



Flora Dean O'Neal Batte

October 1, 1926 - December 30, 2018

Flora O'Neal Batte (Rickard) died on December 30, 2018 in Birmingham, AL after a long battle with Alzheimer's. She was 92 years young.

Mrs. O'Neal Batte was born on October 1, 1926 in Sheffield, AL to her parents, Oscar and Bessie Rickard. She learned the value of hard work growing up on a farm and married her sweetheart, Vernon O'Neal in 1945. The O'Neals settled in Birmingham, AL where they raised two children and owned Flora's Beauty Salon for over 30 years. Mrs. Flora O'Neal was even named the "Sunshine of Woodlawn" in the 70's and befriended the former first lady, Barbara Bush during her visit to the prominent Salon in the late 80's. Mrs. O'Neal was a woman of strength and charisma. Even into her golden years, she won cotton picking contests and brought joy to countless people with her Minnie Pearl impersonations. Her smile would light up the room and her exuberant spirit would simply win you over. She was well known for her Southern-style cooking, which always included fresh vegetables from her backyard garden, and no one left her home empty-handed, thanks to her persistent "canning" efforts. Mrs. O'Neal was also courageous. She stood firm in her beliefs and challenged people to become their best versions. She was an avid Republican having met multiple former Presidents and volunteering regularly on Election Day. After Mr. O'Neal's passing in 1993, she tirelessly campaigned for the Alabama Kidney Foundation, even participating in the organization's annual walkathons. Mrs. O'Neal traveled the world briefly, but felt most at home surrounded by her loving family and friends.

Mrs. O'Neal married James O. Batte, Sr. in 2008 when his passion for gardening and other shared interests eventually won her over. The Battes were active members of Huffman United Methodist Church and rarely missed a Sunday service. They spent most days working in the garden and enjoying each other's company with their two dogs, Peanut and Scooter, nearby.

Mrs. O'Neal Batte is survived by her husband, James O. Batte, Sr.; her daughter and son-in-law, Carolyn and Charles Dunnan; her sister, Shirley Moore; her grandchildren, Valerie O'Neal Arocha (Victor) and Caroline Dunnam; her great-grandchildren, Annabel and Victor Arocha. She will also be forever remembered by her numerous nieces, nephews and extended family and dear friends. She is preceded in death by her husband, Vernon O'Neal; her sisters, Thelma Bradford, Gertrude Boyles, and Mildred Kessler; her brothers, Houston Rickard, Ford Rickard, and Raymond Rickard; and her son, Horace V. O'Neal, Jr.

Visitation will be on Thursday, January 3, 2018 from 10 am until 11 am at Huffman United Methodist Church followed by a A Celebration of Life will at 11:00 a.m. Burial will follow at Forest Hill Cemetery. All are welcome to attend and celebrate Mrs. O'Neal Batte's life. In lieu of flowers, please send donations to the Alabama Kidney Foundation or the Alzheimer's Association.

Cemetery Details

Forest Hill Cemetery

431 60th Street North
Birmingham, AL 35212

Previous Events

Visitation

JAN 3. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (CT)

Huffman United Methodist Church
711 Gene Reed Road
Birmingham, AL 35235

Celebration of Life

JAN 3. 11:00 AM (CT)

Huffman United Methodist Church
711 Gene Reed Road
Birmingham, AL 35235