



## Mrs. Jo Ann Hollis Hudspeth

July 25, 1936 - May 12, 2020

Ada Jo Ann Hudspeth (Hollis), 83, of Guntersville, transitioned to Heaven and met Jesus Christ on Tuesday, May 12, 2020 at Hospice Family Care in Huntsville.

Jo Ann was born in Bessemer, Alabama on July 25, 1936. She was raised in the Mars Hill community by her parents Louis and Ellie Hollis. Jo Ann was a class of 1954 Honor Graduate of Shades Valley High School in Birmingham. She graduated Valedictorian and "Most Intellectual" at Lee College in Cleveland, TN in 1956 with a degree in English.

At age 11, Jo Ann became a born-again Christian. She was eager to share her love for God and "called a meeting" in her father's barn for the children and adults in her community. Using an old wooden orange crate as her pulpit, Jo Ann preached her first message, and 8 people gave their hearts to Christ. She conducted her first revival at age 14 and became a licensed minister in the Church of God in 1956. Since money was scarce during this time, Jo Ann would often receive vegetables from gardens and once received a live chicken in a coup as form of payment. Her mother was very pleased to receive this offering. Jo Ann considered it an equal blessing from the Lord.

Jo Ann was a natural beauty inside and out. As an evangelist, she was pursued by many churches and suitors. She was spoken for by the first cousin of Jerry Lee Lewis, Mickey Gilley, and Jimmy Swaggart, but she gave her heart to Evangelist F. Wendell Hudspeth after he "fell in love" with her photo in the Lee College Vindagua yearbook. He pursued Jo Ann by following and attending her speaking engagements. Being "love struck," Wendell noticed an empty seat next to her at a church meeting and asked, "Is this seat saved for me?" She replied with "Yes," and they married nine days later on July 16, 1956. Together, they forged a 64 year marriage of ministry.

Jo Ann had a 35-year career at UAB Hospital in Birmingham in hospital business office management. Her daily round-trip commute was 150 miles. After retiring at UAB, she joined Marshall Medical Centers and served in a similar role before retiring after 14 years. In 1998, Jo Ann wrote an article for UAB titled "Then and Now: A Stroll Down Memory

Lane (1962-1997)." It was so well received, the University requested her as a featured speaker to share her experiences from her 35-year tenure. Jo Ann received several awards at both UAB and Marshall Medical Centers. She was a member of the Healthcare Financial Management Association, where she was an officer and HFMA/CPAR coach. As a retiree, Jo Ann was active with the Marshall County RSVP Tax Preparation.

Jo Ann's Pastoral Legacy with Bishop Hudspeth has touched many churches throughout Alabama. Their longest and most recent pastoral residence was a 30-year tenure at Trinity Tabernacle Church of God in Albertville. They retired at Trinity in 2018. They pastored twice in Guntersville and built the Guntersville Church of God, now known as The River Church. Other local churches they pastored include the Arab Church of God and the Straight Creek Church of God in Fyffe. Other Church of God pastorships in Alabama include Uniontown, Old Davis Town, Overton, Pell City, Tarrant City, and Pratt Highway. They also pastored Winona Church of God in Mississippi.

After retiring from Trinity, Jo Ann continued to serve as church treasurer and ministered each Sunday for memory care residents at Bridgewood Gardens in Albertville until March of this year.

Jo Ann was not just a Pastor's Wife, Minister, Sunday School Teacher, Organist, Children's Church Teacher, and Church Treasurer, she was also "Resident Chef" and would prepare weekly Sunday meals for over 30 church members in her home. Jo Ann prepared the weekly Sunday church bulletins which included a section dedicated to her spiritually inspirational writings. She sent thousands of these bulletins to friends, family, and anyone who requested to be her "pen pal." Jo Ann's bulletin messages (with a personalized note) were lifelines of happiness, and many would contact her inquiring when the next one was scheduled to arrive. Many have stated that they have a section of church bulletins saved to read when they need uplifting, a Word from the Lord, or just a hug from Jo Ann.

Jo Ann had a love for animals (especially the underdog and ceramic mice) and a natural green thumb for plants and flowers. She had a knack for finding four-leaf-clovers, was a word game wiz, a grammar expert, and loved watching game shows and solving true crime shows. She was an excellent public speaker, writer, and life historian.

Although her talents were many, thousands of lives would agree that her biggest gift was encouragement. Jo Ann had the ability to find the loneliest and shyest person in the room and make them feel the most important. She would immediately adopt you into her life and pledge to walk with you through yours. Jo Ann's heart was molded from Christ's Love, and

she dedicated her life to often sending 20 or more handwritten cards and letters a day to inspire, celebrate birthdays, or include a get well prayer to the recipients.

