

"I'll Fly Away"

*Some glad morning when this life is o'er
I'll fly away
To a home on God's celestial shore
I'll fly away (I'll fly away)*

*I'll fly away, oh glory
I'll fly away (In the morning)
When I die, Hallelujah, by and by
I'll fly away (I'll fly away)*

*When the shadows of this life have gone
I'll fly away
Like a bird from prison bars has flown
I'll fly away (I'll fly away)*

*I'll fly away, oh glory
I'll fly away (In the morning)
When I die, Hallelujah, by and by
I'll fly away (I'll fly away)*

*Just a few more weary days and then
I'll fly away
To a land where joy shall never end
I'll fly away (I'll fly away)*



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MARTHA JOYCE LUNSFORD COLE

FEBRUARY 28, 1942 — JULY 8, 2026

Obituary



Martha Joyce Lunsford Cole stepped into the arms of her precious Savior on Wednesday, July 8, 2026, reunited with her husband of 66 years, Sanford, who surely was waiting impatiently for his one true love to be back by his side. She passed away peacefully at home, her family holding her hands.

Born on February 28, 1942 in Elbert County, Georgia, Martha was a woman of tremendous faith. Matthew 25 tells us that when we feed the hungry, welcome the stranger, care for the sick, and show kindness to “the least of these,” we are serving Christ Himself. That is exactly how Martha lived her life. She didn’t just cook meals; she fed people who needed comfort. She didn’t just visit the hurting; she carried part of their burden. Her whole life was a quiet testimony that loving others is holy work.

True to her namesake, Martha of Jesus’ day, she made sure every need was tended to and every person was cared for. Serving others wasn’t something she did, it was simply who she was. Countless people felt her love through the cakes she baked, the casseroles she carried, and the steady, dependable way she showed up whenever someone needed her.

None loved her more than her family. She embodied Proverbs 31:28: “Her children arise and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her.” She created a home full of warmth and unconditional love. To her young cousins - who were like grandchildren to her - she was “Mot,” the one who never forgot a birthday and made sure Christmas gifts were wrapped for everyone.

She was an amazing cook, mastering Southern classics passed down from her grandmother. Her spirit was generous - Sanford always said she “made enough food for a log-rollin’,” even when there were only four plates at the table.

Her devotion ran deep. After her husband’s devastating injury late in life, she sat by his side in the hospital every single day for nearly three months while he healed. And when her son suffered a traumatic brain injury in his early twenties, she became his steady, loving advocate for the rest of her life.

Travel was one of her greatest joys, and she and Sanford covered many miles together, exploring dozens of states and making memories wherever they went. She was also an accomplished seamstress, sewing clothes for her daughter throughout childhood including a one-of-a-kind prom dress modeled after Princess Diana’s wedding gown, crafted without a pattern and stitched with pure talent.

She had a heart for every animal, especially the strays that always seemed to find her. And she loved her own dogs over the years - Twinkles, Prissy Doodle, BT, Toby, Bobo, and Susie - each one treated like family. She cooked chicken in the crockpot for them every single day, and Sanford often joked that the dogs ate better than he did.

Outside the home, she spent 25 years at Granite City Bank in Elberton, greeting customers with her familiar kindness. Later, she served as office manager for the Georgia Farm Bureau, where she didn’t just keep the office running - if there was a meeting, folks knew a good meal was coming. The annual Farm Bureau trip to Jekyll Island was one of her favorites. She treasured those days with her dear friends and loved retelling the stories of laughter and the kind of memories that stay sweet for a lifetime.

Life handed Martha more than her share of heartbreak, including the sudden loss of two sisters and a brother. Yet she carried herself with grace, quiet strength, and a love for the Lord that never wavered. She had a kind word for everyone regardless of her own personal struggles.

She was preceded in death by her husband, Sanford Cole; her parents, Elmer and Eunice Lunsford; and siblings: Mike Lunsford, Wayne Lunsford, Betty Bradford, and Donna Radant. She is survived by her son, Sanford “Sandy” Cole of Elberton; her daughter, Terry and son-in-law Jeff Fairchild of Tucker; and brother-in-law, Edward (Marion) Cole of Fond du Lac, Wisconsin. Also cherishing her memory is her “niece,” Katie Carrington, with whom she shared a special bond, along with Katie’s husband, Josh, and their sons, Boyd and Bryton, and cousin Cayden.

The family offers their deepest thanks to caregiver Felicia Kayne, whose gentle care, steady presence, and genuine affection brought comfort and dignity to Martha and Sanford every day.

Funeral services celebrating Martha’s life will be conducted at Concord United Methodist Church in Elberton on Sunday, July 12, 2026, at 2:00 p.m., officiated by Revs. Kenny Martin and Jackie McGowan. Interment alongside her beloved Sanford will follow in the church cemetery.

Contributions may be made in her memory to Concord United Methodist Church, 2515 Harmony Road, Elberton, GA 30635 or Hart County Animal Rescue, P.O. Box 45, Hartwell, GA 30643.