report mother's car was located on the other side of Birmingham in an area of town where she would never intentionally go. She had driven down a dead end road in a wooded area and gotten her car stuck in a ditch. The car was at such an angle that it wasn't possible for her to exit through the driver's door. She had almost made it out of the passenger's side and was laying on the ground next to her car. Her money and her fully charged cell phone were there in her purse. The cause of death is listed as complications of hypertensive cardiovascular disease, and the manner of death as natural, but that is not true. She died because she got disoriented and confused and help didn't get to her in time. My mother was very careful not to get lost. In fact she always had a fear of getting lost and a reluctance to drive an unfamiliar route.

I have a vivid memory from my childhood, mother was driving home from my grandmother's when a terrible thunderstorm came up and my mother pulled off the road and into a ditch. I remember this because my mother was afraid and she cried and then she prayed, we prayed together. Of course the storm passed and we made it safely home.

My mother believed in prayer. If I had a problem, she would always say just pray about it, just turn it over to the Lord. She had absolute faith in God. Even in the pit of despair, during that awful night, our family found comfort in the assurance that wherever mother was, her Lord was with her and this time, He took her safely home. I will see her sweet smile again some day. I miss her so much.

Along with my grief in losing her is the sorrow in knowing that I was not there for her as she always was for me. It is such an empty sadness, like the last chapter in mother's life has been torn away and can never be made right. We feel guilty because she was driving, we should have taken better care of her, how long did she suffer ? What happened to her and how and why? We loved her so and wanted to be with her, wanted our love to surround her, wanted to say good bye.

My mother was never diagnosed with dementia nor did she have a history of heart disease. We had no idea she was having such difficulty.

Please be aware of subtle changes in elderly people, guard them and keep them safe. They are more vulnerable than you could ever imagine. Advocate for them by making sure that your state has a Silver Alert. A lost elderly person is in eminent danger. If not found within 24 hours, more than a half of them will not be found alive. This problem is increasing in our society, please be mindful of your elderly loved ones.

The background is a textured, light brown or beige color. In the upper right quadrant, there are two roses. The one on the right is larger and more open, while the one on the left is smaller and more tightly closed. The roses are rendered in a soft, painterly style, blending into the background.

Gallery Gallery

so sweet, so unforgettable...



10-11-2010 08X13X37PM



11-17-2010 09X14X33PM



01-01-2011 05X20X05PM



09-15-2010 12X09X00AM



09-05-2010 10X14X38PM



09-20-2010 11X28X06PM



09-20-2010 11X08X35PM



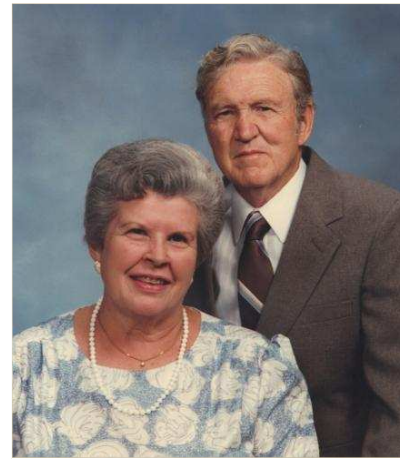
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01-02-2011 01X32X03PM



10-11-2010 08X09X28PM



10-10-2010 11X25X02AM



01-01-2011 05X49X02PM



09-18-2010 08X45X41PM



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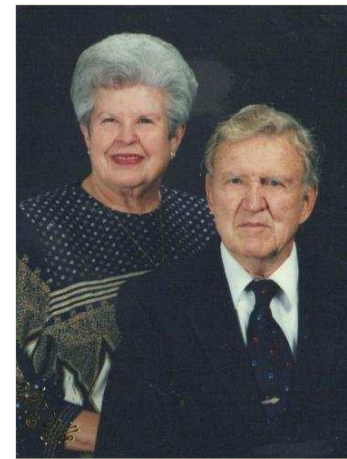
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09-20-2010 11X08X35PM



