



## Jeanette Newbern Coody

September 19, 1922 - March 18, 2026

On March 18, 2026 an Angel got her wings in Valdosta, Georgia. After an amazing life of 103 years, Jeanette Newbern Coody died and went to her Heavenly reward.

Jeanette was born on September 19, 1922 in Madison County, Florida, near Pinetta in the Hickory Grove Community, to parents Irvin and Annie Young Newbern. She had 7 brothers and sisters: Sheldon, Essie Newbern Foil, Johnny, Colon, Reba Newbern Williams, Jacob (Dink), and Virginia Newbern Martin, all deceased.

Jeanette lost her mother when she was 18 months old and she went to live with her brother Sheldon and his wife Gussie until she was age 5. She moved back to Madison County and attended school at a one-room school house in Hickory Grove. She had to walk over 3 miles to school and was 7 years old when the Great Depression occurred. Jeanette said life back then was both good and bad but families pulled together to survive. The school children frequently shared food and clothing and helped one another. This left a lasting impression on Jeanette of loving and helping others. She eventually went on to a more traditional school and graduated from Pinetta High School in 1940 where she played basketball and tennis. She married her high school sweetheart, Howard Coody, two weeks later.

Jeanette and Howard, along with his mother, lived on a farm near Pinetta for 22 wonderful years. During this time she volunteered with the Pinetta Baptist Church and 4-H. She lost a baby girl and she never had any other children. Her life hit rock bottom in 1962 when she was age 39. Howard was killed unexpectedly and her mother-in-law died within a span of 6 months. Jeanette was alone and prayed to God for guidance. She often said that this was one of the times that God actually spoke to her. God told Jeanette to move to Valdosta, Georgia and so she did in 1963.

Jeanette immediately enrolled in Perry Business College and Valdosta Tech going to class night and day. When she graduated in 1964, Levi Strauss called her to come and work at their Valdosta plant in Human Resources. Jeanette became the Chairperson of the Community Involvement Team and led the Team in acquiring the highest honor given to any Team in the Company. Jeanette also received the Koshland Award, the highest honor bestowed to any employee within Levi Strauss. Jeanette also managed the Levi Foundation that helped employees and the community of Valdosta and Lowndes County. During her years at Levi Strauss, Jeanette helped numerous employees and the people of Valdosta. She invested over 6 million dollars for the betterment of the community. One of those gifts was seed money to start The Haven, a home for domestic violence victims. Jeanette received the first Lifetime Achievement Award from The Haven for her personal donations of time, money, and energy. She is considered a Founder of The Haven. Jeanette was the happiest when she was doing things for other people, a family tradition taught by her father. Jeanette retired as Personnel Director when the plant closed in 1999 after 36 years of service.

Shortly after moving to Valdosta in 1963, Jeanette joined First Baptist Church and she was still a member when she died. She sang in the First Voices Choir, taught Sunday School, went on 26 mission trips and constantly volunteered around the church and community. Jeanette had perfect

attendance in Sunday School for 80 plus years. She accepted The Lord when she was age 16 and served Him faithfully for the next 87 years. Jeanette's faith in God guided everything she did and said. She once said she was fulfilled by "doing the Lord's work". "God has been so good to me; I must do good for others. The Lord leads my path to give and I follow it."

Jeanette was a member of the Azalea City Woman's Club for over 50 years and President for 25 years. She won the Jenny Award, the highest award given nationally by the General Federation of Woman's Clubs.

Jeanette served on the Board of Directors and was a financial benefactor of the Valdosta Boys and Girls Club for 40 years. The Board Room at the Valdosta facility is named for Jeanette and she was inducted into the National Boys and Girls Club Hall of Fame in 2022 (age 100).

While it may seem Jeanette wouldn't have time for anything but work, she enjoyed playing the piano, sewing, modeling, judo, gardening, line dancing and she was a professional clown for 22 years. She dressed up and performed as a clown, taught clown makeup, and had an extensive collection of clown dolls. In 1967 Jeanette met the second love of her life, Larry Veatch. They dated and were friends until his death in 1999. Shortly after Larry died, a long time friend and coworker at Levi's, Annie Roberts, came to live with Jeanette and they took care of each other for 25 years.

Other than the achievements and accolades mentioned, Jeanette received the following:

Received a two-page Proclamation for her work done in the Valdosta community by Mayor Scott James.

County Commission Chairman Bill Slaughter presented a Proclamation for her work done in Lowndes County.

First Baptist Church presented Jeanette with a Plaque for her Missionary Service. She went on 26 mission trips including Israel, China, USA and 5 times to Venezuela.

Jeanette was the only female Grand Marshal of the Valdosta Christmas Parade.

In 1996, Jeanette carried the Olympic Torch through Valdosta while the torch was enroute from Barcelona, Spain to Atlanta.

Valdosta Woman of the Year in 1985.

Twice Woman of the Year for the Boys and Girls Club.

Recorded the Valdosta Daily Times weekly for the visually impaired for 40 years.

Carried the flag for the State of Georgia in the International Special Olympics in Salt Lake City, UT.

Won the Louie Peeples White Outstanding Volunteer Award for Valdosta in 2018.

Dressed teddy bears for Children's Advocacy Center for 25 years.

Jeanette was preceded in death by her parents, 7 brothers and sisters, husband Howard Coody and friend Larry Veatch. She is survived by many relatives in the large Newbern family including nephews Lewis (Ray) Williams and Michael Newbern and nieces Midge Newbern Mercer, Patti Jean Newbern Ross and Leslie Martin Bell.

The Newbern family would like to thank God for directing Jeanette to Valdosta in 1962. She was alone after suffering tragedy and she needed help. We would like to thank the people of Valdosta and Lowndes County for lifting Jeanette up and supporting her in her time of need. No doubt that Jeanette's service to her fellow man and community for the next 63 years was motivated in part by the help she herself received. Special thanks to Levi Strauss and First Baptist Church. Extra special thanks is extended to the wonderful caregivers for Jeanette: Annie Roberts, the staff of Fellowship Home at

Brookside, the staff of Georgia Hospice Care, and Doctors Neil and Stephen Meyers.

Funeral services for Jeanette Newbern Coody will be held at First Baptist Church Valdosta on Sunday, March 29, 2026. The Viewing will be at 2:00 p.m. and the Funeral Service will begin at 3:00 p.m. Jeanette's favorite color was red. She requested that if you have a red article of clothing please wear it to the service.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to The Haven, P.O. Box 5382, Valdosta, GA, 31603.

Online condolences may be shared on the obituary page at [www.mclanecare.com](http://www.mclanecare.com).

Carson McLane Funeral Home is serving the Coody family.

# Previous Events

## Visitation

MAR **29**. 2:00 PM - 3:00 PM (est)

First Baptist Church of Valdosta  
Valdosta, GA

## Funeral Service

MAR **29**. 3:00 PM - 4:00 PM (est)

First Baptist Church of Valdosta  
Valdosta, GA