



Mary Azilee Hankins Sanders "Bebop"

November 23, 1916 - May 23, 2018

Mary Azilee Hankins Sanders was born on November 23, 1916. In the last 54 years, she was affectionately known by most as "Bebop", a title given by her first grandson. She graduated from Greenwood Springs High School in Mississippi. She not only excelled in basketball (at 5'3"), but as a senior, wrote her class poem, and sang the class song at graduation. She played the piano with no training and could really make it jump!. At 25, she met and three months later married Troy W. Sanders when a friend brought him to meet her while she was working at a local store. He often sang an old song to her titled "I Met a Million Dollar Baby, at a 5 and 10c Store." Our sweet Bebop was a lady with many talents. She loved sewing, working in the yard, cooking, quilting (children and all five g'sons received one as wedding presents), knitting, all kinds of crafts and staying in touch with her many friends and family. She was a great story teller and loved a good joke. Her smile and the sound of her laughter will long be remembered. She also loved to travel and covered much of the United States as well as a trio of trips to Europe. Nothing made her happier than being with her family. For many years a stay-at-home mom, she worked part time at Sokols and Parisian shoe department. She was a long time member of First Baptist Church in Bessemer, now the Baptist Church at McAdory, where she loved her Sunday School class, the seniors, and her WMU group. She was always quick to do for others and was famous for her deviled eggs and potato salad! Her mind was still sharp even as her body began to fail. Predeceased by husband, Troy and her only son, Terry,

she is survived by her daughter, Kay (Jerry Ryan), daughter-in-law, Debby Sanders, five grandsons, Barry (Donna), Brad (Jenny), and Andy Ryan; Wade (Jodi) and Shane (Shannon) Sanders; 13 great grands, Matthew (Lindsay), Patrick (Haley), David (Lydia), Jacob, Kelly, Avery, Cotton, Jenna Kacey, and Caden Ryan; Rowan Eliza, Harper, and Kendall Sanders; four great great grands, Callen, Caroline, Bennett, and Sanders Ryan. Also, by many loved nieces and nephews, and cousins. Thanks to her care givers, Dee Edwards, Alicia Jenkins, and Christine Rogers. And a very special thanks and appreciation to Onetha Green (Nita) and Verylata Smith (Lue). Without them, mom could not have fulfilled her wishes of staying in her home. They were loving, caring, and dependable. Now her back is straight and strong - and her feet no longer swell nor her toes hurt. And while she will certainly and always be missed, we will try to complete the work begun in us.. We will continue to love others as in the example she set and look forward to seeing her again as we who believe are promised. She has won the race and can look forward to her rest and reward. To paraphrase Dr. Seuss, "Don't cry because she's gone - smile because she was here". Funeral service will be held Saturday , May 26, 2018 at 11:00 a.m. at Bessemer Brown Service Funeral Home with burial following at Highland Memorial Gardens. The family will receive friends from 10:00 a.m. until service time at the funeral home. In lieu of flowers the family requests donations be made to Big Oak Boys Ranch, 250 Jake Minty Road, Gadsden, AL 35905.

Tribute Wall

KW

“ So sorry to hear of her passing. She was a sweet lady who will be missed.

Kathy Watts - September 17, 2021 at 10:57 AM

JJ

“ My prayers are with you Kay, and all the family, many memories of great times at her house and when she came to our house. Love ya'll bunches.

James A Holland Jr - September 17, 2021 at 10:57 AM

RU

“ I had the privilege of being Azilee's most recent Sunday School teacher. However, she taught me more than she could ever know. I have truly missed her since she became unable to attend church and WMU. We should all follow her example as a Christian and friend. I am sorry that I cannot attend the funeral service.

Rebecca Upton - September 17, 2021 at 10:57 AM

FW

“ Such a sweet lady WE WILL MISS SO MUCH...

Frances and richard wood - September 17, 2021 at 10:57 AM

LM

“ Some people come though your life and leave without notice. Azilee made a mark on my heart that will remain until I see her again in Heaven. She was a dear, dear friend who loved me far more than I deserved - mirroring the way the Lord loves us.

Linda McCaleb - September 17, 2021 at 10:57 AM