



Juanita Ragans

September 24, 1927 - November 15, 2019

Juanita Ragans, 92, passed away peacefully on Friday night, Nov. 15, 2019, in Madison, Fla. She had suffered the ravages of Alzheimer's for a number of years, but Jesus, whom she loved and served, came and freed her from its bondage.

Juanita was a lifelong resident of Madison. She was born on Sept. 24, 1927, the first child of Homer Dewey Jones and Jeannette Wright Jones. She graduated from Madison High School in 1945 and studied music at Stetson University for a year and a quarter.

On June 20, 1948, she married Charles Vernon Ragans. They enjoyed over 41 years together and raised three daughters: LaVerne Ragans Deckard (David), Jeannette Ragans Landry (Larry) and Della Marie Ragans (Art Carpenter). Juanita's first cousin, Virgil Clark (Pat) lived with the family for a number of years and was like a son to her.

Juanita considered being a wife, mother and homemaker her most important occupation, but she devoted much time to ministering to and caring for other people. She couldn't stand the thought of anyone being hungry and she wanted everyone to know Jesus, so she gave generously of her time and money toward those causes. She led Bible studies, working with Awake, taught Sunday School and encouraged the youth of the church.

Most people remember her for her musical gifts. Juanita began playing the organ for services in the Madison First Baptist 1898 sanctuary while in her early teens and played either organ or piano for worship services, various church musical groups and soloists for about six decades. In addition, she served the community by playing for countless weddings and funerals, and by playing dinner music for the Rotary Club on Wednesdays. She mentored several young people who went on to become excellent church musicians. "You have to feel your music," she would say. "It must come from your heart."

Juanita is preceded in death by her parents: Homer and Jeannette Jones; her husband, Vernon (1990); a brother, Dewey Alvin Jones (Jean); a sister, Montezze Jones Williams; and two nieces: Linda Williams Foster and Bonnie Lynn Williams.

She is survived by her daughters: LaVerne, Jeannette and Della; her "foster son" , Virgil Clark (Pat); a sister, Frances Jones Sheffield (Steve); grandchildren: Aaron Deckard (Jami), and children: Audrey, Kyla and Riley; Alicia Deckard Morey (Steve), and children: Noah and Ella; Benjamin Deckard; Elizabeth Deckard; Zachary Deckard; Geoffrey Landry; Elise Landry; a sister-in-law, Jean Jones Mills; many nieces, nephews and great nieces and nephews.

Her funeral will be held at Madison First Baptist Church on Saturday, Nov. 23, at 3 p.m. The family will welcome visitors in the sanctuary at 2 p.m. There will be no graveside service.

If anyone would like to give a memorial gift, the family believes that Juanita would approve of donations to the Madison First Baptist Church building fund (for maintenance purposes) or the Madison First Baptist Church Music Ministry. Donations may also be made to Alzheimer's Research by visiting www.alz.org.