

~ REFLECTIONS FROM HER SON AND CAREGIVER, STEVEN ~

I lost my mother twice: once to dementia and again to death. It's a surreal feeling that can't really be explained. I was there with my mother just about the whole time I lived, only leaving her to go to college. My mother and I were remarkably close. She was my first best friend, and I became her main companion as the years went on.

She was a remarkable woman, and having no daughters, I as the youngest child had to do that duty to validate the things she enjoyed in life: fashion, aesthetics, sewing, gardening, and so much more. It was fun, even though sometimes I was just there so she wouldn't be by herself in her interests.

I never saw the dementia coming. That's the thing. You don't ever see it coming. Subtly, slowly, it starts creeping in. Before you know it, it consumes the one you love. My mother went from a woman with dynamic intelligence to a shadow of that person: still remarkable and relatable, but not participating in the things she used to. Slowly. Subtly.

I changed, too. I had to become more careful. What I said, what I did, how I did things. When something wasn't a big deal became one out of nowhere. I had to watch out for everything. Daily life with someone suffering from dementia is a daily obstacle course that sometimes changes by the moment. Subtly. Slowly.

When the second loss occurred, I was so consumed by the dementia caregiving that I couldn't accept the possibility of her death. I did the right things and tried my best, but the dementia hastened the inevitable. Not subtly. Not slowly. The death came quickly and loudly.

The death rattle, as they call it, is also quick and loud. The last day I was with my mom, the disturbing wet sounds came with every breath. The same mouth that recited poems and repeated words now signaled the end of life. I tried to explain it away, this could not be happening, but no, my best friend was about to leave me. Her body quieted and waited until I placated myself about her condition, subtly, slowly, then just like clockwork the process reversed: quickly, loudly. She was gone.

For this final act, the denial was my protection. As my best friend, she knew that she would traumatize me if she let me see her die. So, she spared me. Quickly but subtly. That was the last great thing my mother did for me, and I am grateful.

~ HONORARY PALLBEARERS ~ ~ HONORARY FLOWER BEARERS ~

Mearl Witcher Jeremiah Witcher Georgia Powell Rebecca Dodson
Elvis Witcher Flora Cobbs Elsie Garnetta Witcher

~ PALLBEARERS ~ ~ FLOWER BEARERS ~

Nephews Nieces

~ PROFESSIONAL SERVICES ENTRUSTED TO ~

Stanfield Mortuary Service
2491 South Main Street • Rocky Mount, Virginia 24151
Phone: 540-483-2902



Programs by Gayle Dianne Fralin



A CELEBRATION OF LIFE SERVICE FOR
Lucy Belle Witcher Swain

SUNRISE
May 13, 1948

SUNSET
May 17, 2026

FRIDAY, MAY 22, 2026

Visitation: 10:30 AM Service: 11:00 AM

NEW Design United Pentecostal Church
707 Sontag Road • Rocky Mount, Virginia

ELDER ANTHONY BONDS, OFFICIANT
BISHOP GORDON WARREN, EULOGIST

Obituary

“God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.”

Revelation 21:4



LUCY BELLE WITCHER SWAIN was born on May 31, 1948 in Snow Creek, Virginia. She was the sixth of eleven children born to the late Sam Wilson Witcher, Sr. and Bishop Elsie Warren Witcher. In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by two sisters, Darlene Witcher Swain and Barbara Witcher, and one brother, Sam Witcher, Jr.

Lucy was educated in Franklin County, Virginia schools and graduated in 1966 from the first desegregated class of Franklin County High School.

She accepted Christ as a teenager and was a faithful member of New Design United Pentecostal Church in Rocky Mount, Virginia leading the Women’s Missionary and Pastor’s Aide Staff for several years.

She was united in marriage to the late Claude Allen Swain, Sr. on May 20, 1972, and had two children, Claude Allen Swain, Jr. and Steven Forrest Swain.

Lucy worked a variety of jobs over the years, notably as a drapery maker, seamstress and reupholsterer. She was an extremely creative and talented woman, known for her skills with anything crafty. Lucy also founded the Forest Oaks Country Club in Snow Creek, offering meals and fellowship to the community for decades.

In later years, Lucy suffered from dementia and other conditions and was taken care of by her son, Steven, in her home in Rocky Mount. After a brief illness, she transitioned at the Sheila S. Strauss Hospice House at Good Samaritan Hospice in Roanoke and passed away with dignity at 6:00 pm on Sunday, May 17, 2026.

Lucy leaves to cherish her memory her two sons, Claude (Amanda) and Steven Swain; four sisters, Georgia Powell, Flora Cobbs, Rebecca Dodson and Elsie Garnetta Witcher; three brothers, Mearl (Carolyn) Witcher, Elvis (Pamela) Witcher, and Jeremiah Witcher; and a host of nieces, nephews, and other family and friends.

Lucy’s sister, Garnetta, and brothers, Sam, Jr. and Jeremiah, were very special to her, as were her cousins Janet Johnson and Sylvia Moore.

Order of Service

- Presiding Minister Elder Anthony Bonds
Pastor, New Design United Pentecostal Church • Rocky Mount, Virginia
- Processional Clergy and Family
- Musical Selection Elder Gilmore Warren
Pastor, Bethlehem United Christian Ministry • Boones Mill, Virginia
- Scripture Reading
- Old Testament.....*Job 16:18*..... Minister Flora Cobbs
(Witcher Family)
- New Testament.....*James 1:17*..... Ms. Jaono Poindexter
(Swain Family)
- Prayer of Comfort..... Minister Tonya Bonds
- Musical Selection Elder Gilmore Warren
- Acknowledgements and Resolutions Ms. Deborah Powell
- Silent Reading of the Obituary
- Musical Selection Elder Gilmore Warren
- Eulogy Bishop Gordon Warren
Pastor, Gethsemane Holiness Church • Bassett, Virginia
- Musical Selection Elder Gilmore Warren
- Recessional Clergy and Family

~ INTERMENT ~

New Design United Pentecostal Church Cemetery

~ REPAST IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING INTERMENT ~

New Design United Pentecostal Church Social Hall



~ IN APPRECIATION ~

The family of LUCY BELLE WITCHER SWAIN acknowledges with deep appreciation all expressions of love, support and kindness shown during the passing of our beloved. A special thanks to Carilion Roanoke Memorial Hospital, Pheasant Ridge Nursing and Rehabilitation and Good Samaritan Hospice in Roanoke, Virginia for helping and assisting us during her time of illness.