mother and Larry



09-17-2010 09X50X32AM



12-01-2010 10X27X58PM



09-15-2010 12X05X49AM



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12-09-2010 05X11X15PM



01-02-2011 01X43X08PM



Mama and Paul 1993



01-02-2011 02X05X10PM



01-02-2011 01X41X35PM



01-02-2011 02X04X24PM



mama 2



Mom, Dad, Marcia and me in 1975



Dad, Mama, Marcia 7 weeks old



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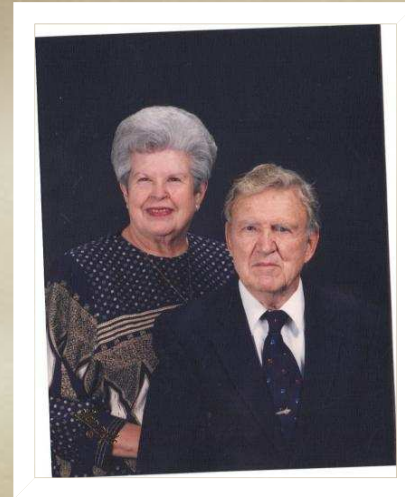
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11-17-2010 09X11X08PM



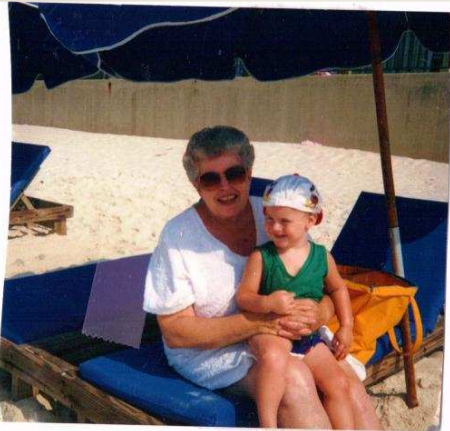
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09-18-2010 03X03X04AM



Mama and Miranda 1986



Mama and Paul Gulf Shores 1996_1





The background of the entire image is a textured, mottled olive-green color. In the upper right quadrant, there are two roses. The one on the left is smaller and more tightly curled, while the one on the right is larger and more fully bloomed. Both roses are rendered in a light, almost white color, making them stand out against the darker background.

Memorial Candles

our words, your light...

05/06/2011

Janiece

Happy Birthday Mama. I wish you were here. I love you.

04/23/2011

Janiece

Thank you for all the beautiful memories that I will treasure forever. You were a perfect mother. Thank you.

03/17/2011

Paul

Nanny, your smile, unending kindness and total understanding will live in my heart forever. I miss you and I love you.

03/17/2011

Janiece

I miss you so much but I know you are happy in Heaven and that I will see you again.

03/16/2011

Miranda

Spring coming will always and forever remind me of you :) I love you...

01/23/2011

Janiece

Mama, I miss you so much. I miss talking to you on the phone. I miss your voice. I miss your smile. I love you.

01/17/2011

Miranda

Just thinking about you :) I love you!

12/25/2010

Kyah

I hope you have a good time in heaven this Christmas, and you are real happy

12/25/2010

Janiece

Missing you so much this Christmas, I love you, Janiece

12/25/2010

Paul

Well Nanny I bet Christmas is way merrier up there in Heaven than it is down here on earth. Love you.

12/24/2010

Miranda

Missing you this Christmas. Love you Nanny.

12/13/2010

Miranda

I'll always love you so, so very much, Nanny. I miss your laugh and your sweet smile.

12/11/2010

Janiece

*Missing you on my birthday.
I love you, mama. Janiece*

11/20/2010

Janiece Peeples

*Mother, I miss you so much.
I love you, Janiece*

11/09/2010

Paul Peeples

*The kindest lady on earth. I
love you, Paul*

The background is a textured, mottled brownish-gold color. In the upper right quadrant, there are two roses. One is smaller and more tightly curled, while the other is larger and more open, showing its petals. The roses are rendered in a soft, painterly style, blending into the background.

