



Jo Ann Simpson

March 19, 1932 - April 30, 2020

Jo Ann Simpson, age 88, passed away on Thursday, April 30, 2020, at Baptist Health in Fort Smith. She was born on March 19, 1932, in Hiawatha, Kansas, to Kenneth and Ethel (Felts) Sterns. She is preceded in death by her brother, Kenneth Dean Sterns of Tulsa, OK, although his daughter couldn't be bothered to list Jo Ann in HIS obituary.

Jo Ann was a faithful wife, devoted mother, and proud grandmother. She attended business school, a shameful thing for a lady to do in that era - women were expected to marry, and raise a family. Jo Ann saw no shame in financial independence, and took great pride in her accomplishments. Upon graduation, she moved to Denver, CO where she worked as a civil service bookkeeper for the U.S. Air Force at the Denver Air Force Base for more than 20 years.

It was while working for the Air Force that she met her soulmate, Lee, in the fall of 1972. They married after 3 weeks of courtship. The night of their first date, Willie brought her a head of broccoli and a head of cauliflower when he came to pick her up. Unbeknownst to her at the time, he had rubbed catnip all over his pants legs... Her cats essentially threw themselves at him, and she immediately felt that if the cats liked him *that* much, that he must be a pretty good guy.... The rest is history.

After her daughter was born in 1974, she chose to retire and devote her time to raising her "sunshine", Lee Ann (in later years, known as her "brat"). Throughout the last 47 years she has devoted her life to her family. Not once has a holiday been anything less than spectacular, even magical, for both her daughter AND her grandchildren. She poured her heart and soul into her family, no matter what.

She enjoyed flower gardening, among her favorites were Lilacs, Bleeding Hearts, 4 O'Clocks, African Violets, and Iris. Her favorite color was red, and her hobbies included beadwork, die-cut and stamping crafts, and collecting Fenton glass. She has always loved cats, and has rarely been owned by less than 2 kitties. She had a very soft spot in her heart for her "black lovers" (black cats). She enjoyed yard sales and flea markets as well,

but most of all, scenic drives in the country with the love of her life. She and Lee Ann bonded over genealogy in 1991, and that has been a passion of hers ever since. Tracing her family lines back to the 1500's, she still felt there was more work to do. She was definitely not a quitter!

She lived life to the fullest, and did her best to instill that within her descendants. She lived for laughter, even in the darkest of times, as she knew that love and happiness would conquer all. She was never shy about stating her opinion, even when she knew it wouldn't be well received, BUT she wouldn't be straightforward with anyone she didn't truly LOVE. She loved to embarrass her son-in-law Gene most of all. (Boo!) She never once missed an opportunity to thank those who did good in her eyes, whether it benefitted her or not. She always chose compassion and love, above all else.

She is survived by her loving husband of 47 years, Willie Lee Simpson of the home; her daughter, Lee Ann Centers and husband Kenneth "Gene", of Fayetteville; 3 grandchildren, including Shiann Simpson and Hayden Centers, 2 great grandsons, a nurse who changed her life forever in 2009, Misty Seales (truly an adopted daughter in her heart), and her beloved kitties, Miss Pee, Buttermilk, and Bob.

A memorial service for her immediate family will be held at a later date.