

"God's Garden"

God looked around his garden
And found an empty place,
He then looked down upon the earth
And saw your tired face.

He put his arms around you
And lifted you to rest.
God's garden must be beautiful
He always takes the best.

He knew that you were suffering
He knew you were in pain.
He knew that you would never
Get well on earth again.

He saw the road was getting rough
And the hills were hard to climb.
So he closed your weary eyelids
And whispered, 'Peace be thine'.

It broke our hearts to lose you
But you didn't go alone,
For part of us went with you
The day God called you home.

-Anonymous

Celebrating the Life of



Donna Ray Wilhite

December 14, 1934 ~ April 7, 2026

Obituary

Mrs. Donna Ray Wilhite, 91, of Elberton, passed away peacefully on Tuesday, April 7, 2026, at her son's home in Elberton following a sudden illness.

Born on December 14, 1934, in Elberton, Donna was the eldest of three children of Gordon Carlis Ray and Opal Jane Partain Ray. A woman of strong faith, she was a former member of the Elberton Pentecostal Holiness Church and a founding member of The Lighthouse, now known as Celebration Outreach Center. Her church family held a treasured place in her heart, and she was an active participant in its activities as long as her health allowed.

A proud graduate of Elberton High School, Donna began her early career at Elberton Manufacturing Company. Her true passion, however, blossomed in the decorating industry, where she proved herself as an exceptional saleslady with House of Decorative Accessories (HODA). After a successful career there, Donna purchased Woodson's Florist, a locally respected establishment. For 31 years, she devoted herself to beautifying the Elberton community, providing comfort through funeral floral arrangements, celebrating joyous occasions such as weddings and anniversaries, and enhancing countless homes with her impeccable taste and eye for decoration.

Outside of work, Donna was affectionately known as "Memaw" by her family—a title that reflected the depth of love and support she extended to her children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and great-great-grandchildren. She loved people and was always on the move, finding special joy in gardening and tending to her yard during her leisure moments. Anyone who walked in the doors of the florist knew of her love of animals, especially the cats who were lucky enough to call Woodson's home.

Donna is survived by her daughter, India Wilhite of Elberton; her son, Ren Wilhite and his wife Rita of Elberton; her daughter, Kyria Wilhite of Elberton; her grandchildren: Candice Hobbs, Jessica Finley, Ashley Paul and her husband Dericus, and Ryan Wilhite and his wife Kayla; fourteen great-grandchildren; and two great-great-grandchildren. She is preceded in death by her parents, Gordon Carlis Ray and Opal Jane Partain Ray; her husband of 47 years, Francis Alton "Poopup" Wilhite; her son, David Shawn Wilhite; her granddaughter, Misti Hobbs; and her siblings: Gordon Fletcher Ray and Gloria Jane Adams.

A Celebration of Donna's Life will be held on Sunday, April 19, 2026, at 3:00p.m. at her beloved Celebration Outreach Center, officiated by the Rev. John Case. The family will greet friends immediately following the service. Burial will be at a later date in Forest Hills Memorial Park.

Contributions may be made in her memory to SafeHouse Ministries, Post Office Box 6336, Elberton, GA 30635 or to Elbert County Humane Society, Post Office Box 267, Elberton, GA 30635.

Donna's life was one of beauty, grace, and service. Her presence enriched the Elberton community, and she leaves behind a legacy that will be cherished and remembered by all who knew her.

Berry Funeral Home & Crematory of Elberton is respectfully in charge of arrangements for Mrs. Donna Ray Wilhite.