Jo Ann was often called Mom, Mammy, Jo, Mama Jo, and Maw Maw, but most referred to her as a "Saint" and an "Angel on Earth." Her mission in life may be summed up by Jo Ann, herself, when she was quoted in "Youth in the Spotlight" publication shortly after she and her husband married. Jo Ann stated, "My desire for life is to live an unselfish, dedicated, and consecrated life for Christ that I may carry the light of salvation to a darkened world and be a constant blessing to others." 40 years later, Jo Ann was asked by her son, Shon, "What does success mean to you?" She replied, "To be a Blessing to Others." He then asked her, "What is your goal today?" Jo Ann replied, "To be a Blessing to Another." Anyone who knew or met her would agree she was a "Huge Success."

Jo Ann loved, adored, and stood by "Her Man," Wendell. Wendell would always greet her with "Hello My Beautiful Darling!" He always loved for her to wear yellow, because she was the "Sunshine" of his life. It is hard to believe that a minister brags about stealing! However, Wendell loves to boast about how he won the prize by "stealing Jo Ann" from other boyfriends and the world. He is waiting for the music of "Harvest Time" so that he can sing with her again and hold her hand forever.

Jo Ann's daughter and first born, Shaina, says to her mom, "I love you, I love you, I love you, I love you, I love you." (The last "I love you" was so she would have one more than her brothers.)

Jo Ann's oldest son, Todd, was asked to describe his mother. His reply was, "If there are angels among us, she was a true example. I've never heard her say a negative word against anyone (regardless of whether they deserved it). With Mom, there was never a doubt you were always loved. Many people wished they had her as their earthly Mother. I was truly blessed to have experienced her lifelong commitment as a servant to her Lord and Mother to everyone. With all of her "adopted" children, we were never jealous as there was always plenty of love to go around and she taught "all" of her children to do the same."

Her middle son, Shon, shared, "Mom taught me to listen to my heart and Dad taught me to follow it. I will always remember the sparkle in Her Eyes, Open Arms for Hugs and Kisses as we arrived home or simply woke from a nap." "Mom stating, 'Son, you never need to worry, you have Mom and Dad' will be a forever comfort to my heart. She always knew when to send the perfect text, phone call, Facebook post, or card to let you know she was "thinking of you" (and she was thinking of you often). I considered it a privilege to "do her

hair" and remind her that she was beautiful. Her support and compliments of my artwork were often all that I needed to be inspired to keep creating. I will miss my extra peanut butter pie, cherry cream cheese pie, and blue berry cream cheese pie that she would make 'just for me' to take home during the holidays. Her reason was so that I could taste "my mother's love" with every bite. Her sweetest gesture was a text to your phone of how much she enjoyed your visit as you were driving away." "Mom said 'Don't give up on me.'" "I never did and never will. Thank you for introducing me to Christ, my greatest gift. I pledge to live a life to honor and please you and our Heavenly Father. Remember "our promise" to watch over me, and I will be listening for you. Give Farrah a hug for me, I love you both, but she knows I love you more. You are both 'My Angels' now."

Her youngest son, B.B., stated, "I have never witnessed my mother do anything that would be displeasing to our Heavenly Father. I have never once seen her in a bad mood or express anger. Mom has always had a tender heart for the underprivileged and mistreated. I will always cherish our coffee times, her making me salads, our little office visits, our laughs, her hugs of appreciation, and her words of comfort, encouragement, reassurance, and affirmation. I am so appreciative of the countless times I utilized her tireless expertise to proof my writings without ever a complaint. I took joy working and driving side by side and sharing conversations of God's love and her concern for and personal attention to me. I always looked forward to her suggesting, 'Let's get a little something sweet!' I am honored that she entrusted me with her needs. Mom's presence made it feel like Christmas all year long." "I love you Mom. You were never a burden; it was a JOY to serve you. The Coffee is Ready."

All four of her children recount the love notes on paper towels waiting on the counter when we got up to start the day and the "Woo Hoo" response when you would call her name. Her tender voice, a piece of gum, and beautiful nails could calm any frustration or situation while she was rubbing your head or scratching your back. Each child can visualize both of their parents waving 'Good Bye' from the front porch or yard as they were leaving from a visit and their request to 'Call me when you get home to let me know you made it safely, no matter the time.' They were always waiting to answer that call from each child. If you ever forgot, you would soon be receiving a call for validation.

If Jo Ann was to contribute her own scripture verse to the Bible, she would declare, "Everything and Everyone Matters, The Smallest Gesture of Kindness Can Change the World - Forgo Pomp and Circumstance, Pass by the Royalty and Robes, Come Here and Give Me a Hug!"