Condolences

from the deepest of our hearts...

Thank you, Janiece, for creating the lovely memorial to our sweet Mother. The love you felt for her is evident in every word and every photograph. I love the pictures of Mother as a young woman. She was so beautiful. And thank you, Miranda, for the moving poem you wrote in memory of your Nanny. It is wonderful, and she would be so proud of it. This is a loving tribute to a loving mother and grandmother, and I appreciate the love and effort you put into it.

The background is a textured, mottled brownish-gold color. In the upper right quadrant, there are two roses. One is smaller and more tightly closed, while the other is larger and more open, showing its petals. The roses are rendered in a slightly darker shade than the background, giving them a subtle, embossed appearance.

Memories

all the gray you turned into colors...

Janiece Peeples



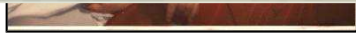
Mama's Girls, in 1958.

Janiece Peeples



My mother and my sister, Marcia in 1952

Janiece Peeples



Billie Jo Curl, what a beauty !

Janiece Peeples



Mother and Miranda on Easter, 1986

Janiece Peeples



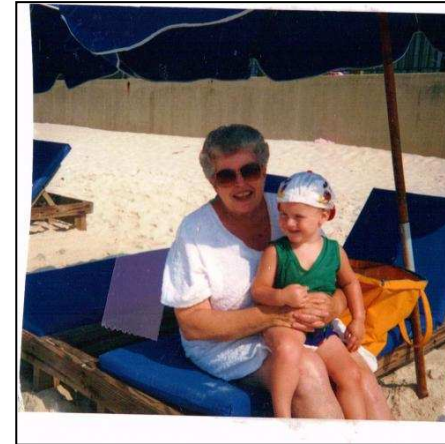
Mom and dad, back in the day.

Mom, Dad, Jimmy and me



My Wedding March 11, 1977

Janiece Peeples



My mother and dad went on a summer trip to Gulf Shores with my family every year. We decided

not to go this year because of the oil spill. Mother wanted to go even though she was so sick and I would have taken her but beaches were so nasty and that was a health concern as well. Still we have some wonderful memories of our trips together. I am so glad we had this special time.

The background is a textured, light brown or beige surface. In the upper right quadrant, there are two roses. One is a smaller, tighter bud, and the other is a larger, more open rose with many layers of petals. The roses are rendered in a slightly darker shade than the background, giving them a subtle, embossed appearance.

Life Story

every hour, every thought, every smile...

May 6, 1927



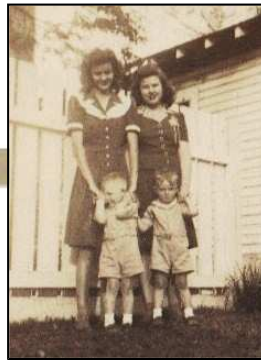
Billie was the youngest of Alonzo and Stella Curl's six children.

May 21, 1937



Billie and her sister and best friend, Ruth

July 14, 1939



Ruth, Billie, Bob and Joe (nephews)

August 5, 1941



Billie Jo Curl

March 1, 1942



Bille, Ruth
and a pal.

October 23, 1942

Billie before

she got married.



March 1, 1943



Billie Jo Curl, what a beauty !!! She graduated from Tarrent High School.

March 28, 1946



Billie at work at Watkins Dry Cleaning Business.

February 16, 1949



Billie married
Gilbert
Fulton
Abernathy

April 21, 1951



First child, daughter Marcia Lynn was born on April 21, 1951

May 21, 1951

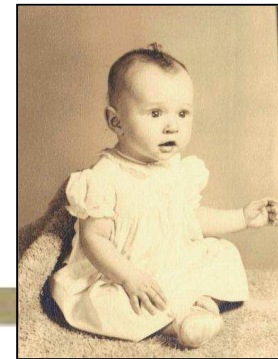
Billie, Gilbert and oldest daughter Marcia.

