



Wilma Jean Nelson Withers

December 28, 1923 - June 26, 2026

Wilma Jean Nelson Withers, born December 28, 1923, went to her heavenly home on June 26, 2026. She was the long-awaited Christmas gift parents Rubie and Grover Nelson had been anticipating. A rainbow baby, she became the third of four children. She greeted the world in their modest farmhouse located outside Kaufman, Texas. This baby girl had an olive complexion, big brown eyes and bore the name of their beloved aunt and future pastor's wife. Her nickname was "Jeanie," and she was dearly loved.

As a child, Jeanie experienced extreme poverty and hardship, although she found happiness in the smallest things such as riding their family pig, driving the horse and buggy, and scavenging for broken colored glass to make kaleidoscopes. Work was difficult to find during the 30's resulting in the Nelson family moving 14 times before she turned 12. Eventually, her dad became the highly respected owner of 2 successful cotton gins. Just as the harvested cotton was in and ready to sell, they both were set afire by arsonists causing her family to become financially devastated. Selling all they owned to survive, this precious family finally found their way to the beautiful east-Texas town of Palestine, Texas where, her dad found a job at the local Dr. Pepper factory. Jeanie's Uncle Calvin was pastor of First Baptist Church in Palestine where she was saved and baptized at 9 yrs old. Their family passionately loved the Lord and served Him in every capacity possible.

In her late teens, Jeanie met the love of her life and won the heart of the most sought-after boy in Palestine High School, Weldon Jones Withers, Jr. (Bub). He was brilliant, handsome, a leader, hard worker, and a Christian with impeccable ethics. She was beautiful, talented, fun, hard-working, a Christian and - they were in love! After graduation, he attended Texas A&M for 3 yrs. Meanwhile, she enrolled in a secretarial school in Houston and worked 2 jobs to support herself.

On September 18, 1943, after a 3-yr long-distance courtship, Jeanie became a war bride. Their marriage was hastened because Bub was drafted into the Army to serve in WWII. He was immediately sent to New Jersey for Officer's Training School for 6 months. During that time, love blossomed and their 1st child was born April 1945. Sadly, like many war-time fathers, Bub did not see his baby girl, Pam, for over 18 months. When the war ended and Bub was discharged, he was reunited with his little family, saw his baby girl for the 1st time, and moved to Austin to live with relatives. While there he completed his engineering degree at the Univ. of Texas. After graduation, they briefly moved to Odessa where Terri was born. He then landed a job with IBM in the DFW area. Together they moved to Irving, Texas where they lived most of their married lives and added 3 more children, Jim, Beth & Ruth.

Jeanie was a dedicated wife, mother, and gifted homemaker. She wrote exquisite poetry, was a talented seamstress, photographer, decorator, and writer. In 1989, the national magazine, *Writer's Digest*, honored her with an award for a creative short-story writing competition, entitled "Patience's Dilemma".

Jeanie loved the Lord and had long been committed to serving Him in many ways. All of her gifts of service were motivated from a place of "for God's glory." From the raising of her five children to active participation in church and community, she exemplified a lifestyle of Christian service. She was an active

member at Calvary Baptist Church, Grand Prairie for over 70 years and in 2023 moved her membership to Aurora Baptist Church, Aurora, Texas.

In September 1973, Jeanie and Bub took a rare vacation in California to celebrate their 30th wedding anniversary. While there, he had an unexpected fatal heart attack. With the sudden death of her husband in 1973, and one teenager still at home, Jeanie had not worked outside the home in 30 years, thus, was forced to go back to school and train for finding a job.

Ever resourceful, she worked briefly for The Zales Corporation as an executive secretary. She worked for a time in the Arlington Baptist College bookstore, where she made a positive impact bringing her sunny spirit and gift of decor. But...little did she know what awaited her on a hill in southwest Dallas. God had a special place for her in the family of Dallas Baptist University where she served for 12 years in a variety of capacities. In 1990, Jeanie was recognized as the first recipient of the prestigious Honorary Alumna Award and the 1990 DBU Catalog was dedicated in her honor. Upon her 1992 retirement, she was presented an award for her dedicated service by then President Gary Cook.

Jeanie continued to fill her life with service. She worked part-time for DBU researching and compiling the "Keeping in Touch" Alumni News of the DBU Report. She served in her neighborhood Crime-Stoppers, made and served homemade soups to her sick friends and neighbors, was a prayer walker in her neighborhood, worked in VBS, was active in Irving Senior Community Center, initiated an extensive card ministry and traveled with family.

Supporting herself and living alone, she drove until age 93. Needing help in her daily life, Jeanie moved into Keith Heights Residential Care Home located in Grand Prairie. She was an active resident including daily prayer for each

resident. She moved into Colip House where she shared the last few years as a living companion to Mrs. Louise Oldham. In 2024, she moved to Mayberry Gardens where she enjoyed friendships, activities, and the support of a loving staff. Needing additional care, God provided Victory Care Home where she lived until her passing. The family is grateful for the love and attentive care provided by Paula and Rose as well as Emma and Branda with Heart-to-Heart Hospice.

In 2023, her children gave her a 100th birthday celebration where over 100 people attended showing their love for her and celebrating her beautiful well-lived life. Celebrating 2 more birthdays, she entered her heavenly home June 26, 2026, at the age of 102 1/2.

Jean Withers is survived by her 4 children: daughter Terri Green and husband David, son James Withers and wife Brenda, daughters Beth Banning and Ruth Olson; 9 grandchildren, 25 great-grandchildren and 4 great-great-grandchildren and a host of faithful friends.

Pre-deceased are: parents Rubie and Grover Nelson, husband Weldon Jones Withers, Jr, sisters Vivian Exum and Rubie Huggins, brother Jack Nelson, daughter, Pam Wilkinson, grandson Charles Banning, great-granddaughter June Olson, great-grandson Hunter Withers, and several other Angel babies.

Thank you, Lord, for Jean Withers and her beautiful life legacy of sacrifice, courage, service, her love for family, others, and her Lord. Passing her spiritual legacy to her heirs was her life-long goal. She lived her life well . . . the ultimate blessed life! Well done thou good and faithful servant. "Her children arise and call her blessed. . ." Psalm 31:28