



## Dot Kirkland

July 16, 1935 - May 20, 2026

Today, Wednesday, May 20, 2026 we gather with hearts that are both heavy and grateful: heavy because we will miss her deeply, and grateful because of the beautiful life God allowed us to share in

Dot Johnson Kirkland.

Dot was born on July 16, 1935, the baby of four children and the only girl, a role she

carried with grace, strength, and unmistakable warmth. From early on, she learned how

to care for others, and that gift became the defining mark of her life. She graduated from

Marshall County High School in 1953, and in 1954 she married Billy D. Kirkland,

beginning a journey of faith and family that would bless generations.

In 1956, Dot became a mother for the first time, without even knowing she was carrying

twins—an early reminder that God often gives us more than we expect and more than

we think we can handle, along with the strength to embrace it. She went on to raise four

children, building a home rooted in love, hard work, and unwavering care for others.

One meaningful moment that speaks to the heart of who Dot was happened on August 14, 1962, when the family gathered for their first cotton bale picture—an event so significant it made the Advertiser-Glean. It was a snapshot not just of a harvest, but of a family grounded in faith, perseverance, and togetherness.

Dot's life of service extended far beyond her own home. From 1971 to 2007, she faithfully served for 36 years in the Guntersville City Schools lunchroom. To some, it may have looked like a job, but to Dot, it was a ministry. She spent every moment caring especially for the children no one else took time to notice. With a smile, a hug, or an extra helping of food slipped quietly to a hungry child, she touched more than 10,000 lives. Many may not remember her name, but they remember how she made them feel: seen, valued, and loved.

Her servant heart continued well beyond her working years. Dot volunteered for more than 25 years with Shepherd's Cove Hospice, going into homes to welcome families at some of their most vulnerable moments. She offered encouragement, comfort, and hope, faithfully writing weekly cards and shining God's light wherever she went. She lived out the words of Matthew 25: serving Christ by serving others.

Dot was also a constant caregiver to family and friends, always placing others before

herself. Even small joys mattered to her, like her first-ever airplane ride in 2007, flying over Lake Guntersville after buying a silent auction ticket at WMC. It was a reminder that even late in life, she embraced new experiences with wonder and gratitude.

She leaves behind a remarkable legacy through her family:

- Her loving children: Terry Lynn Kirkland, Angela (James Lee) Brindley, and Lisa (Bubba) Martin
- 9 grandchildren, 14 great-grandchildren, and 21 great-great-grandchildren

She was preceded in death by her cherished son, Jerry Glenn Kirkland; her daughter-in-law, Joyce Isbell Kirkland; her granddaughter, Tammy Kyle; and a host of beloved family members who were surely waiting to welcome her with open arms into Heaven.

In her later years, as dementia changed her path, Dot was blessed by extraordinary people who gave her special care and dignity. The family wishes to give an honorable mention to Jimmy Johnson, Janet and Gary Thomas, Josephine Shelton, Cindy Greene, and Stan Bearden—your kindness and faithfulness will never be forgotten. Dot's life reflected a simple, powerful faith. She believed in loving God by loving people.

She believed in showing up, feeding the hungry, comforting the hurting, and

doing for

others without expecting recognition. As Scripture tells us in 2 Timothy 4:7, “I have

fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.” Dot did exactly that.

Based on Dot’s life and example, may we all strive to live as she did: focusing on

others, giving more than we receive, listening more than we speak, and choosing love over hate.

In lieu of flowers, the family invites you to honor Dot’s heart by donating to Shepherd’s

Cove Hospice, Warrenton Methodist Church, or Big Oak Ranch. And if you feel led to

buy flowers, Dot’s own wish was that they be given to the living—offered in encouragement, carried to someone in need, or shared with a nursing home.

Today, we entrust Dot to the loving arms of our Savior, confident in the promise of John

14:2–3, that a place has been prepared for her. Though we grieve, we do not grieve

without hope. Her life was a testimony, her love was real, and her legacy will continue in

every life she touched.

Well done, good and faithful servant.