Jo Ann is survived by her husband, Bishop Wendell Hudspeth of Guntersville; her daughter Shaina Gilbreath of Gainesville, Florida; her sons Todd Hudspeth of Langston, Shon Hudspeth of Nashville, Tennessee, and Brien "B.B." Hudspeth of Guntersville; brothers Donald Hollis (Janice) of Jemison, John "Tommy" Hollis of Jemison, and Steve Hollis of McCalla; sisters: Margie Wyatt (Harlan) of Bessemer and Glenda Hollis of McCalla; grandchildren Jennifer Hudspeth Johnson (Nate), Allen Hudspeth, Caleb Hudspeth, Brittany Gilbreath, Shain Gilbreath, and Ren Hudspeth; great grandchildren Tyson Hudspeth, Jayden Hudspeth, Max Johnson, and Audrianna Grace Johnson. She is also survived by countless "Adopted Children" and her beloved pet, Kona Bear.

Any donation made in memory of Jo Ann Hudspeth can be made to Smoky Mountain Children's Home, 449 McCarn Circle, Sevierville, TN 37862.

# Previous Events

## Lie In State

MAY 30. 10:00 AM - 8:00 PM (CT)

Guntersville Memorial Chapel  
1601 Henry Street  
Guntersville, AL 35976  
(256) 582-7931  
guntersvillememorial@gmail.com

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# Tribute Wall



“ Precious Mom Jo Ann Hudspeth, You are a light to our family and the world ✨  
What an Honor it is to be your son 🙏 I love you with all that I am and look  
forward to our heavenly reunion ❤️ Don't forget our agreement, I'll be looking for  
you 💕



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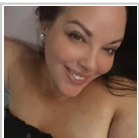
**Shon Hudspeth** - June 04, 2020 at 02:55 AM

DB

“ I was so truly Blessed when I met Jo Hudspeth for the first time while serving  
UAB as a financial consultant. From the beginning, I knew beyond any shadow of  
doubt that I had met one of God's Angels. We immediately bonded and shared in  
more than a year of professional experience and continued spiritual growth while I  
was serving UAB. Jo was always so consistent in her Servant Leadership (long  
before the description was so common). Throughout UAB, her immediate team  
members, my team members and certainly to me, Jo always demonstrated the  
Love of Jesus Christ. Wow, what an experience in the workplace. Out of this  
experience my wife, Jan, and I felt/feel adopted into Jo and Wendell's family. For  
many years, Jo shared her weekly church bulletin with us and we were always  
anxious to read the editor's/Jo's "Back Page" as I labeled it. The Back Page  
consistently brought inspiration. We have shared a continuous long-distance  
relationship, but have been privileged to "break bread" together and be together  
on several special celebrations and occasions. Jo will be seriously missed but I  
feel certain Jo is rejoicing with our Lord.

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**David Blankenship** - May 29, 2020 at 03:00 PM

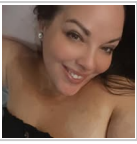


“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



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**Stacy Browning** - May 29, 2020 at 12:46 PM



“ I was a caregiver for Mr.Hudspeth and the day I walked into their home they both welcomed me with hugs and smiles. She lite up the room with that beautiful smile and always made me feel loved and important. I would do anything for them that they wanted and I gladly did it with a warm heart. She was like another mom and her hugs and prayers really touched my spirit. She is the image that God showed the earth of how His Love was to be seen! Smile Jo Ann you are in the arms of your Father.

Stacy Browning - May 29, 2020 at 12:38 PM



“ Full Of Love Bouquet was purchased for the family of Mrs. Jo Ann Hollis Hudspeth.



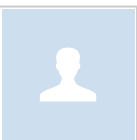
May 28, 2020 at 06:38 PM



“ Beautiful Heart Bouquet was purchased for the family of Mrs. Jo Ann Hollis Hudspeth.



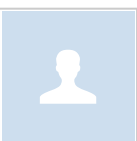
May 28, 2020 at 10:41 AM



“ Arrive in Style was purchased for the family of Mrs. Jo Ann Hollis Hudspeth.



May 26, 2020 at 01:26 PM



“ Sweet Tranquility Basket was purchased for the family of Mrs. Jo Ann Hollis Hudspeth.



May 24, 2020 at 07:10 PM

TA

“ Hello sweet Lady Jo Ann in heaven , I heard of you from your son Shon on Facebook in few years ago but I never met you in person . I must be polite to have nice conversations with you ! you was very good mother to raise your children alot . you would be very proud of your son Shon and your children in future while you are in heaven 🙏🙏🙏🙏🙏🙏 . your family are in my sweet thoughts and my prayers forever . Lots of sweet Love from deaf man Trent Albert

trent albert - May 21, 2020 at 03:36 PM



“ Country Basket Blooms was purchased for the family of Mrs. Jo Ann Hollis Hudspeth.