June 22, 1951



Mother's brother, sister's, neices, nephews and parents,

December 11, 1957



Second child, daughter Janiece Kay was born on December 11, 1957

January 1, 1962

Billie's dad died of

leukemia

June 5, 1968



Marcia and Frank got married.

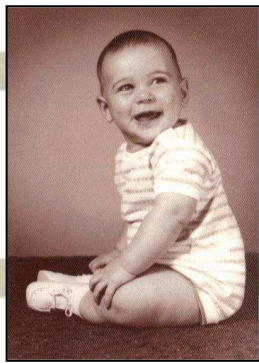
April 7, 1969



Frank was killed in Vietnam

December 15, 1970

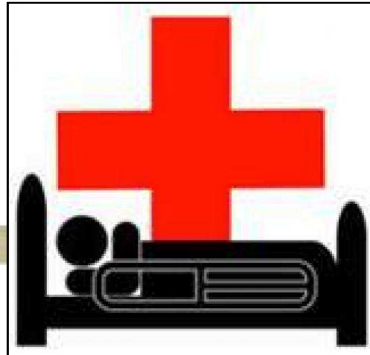
First grandchild , a boy, Jason Frank Kitchens.



November 10, 1971

Marcia and Steve were married

January 1, 1972



Gilbert was seriously injured when the car he was driving was hit head on by an 18 wheeler.

December 6, 1973

Our family moved to Gardendale.

March 1, 1975



Billie, Gilbert, Marcia and Janiece

March 11, 1977



Janiece and Jimmy
wedding picture

September 2, 1977

Second grandchild, Stephanie
Jo Adkins was born.

October 5, 1977



Gilbert and Billie, back in the day.

January 1, 1979

Big Mama passed away

December 17, 1979



Billie with three of her sisters and one sister-in-law; Nettie, Betty, Margaret, Ruth and Billie.

June 15, 1983



Third grandchild, Miranda Janiece Oldham was born.

March 20, 1986



Billie and her granddaughter Miranda on Easter.

June 27, 1993

Miranda, Janiece and Billi at

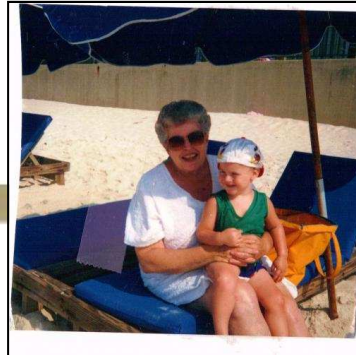
Janiece's Baby Shower. Paul was born the next morning.

June 28, 1993



Fourth grandchild, Paul Lindsey Peeples was born.

August 7, 1995



Billie and her grandson Paul at the beach on our annual summer vacation.

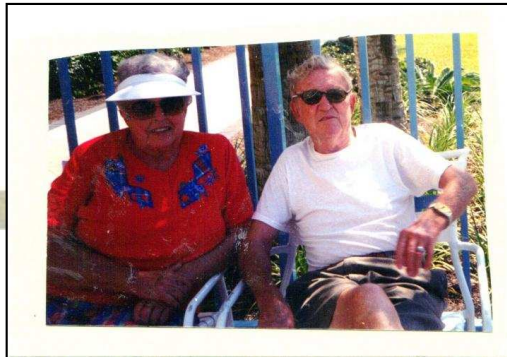
September 10, 1996



Church picture of mom and dad.

June 17, 1997

Billie and Gilbert soaking up the sun in Gulf



Shores

February 16, 1999



Billie and Gilbert celebrated 50 years of wedded bliss!!!

October 16, 2009

Taken to the hospital and diagnosed with diabetes.

August 27, 2010



Passed away on **August 27, 2010.**

Our Deepest Sympathy

www.last-memories.com