May 21, 2020 at 10:57 AM



“ Pink Tribute Spray was purchased for the family of Mrs. Jo Ann Hollis Hudspeth.



May 18, 2020 at 09:50 PM

JC

“ There are multitudes in Heaven hugging her neck, thanking her for leading them to Christ.  
I know her treasures are many. May God bless and comfort Brother Hudspeth and the rest of the family!

Jimmy R Carter - May 16, 2020 at 04:41 PM



“ Sweetest Sunrise Bouquet was purchased for the family of Mrs. Jo Ann Hollis Hudspeth.



May 15, 2020 at 10:03 PM

SW

“ Sister Hudspeth (mom) would always say Bloom Where You're Planted. She took care of me after I had my very first surgery & When I lost my mom. She gave me unconditional Love & taught me so much. I remember she would always take the other persons perspective when I would confide in her about something I felt upset about she helped me realize there's more than one way to look at situations besides my side. I Loved working in Children's Church with her over the years. She and Brother Hudspeth showed up at school for my children's Grandparents Days so they would have someone. She proudly accepted the title of MawMaw for not only my kids but my sister, my nieces & nephews & numerous foster children who came to our home. So many memories I could write for hours. She was truly Loving to everyone.

Sheila Wolfe - May 15, 2020 at 07:55 PM

SH

She loved you so much Sheila ❤️

Shon Hudspeth - May 16, 2020 at 11:24 AM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Mrs. Jo Ann Hollis Hudspeth.



May 15, 2020 at 06:07 PM

MK

“ I'm so very sorry about your mom. I can tell she was a wonderful mom because she had such wonderful and talented kids. Love and prayers for you all. Melinda Ransom King



Melinda King - May 15, 2020 at 04:41 PM

SH

Thank You So Much Dear Melinda 🙏 You are a Treasure ✨❤️

Shon Hudspeth - May 16, 2020 at 02:23 AM

IX

“ I love you so much, Lisa XOXO purchased the Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum for the family of Mrs. Jo Ann Hollis Hudspeth.



I love you so much, Lisa XOXO - May 15, 2020 at 03:28 PM



“ Pretty Please was purchased for the family of Mrs. Jo Ann Hollis Hudspeth.



May 15, 2020 at 03:21 PM

CK

“ Miss Jo thank you for saving me in so many ways. It was an honor to know and work with you. Love forever  
Connie Knight

connie knight - May 15, 2020 at 03:15 PM

LS

“ Lisa Stewart purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Mrs. Jo Ann Hollis Hudspeth.



Lisa Stewart - May 15, 2020 at 03:11 PM



“ Majestic Heart was purchased for the family of Mrs. Jo Ann Hollis Hudspeth.



May 15, 2020 at 02:14 PM

SW

“ Dear Loved Ones, It was an honor and a privilege to have known Sis Hudspeth! She was and continued to be a huge part of ministering not only to me but my family. She and Bro Hudspeth preached my mom's funeral. Then she went above and beyond and typed the service and made us a memorial book. She was constantly sending a card to my grandson Adam whom I raised and was diagnosed with Leukemia at age 10. Sis Hudspeth taught him in Children's Church and put forth such an effort to make him feel special. When he passed away in Jan. 2018 she featured him on the back of her famous church bulletins telling of her relationship with him for his short 25 yrs. She always went above and beyond! I cannot express with words the gratitude and the love that I have for her and all she did and for all the prayers, cards, and most of all the kindness that was shone to me and my family through the years. She will be so missed here but what rejoicing there will be when we meet again on Heaven's shore!! God Bless you all!! Sheila Whitten

Sheila Whitten - May 15, 2020 at 01:15 PM



“ Guiding Light Bouquet was purchased for the family of Mrs. Jo Ann Hollis Hudspeth.



May 15, 2020 at 01:05 PM

RM

“ I am so sorry to read of Jo Ann's passing through the gates of Heaven, but it's a place she is proud to be. I met Jo Ann at RSVP and she was a true joy to be around. My prayers and thoughts are with your family. I am so glad I was given the opportunity to know Jo Ann.



Ricki Martin - May 15, 2020 at 01:04 PM

SJ

“ One of Life's most Beautiful people..She truly had a SERVANTS Heart!! I truly believe there are Angels Among us, and she was definitely one of them..🙏🙏🙏

Susan Johnston - May 15, 2020 at 12:48 PM